



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

February 23, 2021

Announcements and information of interest to the people of the Northern Spirit region.

If you have news to share or information about an upcoming event or learning opportunity, please write a short article, and send it to Kathy Jackson, Administrative Support: kjackson@united-church.ca. We are unable to include posters or other attachments, but links to further information may be included. Alternatively, our Community of Faith Events Calendar is open 24/7 for posting about online events that are open to the public. Events can be posted directly to the Newsfeed: <https://northernspiritr.ca/add-your-community-event/>.

Family News

We have received word of the death of Joyce Kimmerly, former Administrator for Edmonton Presbytery, on February 14, 2021. We extend our prayers and deepest sympathy to her husband, the Rev. Bob Kimmerly, her family, and her friends.

We have also been advised that Kenneth Chan, a retired lay minister, passed away earlier this month. Kenneth Chan was a former minister who served Chinese United Church in Edmonton. We extend our prayers and deepest sympathy to his family and friends.

COVID-19 Concerns Continue ...

Seeking Information and Guidance from the Church?

As we continue to face the challenges of the current pandemic, new information is produced almost daily. In order to keep up with this kaleidoscope of change and concern, we invite you to visit our [Regional Council web site](#). If you visit the [United Church web site](#), and search for "covid" you will find links to a page on *Faith Communities and COVID-19*, as well as links to reflections, news, prayers, stories of hope, and much more.

Congregational Annual Meeting Top Secret Secret Voting Strategies and More

Many communities of faith are going ahead with congregational meetings online, and have many good questions about voting. [Here are some thoughts](#) from Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy on not-so-secret ballots and your community of faith's online Annual Meeting. [Here's a good resource](#) from some of our kin in the Shining Waters and Canadian Shield Regional Councils that outlines the various options. (Hint: there's really no such thing as a completely secret ballot for everyone.) The Centre for Christian Studies has just released a great [recorded "how to"](#) workshop (and a [hilarious video](#) that may sound just a bit familiar).

Federal, Provincial and Territorial COVID Pandemic Guidelines

Please continue to check the Federal, and all Provincial and Territorial Governments for updated guidance and direction related to the pandemic: [Health Canada](#); the provinces of [Alberta](#) and [British Columbia](#); and the [Northwest Territories](#).

Featured News ...

The Crisis in Long Term Care

On Friday, March 5, 2021, 9:00 am (MST), a national United Church meeting is being called for all who are concerned about the quality of both spiritual and physical care in long term care facilities, and the ways that Covid-19 has laid bare the state of crisis in many facilities. To register, and to receive the Zoom link, please contact Regional Council staff member Diane Matheson-Jimenez, by email to dmatheson@united-church.ca.

Affirming Get-Together for Northern Spirit

On Tuesday March 2, 6:30-8:30PM (MT), join us on Zoom! Calling all Affirming and in-process ministries, all those who are curious about it, all LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people and all allies. You are welcome! Come out to this check-in and reminder of the resources that are out there to help your ministry. Give and receive some good energy and support. For more information, to RSVP, and for the Zoom Link, email Shylo Rosborough affirming.ministries@rwuc.org, or Julie Graham jgraham@united-church.ca. Face Book event: <https://fb.me/e/2obNnveqy>
Northern Spirit web site event: <https://northernspiritrc.ca/event/regional-affirming-gathering/>

Black/African Heritage Month: An Invitation to the Palaver Tree

Pastor Samuel Vauvert Dansokho recounts the [devastating and lasting impact of colonialism](#) on the diverse nations of the African continent in this week's Black History Month reflection. He invites us to join him "under the palaver tree". For more on what a palaver tree is, and its central role in the community, [click here](#).

Reflections on the Other Pandemic: Opioids

Across Canada, too many in church and pastoral leadership, and too many in our communities, have already experienced the impact of the ever-expanding opioid overdose crisis. The March edition of Broadview, the church's independent national magazine, offers a more [personal story from a United Church minister](#), and invites our reflection on the impacts and causes of this epidemic, which has gathered strength during COVID. Watch for an upcoming United Church gathering series on this crisis in our communities, and on different perspectives on the decriminalization of drugs.

Care for the Pastoral, Prophetic and Priestly Self in a Pandemic

The Committee on Ministry Personnel Support in Living Skies is co-hosting, with St. Andrew's College, a retreat for Ministry Personnel, roughly 1 year after the pandemic transformed our lives. The details of the event, including dates, cost and learning options, is found [here](#). The registration form for **Ministry Personnel** is found [here](#). **Lay Leaders:** this is an opportunity to offer sabbath to your Ministry Personnel as they prepare for the busy Holy Week time. A worship service will be available for use on March 21 to enable Ministry Personnel to fully experience retreat. If you are worshipping online only (or a combination of online and in-person), this may be a time to find someone else to learn how to record the service or host the online gathering instead of your minister. If you are a community of faith without called or appointed Ministry Personnel, you are also welcome to access this offering. Details of the worship service will be shared via this newsletter once they are available.

