



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

February 2, 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 the Rev. Gordon Cann, on January 17, 2021. Gordon was Ministry Personnel in Edmonton from 1986 until 2003, when he moved to Vancouver Island. We offer our condolences and prayers to Gordon's family.

COVID-19 Concerns Continue ...

Important Update: Congregational Annual Meetings for 2021

A reminder of a notice sent late last year: the General Council Executive has suspended the requirement to hold Congregational Annual Meetings until June, in light of the pandemic. You can still hold an online meeting as possible, but meetings are not required. [Please click here for details](#). Further details about related matters like Budgets and Annual Reports will be shared later this month.

Thriving Churches During COVID and Beyond: Webinar Series

On February 3 and 10, at 5:00 p.m. (MT), the Thriving Churches Series continues online, with the focus this week being on how to develop strong leadership teams, innovation, creative adaptation, and flexibility. If you're wondering how to thrive as a church in these times, this series is for you! [Find out more and register](#).

Map of Online Worship Services Across the United Church

As more and more communities of faith join in online worship, or refresh their skills and expand their reach, the national map (found online [here](#)) is updated as information is received. Share the link on your website and social media, as many Canadians are looking for supportive spaces in this difficult time. Be sure to add or update your listing and help people find you [through this form](#).

Alberta Government is Supporting Safe Faith Community Gatherings

On November 9, the Alberta government announced that it is investing \$1 million to help faith-based and cultural organizations recover costs associated with COVID-19. From hosting online events, to facility upgrades and offering PPE, faith-based and cultural community groups have persevered to continue bringing hope, joy and connection to their communities. The new Faith-based and Cultural Facility Relaunch Grant will provide funding to offset costs related to following public health measures to ensure important religious and cultural gatherings can continue safely. For more information, please visit: [Faith-Based and Cultural Facility Relaunch Grant](#). The final application deadline is March 1, 2021.

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Guidelines

The Federal, and all Provincial and Territorial Governments provide updated guidance and direction related to the pandemic: [Health Canada](#); [Alberta](#); [British Columbia](#); and [Northwest Territories](#).

Featured News ...

Black/African Heritage Month: Resources for Congregations

February is Black History (or African Heritage) Month in Canada, a time to honour the contributions and struggles of peoples of African descent. How do you (and your congregation) plan to mark it? The United Church has many [worship resources](#) for each week, including new blog posts, prayers, and a new Black History Month service for 2021. This year, to accompany the blog posts, we will also be sharing video interviews of the writers, which we hope will enrich your experience.

Youth and Young Adults Retreat: Zeebu 2021

The Prairie to Pine YAAY (Young Adults and Youth) Committee invites youth and young adults from Northern Spirit to join them at the virtual Zeebu 2021 “Retreat”, Friday, February 12 (6-8 pm MT) and Saturday, February 13 (8:30-11 am MT). This free, 2-part, online event is offered for participants from Grade 7 to mid-30s. The Theme is All our Relations, and the event will include interactive Theme Time, Worship and Music, and a Games Night. Home groups will be arranged by age groupings. Don’t wait too long to register, as planners will need to “snail” mail participants a package of materials to use and enjoy during the retreat. For this reason, please register before **February 5**. For more information, or to register, please [click here](#), and scroll down to Zeebu 2021.

10th Annual Moose Hide Campaign Day: Reconciliation in Action

The Moose Hide Campaign is an Indigenous-born grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children. The Campaign invites all Canadians from all genders, backgrounds and cultures to stand with us. A cornerstone of the Moose Hide Campaign is the moose hide pin. These can be ordered free from our [website](#), and can be shipped anywhere in Canada. Wearing the moose hide pin signifies your commitment to honour, respect, and protect the women and children in your life and to speak out against gender-based and domestic violence. Now more than ever, your leadership and example are needed to help address the rising levels of violence against women and children in our country, an issue that has only been exacerbated by the pandemic.

On **Moose Hide Campaign Day**, Thursday, February 11, everyone is invited to come together online for a day of action, inspiration, ceremony and fasting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this will be the first year the gathering will be held entirely online, where attendees will be guided through a virtual day of ceremony, keynote speeches, and an engaging and diverse line-up of interactive workshops. For more information, and to register, please click [here](#).

Making a Difference through GSA Support

Here is [some public praise](#) for St Andrew's UC in Spruce Grove, Alberta, for their support for a Gay-Straight/Gender-Sexuality Alliance in the community. Their support, and physical and spiritual space, are making a much-needed difference to LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit students. Please keep in mind that GSAs and Pride groups may need extra support and solidarity during the pandemic, whether space or other forms of support. Can your community of faith offer those to a GSA in your local school?

