



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

April 13, 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/>.

Important and Time-Sensitive ...

3rd Annual Regional Council Meeting: Lay Representatives

The Regional Council will meet, online via Zoom, the evenings of **Tuesday and Thursday, May 4 and 6, 2021**. We are now developing the mailing lists for Annual Meeting registration information, scheduled to go out this week. As further details about the Annual Meeting unfold, they will be shared in this newsletter, on the Regional Council [web site](#), and/or directly to Communities of Faith, Ministry Personnel, and Lay Representatives.

Attention: Communities of Faith

Please submit the names and contact information for your current elected Lay Representatives to the Regional Council Office (northernspirit@united-church.ca) as soon as possible. We want to be sure that Annual Meeting information is communicated effectively.

Proposals for the Regional Council Annual Meeting: Reminder and a Resource:

In the United Church, proposals call on the Regional Council or General Council to make a decision or set policy on behalf of the church. [Click here for a guide](#) on who can make a proposal and how to prepare one. The deadline for proposals to the May 4 and 6, 2021, Regional Meeting is **April 26, 2021**.

General Council 44 Commissioners: Job Description and Invitation

The Regional Council is still looking for persons who are willing to serve as Commissioners to the 44th General Council, to be held online in 2022. Although 2022 seems like it is still a long way into the future, the deadline for the submission of names and contact information for Commissioners is in June 2021. Thus, the Northern Spirit Regional Council will elect its Commissioners at our Annual Meeting, **May 4 and 6**. [Have a look at the full details here](#). Please help by spreading the word, and directing yourself and other interested persons to the [Nominations Form](#). Even if you, or a good candidate you know, have limited internet or older equipment, do not let that keep you from applying or from encouraging others. General Council planning will include accessibility for a video meeting.

Featured News ...

Moderator's Town Halls on the Church's Future Directions

A report is being prepared for the October 2021 meeting of the 43rd General Council, recommending mission, vision, and key strategic priorities for The United Church of Canada. This [strategic planning process](#) is aimed at providing a common direction for 2022 to 2024. On **April 17** at 1:00 pm (MDT) or **April 20** at 7:pm (MDT), our Regional Council is invited to participate in the consultation. English Sessions are also planned for May 1, at 10:00 am (MDT) or May 4 at 4:30 pm (MDT). Members of the Indigenous Church can also choose to attend special focus groups in May and June (exact dates/times to be determined). For more details, and to register, please [click here](#).

Opportunity for Young Adults:

Ecumenical Stewards Programme 2022 World Council of Churches 11th Assembly, Germany

The United Church of Canada is encouraging interested young people to apply to serve as an Ecumenical Steward with the [Stewards Programme](#) for the 2022 Eleventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe, Germany. Click [here for more](#) details from the United Church.

Interim Principal Appointed for Emmanuel College

William Robins, President of Victoria University, is pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. John H. Young has been appointed as Interim Principal of Emmanuel College from August 15, 2021, to June 30, 2022. Dr. Young brings to Emmanuel College a longstanding commitment to teaching, scholarship, and ministry, and a deep understanding of theological education and institutional administration. Professor Michelle Voss Roberts will continue as Principal of the College until the start of Rev. Dr. Young's term. For more information, please visit the Emmanuel College [web site](#).

New Sustainability Cohort from the EDGE Network begins April 22

Interested in gathering with others from across the entire church to explore new dreams and ideas, including funding, for your ministry? The next free Sustainability Cohort through the EDGE Network begins on **April 22**. A number of ministry representatives from across our Regional Council have participated in EDGE Network cohorts over the past couple of years, and have found the material and the facilitated peer to peer conversations to be very helpful. For information about Cohorts, [click here](#). To participate in the next Sustainability Cohort, sign-up information can be found [here](#).

Attention: Ministry Personnel

A friendly reminder from our Office of Vocation Minister, Karen Medland ...

It's almost time to complete your Annual Declaration re criminal charges. This is a requirement for all active Ministry Personnel, and must be done between April 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021. **Please don't try to go into the system until those dates.** Your Annual Declaration is how you confirm that you have not had any new criminal charges against you in the past year. You **do not** need to get a new police records check if you have not had any new criminal charges. Google Chrome and/or Explorer are the best browsers to use: please **do not** use Safari. To complete your form, log into your personal page at www.churchub.ca . If you experience any problems, please contact ministry@united-church.ca for assistance. If you have any questions about the Annual Declaration, please contact Karen at kmedland@united-church.ca.

In Other News ...

Camping Sunday: Reminder

Traditionally, camping is celebrated on the final Sunday in April. This year, Camping Sunday will be on **April 25**, and provides a great opportunity to highlight the ministry that camps and outdoor ministries have continued to carry out over a very difficult year. Please check with your local United Church Camp for any updates they'd like you to share, and have a look at these [resources from the national church](#) to help with your worship preparation.

The Regional Council Needs You ...