Update on Bill C-15 and the United Church

Following discussions with the National Indigenous Council and the Elders Council, The United Church of Canada has not signed on to the ecumenical campaign supporting the federal Bill C-15 on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Both the Council and the Elders cited the need for community discernment, as outlined in the Calls to the Church, before a decision could be taken. This

reflects our commitment to the Declaration, which we continue to support as the framework for reconciliation. We also continue to encourage everyone to learn more about the UN Declaration. It remains one of the many crucial calls to our church within the TRC Calls to Action. (You can download a [free PDF of the text here](#) and read the KAIROS summary of the Declaration's long journey.) This newsletter includes information about a related event from churches who have taken a position on Bill C-15. And watch for future news about an upcoming event on diverse points of view on Bill C-15, hosted by KAIROS Prairies North.

In Other News ...

St. Andrew's United Church, Spruce Grove: Celebrating 100 Years!

In November, 2020, as part of the celebration, the people of St. Andrew's developed and published a 100th Anniversary Book which is now "in stores" (our church) for sale at \$25.00 per copy. This "table topper" book uses pictures, messages from past ministers, and stories from many members, past and present, to tell the story of how ministry grew in "the Grove". Please see further information, including the "smiling faces" of the editorial committee on the Northern Spirit news feed: <https://northernspiritrc.ca/northern-spirit-news/>.

Faith on the Move: a National Online Journey through Lent

On February 23, March 2, March 9, March 16, March 23, and March 30, at 11:00 am (MST), you are invited to join a community of friends to walk through Lent, sharing in a risky, surprised-filled adventure and exploring the places that will challenge you and stretch you to your limits. [Please refer to this link](#) for a full description of these 60-minute programs, and to confirm times, as the dates fall over the daylight savings time change.

Affirming PIE Day 2021 Resources and Video Launch for Sunday, March 14

PIE= Public+Intentional+Explicit: the standard for creating a safer sacred space for LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people. For 2021 and its many online events, [Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble](#) and Calgary's [Affirming Connections](#) ask: What ingredients or recipe make up your PIE and your radical hospitality? Have a look at the materials to help you animate Affirming PIE Day on Sunday, March 14, including a [new worship service](#). Check out [online events](#), and add your own. Your gathering or worship doesn't have to be complicated ... it doesn't even have to include pie (any dessert or savour treat is welcome. But do make it PIE. And, if you want your PIE hot, check out the forthcoming short video on a topic that is overly close to many LGBTQIA+ people: [What the Hell?](#)

Annual Meeting Planning Committee: Are you called?

A reminder that the Nominations Committee wants you to consider who might help plan the 2021 Regional Council Annual Meeting. [Have a look at the details here](#). Please consider this invitation, or invite others to do so, and please share it widely.

Ongoing and Upcoming Events ...

Indigenous Lenten Series: Ahogichipabi

On Wednesdays, February 24 to March 31, at 7:30 PM (MST), join us this Lenten season as we explore Christ's journey into the desert and the connection this has to Indigenous spiritual traditions: the 7 sacred teachings of the Assiniboine and the Vision Quest. We will examine the intercultural traditions found in Indigenous Christian theology and how this impacts our spiritual formation and worldview

today. This series is sponsored by the Chinook Winds Regional Council and the Urban Indigenous Circle. [Click here](#) for the Facebook event. [The Zoom link is here](#). Contact Tony Snow for more information: tony.snow@hillhurstunited.com

Introduction to Indigenous Lands and Issues in Canada

From February 27 to June 19, host Adrian Jacobs, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre's Keeper of the Circle, and Indigenous Elders from across Canada, invite you to explore the cultural and historic foundations to today's headlines. Join in a series of online conversations in response to the Indigenous education mandates from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Final Report. For a schedule and further information, or to register, please [click here](#).

Fasting: An Exploration and an Invitation

On Saturday, February 27, from 10 am to 4 pm, via Zoom, Providence Renewal Centre is offering an opportunity to explore and experience fasting as a spiritual exercise. Fasting is one of the three pillars of the Lenten season in the Christian tradition, along with prayer and almsgiving. Through prayer, silence and whatever degree of fasting that you wish to engage in, spend a day entering into this Lenten season and explore fasting (not necessarily from food!) as a means to feed your soul. You may bring whatever snacks you need for your day, beverages provided. This retreat will take place via ZOOM. The registration deadline is February 22.

For more information, visit the Providence Renewal Centre website: <https://providencerenewal.ca/>, or telephone 780-701-1854.

Affirming Conversation and Check In

Please check the Calendar of Events listings on the [Northern Spirit web site](#) for information about a March 2 invitation for all Affirming, in process, and curious ministries, and all LGBTQIA+ people and allies.

Hopeful Economics UnConference

On March 3-5, 2021, the United Church's EDGE Network will host "Hopeful Economics", a way of looking at the world, and the assets and abundance that it has, and making that work for everyone. With an incredible lineup of speakers, you'll dive deep into the relationship between social enterprise and faith. You'll learn about the economic impact of churches and how to pitch your community of faith to form new partnerships. For details, agenda, and registration, please visit:

https://whova.com/web/virtu20_202012/.

United in Learning: Great New Opportunities

United in Learning is offering several new webinars and workshops. To view a list and find more information, please check out their newsletter [here](#).

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