2021 Annual Meeting Planning Committee: Are you called?

Your Nominations Committee, Marilyn Carroll and Brenda Simon, would like your help in finding people for the Planning Committee for the 2021 Regional Council Annual Meeting. Our meeting will again be online, and that creates both challenges and great opportunities for trying new things. A wide range of identities, experiences, and skills are needed for the planning team. You don't need to be a Certified Annual Meeting Expert. You do need to be interested in how to make this online space for Worship, decision-making, learning, and community the best space it can be -- at a time when sacred space and community are more important than ever. Please consider this invitation, or invite others to, and please share it widely. [Here is the full description](#). Watch this space for many more upcoming opportunities to be part of Regional opportunities and spaces.

Special note to Lay Representatives to the Regional Council: your term lasts the entire year (contrary to rumour, it is not a life sentence!) You are an important connecting point between your community of faith and the Regional Council. Are there people in your community of faith who might be called to serve the wider church, and can you help connect them to the Nominations Committee? Are there ways of communicating and inviting that would help you make that connection? Please let the committee know, by email to northernspirit@united-church.ca.

In Other News ...

Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization

On Thursdays, from February 4 to 25, from 12:30- 2:30 PM (MT), you are invited to join with Indigenous and settler resource people to challenge and change our reading of the Bible. This series is hosted by the New Leaf Learning Centre. [Full details are here](#).

Deepening Practices of Restorative Solidarity

February 12-15, 2021, live on Zoom from un-ceded Chumash territory, in the Ventura River Watershed, California, please join the 2021 Bartimaeus Kinsler Institute. More information: <https://www.bcm-net.org/study/bki2021>. The Bartimaeus Institute has many ecumenical Canadian connections, including resource people Harry and Germaine Lafond, of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and the Metis Nation, respectively. Consider creating the usual Canadian delegation online this year, and deepen engagement with decolonizing discipleship.

Pancakes and PIE!

On Tuesday, February 16, at 5:00 pm (MT), Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble asks us to join them in the kitchen for a Virtual Pancake Supper on Zoom, with entertainment from Pam Rocker, and a friendly cook-off in two home kitchens! We'll also get to talk about [P.I.E. Day 2021](#) (Sunday 14 March) and what's cooking there. Facebook event: <https://fb.me/e/1ufTk8ggF>

CCS Fridays

Lay people and clergy are invited to join the Centre for Christian Studies virtually, for an hour to explore timely topics of theology, life, and faith. On February 12 from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon (MT) we will look at Zoom Tips for Annual Meetings: we will review the basics of how to use Zoom, go over the nitty gritty of hosting a virtual annual meeting, and have a chance to share tips and favourite features. The workshop is free, but you must register in advance [here](#). Click on the workshop name and fill in the form. If you have any questions, please e-mail info@ccsonline.ca.

Perspectives on K-12 Education for Reconciliation: Panel Discussion

Some in our Region have expressed major concern that the government's proposed new curriculum has removed key pieces of education about the reality of residential schools. On February 17, 2021, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (MT), this event will provide an opportunity to learn from qualified and knowledgeable education partners about why the Alberta government needs to "make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students", to gain increased knowledge and understanding of this issue, and to be prepared to share feedback when the Alberta Education Minister allows for public input in Stage 5 of the development of the new curriculum later in 2021. For more information or to register, please [click here](#). This event is hosted by Alberta's [Remembering the Children Society](#), of which the United Church is a member, and it is a chance for us as a church to live into the TRC Calls for Action to which we've committed.

United Church Rural Ministry Network: Upcoming Workshops

As part of their mandate, "Connecting rural stories with rural people across Canada", the UCRMN is hosting two workshops to support to rural ministries. For more information about the Network, please visit their web site: <https://ucrmn.ca/>.

Ashes and Resurrection: How are COVID Days Shaping Us for Newness? February 18, 2021, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm (MT), Tickets are \$10. C.S. Lewis said, "you can't go back and change the beginning but you can start where you are and change the ending". How are our practices in these days - our ways of being church "together while apart" - shaping us for newness? What are we discovering as an answer to the question, why is the church? Participants will share practices that nourish and connect us these days, and also, how they open our hearts to something new. There will be time to just be together to share stories, and time to be encouraged, to take heart in these days with Scriptural themes of annunciation and exile, stars and wilderness. For more information, or to register, please click [here](#).

Practical Technology Possibilities for Rural Churches

During COVID, many of those in small and rural churches have learned more than they thought possible about sharing technology, and find that learning will well serve the church in the future. The UCRMN will be facilitating a workshop on practical tech possibilities. Please contact editor@ucrmn.ca if you would be interested in participating, and indicate whether you would like to see it before Easter to help with Easter prep (early to mid- March) or in mid-April (post-Easter). Tickets are \$10 to help cover the cost of the workshop.