The Nominations Committee continues to seek out and invite nominations for vacancies. Right now, members are needed for the Regional Council Executive, and in particular, a Chairperson-Elect. There are also vacancies on the Communities of Faith, Lay Leadership, and Ministry Personnel Support Committees; the Annual Meeting Planning and Nominations Committees; the Youth Council; and Commissioners to the 44th General Council. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the United Church: we rely on the wisdom and talents that committed individuals bring to their involvement in the work of the Regional Council. Nominations and self-nominations are equally valued, so please consider where you might be involved, and talk to others about where they might find a place in the Northern Spirit Regional Council as it continues to develop its mission and ministry. For more information about Regional Council Roles or to complete the Expression of Interest and Nominations form, please visit our web site: <https://northernspiritrc.ca/about-us/get-involved/>.

Video: Centre for Christian Studies Discussion on Anti-Asian Racism

On March 12, the Centre for Christian Studies hosted an online discussion of the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic exposes long-standing racial divisions and systemic injustices, and to imagine opportunities for change. The special guest was Kim Uyede-Kai, Minister for Communities of Faith Support and Right Relations in the Shining Waters Regional Council of the United Church of Canada. [Have a look at the video here.](#)

Seeking New Participants in the KAIROS Prairies North Region

KAIROS is one of the United Church's main Canadian ecumenical partners. It has a broadly-based grassroots network that engages communities and faith communities in its work for social and ecological justice. It is looking to refresh leadership and involvement for the Prairies North Region, which covers Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories. [Have a look at the detailed description here.](#)

Virtual Informational Potluck: this informal gathering is planned for **April 22**, 6:00 pm (MDT) to include an ecumenical justice check-in. To learn more about the potluck and to register and receive the meeting link, [click here](#). Please plan to join the potluck!

Surprise Lake Camp Update

The Surprise Lake Society would like to invite everyone to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Camp this summer on the weekends of **July 18th** and **August 8th**. They want to honour those who have paid it forward with their time and resources, and to let everyone see what they are doing now and where they want to go. There are numerous events planned as well as opportunities to meet up and reminisce with old friends. For those folks who were out at camp in the 80's and early 90's, you may want to put this on your calendar: Andriel Pitter will be hosting a ZOOM reunion with former camp friends on **April 22** from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. To stay up-to-date with the plans and events, sign up for our society newsletter (The

Loonie”) on our website, <https://surpriselake.ca>, or on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/surpriselakecamp>. See you for a sunset!

Emmanuel College: Re-Imagining Theological Education

At Emmanuel College, the learning environment mirrors the religious and spiritual diversity of the world its graduates will serve. Future leaders of the United Church of Canada, along with Muslims, Buddhists, and folks of many other faith traditions unite in a common purpose: to meet the world’s needs, through education, administration, music, congregational leadership, and spiritual care. Come, reimagine with us! Applications are due April 30 for September admission. For more info: bit.ly/exploremmanuel or email emmanuel.admissions@utoronto.ca.

Feeling Called to Ministry in The United Church of Canada? Through the John W. Billes Grant, Emmanuel College is offering 100% tuition support to full-time students on the pathway to ordination. For more information: bit.ly/UCCSupport.

COVID-19 Concerns Continued ...

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.

Resources for Online Congregational Annual Meetings

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 wee 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](#).

Events and Learning Opportunities ...

Introduction to Indigenous Lands and Issues in Canada

Since February, and until June 19, Adrian Jacobs, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre’s Keeper of the Circle, and Indigenous Elders from across Canada, have been hosting opportunities 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. The next session is on **Saturday, April 17**, and will focus on the topic of Indigenous Child Welfare. with Stan McKay. For a

full schedule and further information, or to register, please [click here](#). Please check local times carefully, as each session varies.

Affirming Reflections: Queer Art

Are you an artist or love seeing different ways people can be creative? Are you interested in learning more about local queer art and artists? Then, join in on **Monday, April 19**, at 12:00 noon (MDT) to learn about creativity, queer art, and getting to know local artist Max Elwood! This interview, hosted by Affirming Ministries, will be online with Facebook Live. For more information about Max Elwood, or the event, please visit this link: <https://fb.me/e/2dBmnhPp>.

United in Learning

[Click here](#) to read the Newsletter from United in Learning, with information about many new April and May learning opportunities.

Listening to Indigenous Voices: A Dialogue on Justice and Right Relationships

This new learning and conversation resource, to be launched **April 28**, 3:00-4:30 pm (MDT), begins by exploring Indigenous worldviews, goes on to examine the history of colonization, and concludes with sessions on righting relationships, decolonization, and indigenization. You can find [more information or register here](#).

Seeking to Reduce Harm

On **Wednesdays, May 12, 19 and 26**, at 5:00 pm (MDT), this national series will consider the idea of drug decriminalization. Our Regional Council Executive is a co-sponsor of this series, which gives us space to talk about this complex issue without taking a position on it. Themes will include Harm Reduction and UCC Engagement on May 12; Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use on May 19; and the Theology of Harm Reduction on May 26. [Click here](#) for details and to register.

Coming Alive: The Spirit Of Poetry

Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton, is offering this Zoom retreat over two evenings, Mondays, May 10 & 17, from 7:00-9:00 pm. With Facilitator, Antoinette Voûte Roeder, the first evening will look at and sample poetry from different faith traditions, discussing spirituality and its universality. The second evening will centre on poems that have an underlying spirituality that may not be traceable to any particular tradition but have a pervasive sense of Something Else. They hope to inspire some writing by participants on both evenings. For more information, or to register (by May 5), visit the Centre's web site: www.providencerenewal.ca, or telephone, 780-701-1854.

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