Want to do your own Online Workshop? You supply the topic and the leadership, and UCRMN will supply the logistics, such as advertising, registration, Zoom platform, and all the administration needed for a successful workshop. E-mail Connor at office@UCRMN.ca to talk about possibilities.

Circles of Support

We are all living through the same pandemic - "all the time, same storm but with different boats". We are also living through precarious economic times, austerity plans and divisive, dangerous politics. This non-faith-based support circle uses expressive art methods to process our thoughts and feelings around the current time. Each session will start by checking in with each other, then sharing feelings and thoughts, exploring possible hopeful futures through being creative together, and closing the time together. The circles will be held from 11:00 am to 12:30 p.m. (MT), on January 23, February 20 and March 20, 2021. You are invited to come to one circle or many, and to bring and eat your brunch (or not). The hope is that we will feel less alone during this stage of the pandemic and political climate. To register, please visit <https://www.rwuc.org/artistic-justice-workshops/>.

National United Church: New Opportunities to Serve

From conflict resolution facilitators to researchers about Black experiences in the United Church, please visit the United Church web site to find out what's available and to consider both your own call and others' gifts. [See details here.](#)

Stewardship Newsletter: God's Mission, Our Gifts

The United Church Stewardship newsletter is posted monthly and includes a number of good ideas, information about new initiatives and much more. You can subscribe to it and other United Church newsletters by signing up [here.](#)

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.](#)

ReJUNEvation: Now it Springs Forth: Looking for Ecumenical Movement with Fresh Eyes

St. Andrew's College will host its 2021 ReJUNEvation online - live from June 18-21, with Theme Leader the Rev. Canon Dr. Scott Sharman, a theologian and priest in the Anglican tradition. Scott will address the "sense of stall and stagnation and 'ecumenical winter' that came to dominate during the '90s and 00s", and offer a theological, methodological, and spiritual diagnosis as to why that might have happened. He will go on to offer examples of things that seem to be leading to new life and impetus for renewed ecumenical movement - an "ecumenical spring" - especially in the Canadian context. For more information or to register, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3qK7rwc>.

Union Theological College: Strategic Alliance with Anglican College

The United Theological College (UTC) and Montreal Diocesan Theological (Dio) are entering into a strategic alliance that will deepen and build on their long-standing collaboration in theological education. Following months of discussions among members of the Boards of Governors, the two colleges have begun an 18-month transition period in which they will explore and plan for the formation of a combined Anglican-United college in Montreal. Over the course of the winter semester, UTC will complete the process of selling its building and wind down its independent operations. Starting in September 2021, UTC students and faculty will be incorporated into a United Church Studies program within the structure of Montreal Diocesan Theological College under the principalship of the Rev. Canon Jesse Zink. United Church graduates of the college will be granted a *testamur*, which attests that they are academically qualified for ordination in the United Church of Canada. Dio and UTC have worked side-by-side for more than a century in the Montreal School of Theology, which also includes The Presbyterian College, and is affiliated with McGill University. Students in all three colleges already study together in similar degree programs that combine coursework at McGill with in-depth ministry placements and ecumenical teaching of mission and ministry.

Learning Opportunities ...

Training for Ministry of Supervision

This intensive is being offered February 22-26, 2021, in order to equip people to be credentialed as supervisors for Supervised Ministry Experience students within the United Church of Canada and within other denominations. The Certificate in Ministry of Supervision provides participants with the information and skills to mentor individuals preparing for ministry. The instructors are the Rev. Brenda Fawkes and the Rev. Dr. Andrew Richardson, Office of Vocation Ministers in the Pacific and Atlantic

regions. This course, designed for clergy and lay individuals, is available to participants from any region of Canada or beyond, and is offered in partnership with the Vancouver School of Theology. It will be presented in an online (Zoom) format using Canvas for student and instructor interaction and resources. The course fee is \$211.50. Class times will be 10:00 am to 1:00 pm (MT). Prerequisite: a minimum of five years experience in congregational ministry and leadership. For more information or to register, please visit: <https://vst.edu/courses/certificate-in-ministry-of-supervision/>.

Licensed Lay Worship Leader Training

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWLs) are individuals, supported by their communities of faith, who have offered their faith, insight and skill at Worship leadership in order to support the ministry and mission of The United Church of Canada in the Northern Spirit region, and who have taken the appropriate training. United Church training for LLWLs is provided through a 4-part educational program of [United in Learning](#). Registration is now open for Unit 2 of the LLWL online training! In Unit 2, the focus is on preaching. For more information or to register, please visit [this page](#) of the United in Learning web site. If you plan to take part in this training, please make sure you register before the orientation webinar on February 15.

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