



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

April 20, 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://northernspiritrc.ca/add-your-community-event/>.

Regional Council Annual Meeting Updates ...

Have you Registered Yet?

The Regional Council will meet, online via Zoom, the evenings of **Tuesday and Thursday, May 4 and 6, 2021**. Those who have registered to attend the meeting, should now have received a Confirmation Email. If you have registered, and have not received an email with the Zoom links and other information, please contact the Registrar (kjackson@united-church.ca).

The Registration Form link has been sent to Communities of Faith, Ministry Personnel, and known Elected Lay Representatives. If you have not received the link to register for the meeting, please contact your Community of Faith, or the Registrar. As further details about the Annual Meeting unfold, they will be shared in this newsletter, or on the Regional Council [web site](#).

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. If you know of a pressing issue that should come before our Annual Meeting, [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 seeking people 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 Commissioners' names and contact information to the General Council Office 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 ...

Asian Canadian Women: Support, Strength, and Solidarity Gatherings

If you are of Asian descent in The United Church of Canada and self-identify as woman, genderqueer, and/or nonbinary, you are invited to gather together in Asian Heritage Month this May. On **May 2 and 5**, 4:00-6:00 PM (MDT), we will take time to get to know one another, to talk about our places in the church, and to explore the intersections of our racial identities and gender identities. Asian women are particularly visible and vulnerable during this pandemic time. Please be welcome to a safe meeting space to connect, lament, and honour one another. To register, please send an email to: anti-racism@united-church.ca with your full name, your email address, and your Asian ancestry.

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. The discussion was recorded, you can [have a look at the video here](#).

Mental Health Awareness Week Resources

May 3-9 is Mental Health Awareness Week in Canada, and this year, the United Church will mark Mental Health Sunday (May 2) for the first time. [Worship resources](#) will be coming soon, and during the week itself there will be [live sessions with chaplains and ministers](#) on the church's [Facebook page](#). General Council Office staff person Amy Crawford has also written a blog post entitled "[Breaking the Silence about Mental Health](#)".

National Worship Service of Apology and Lament for the Church's Role in Coerced Adoptions

On **May 9**, from 1:00-3:00 pm (MDT), The United Church of Canada will acknowledge its role in forced adoptions through maternity homes operated by the church. During the service The Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, Moderator, will offer a formal apology to mothers and all those affected by historical adoption practices. Please [see this link for more information](#).

News from the Regional Council Executive

The April Newsletter from the Executive is now posted to the Regional Council web site. Please click on [Executive Newsletter](#) to see what the Executive has been doing on our behalf.

Stewardship - It is a Journey

You are not alone. Really. You are not.

Join other communities of faith from Northern Spirit on **The Journey**, as together we learn Stewardship Best Practices that can help you increase revenue in order to better fulfil your mission. This May, interested Communities of Faith can form a Learning Team, and participate in four 2-hour sessions to learn about best practices in stewardship, plus receive ongoing coaching and support. Spaces are limited, so reach out to Vicki Nelson (VNelson@united-church.ca) right now for more details or to express interest. Don't walk alone.

Attention: Ministry Personnel

From Karen Medland, Office of Vocation: Thanks to all of you who have already completed your annual declaration. I just want to up date some information for you all. The closing date for annual declarations

is **June 30 2021**. You **do not** need to get a new police records check if you completed your annual declaration last year. If there is a reason you will not be able to complete your annual declaration by June 30, please email me at kmedland@united-church.ca so that we can make other arrangements for you. Remember that ChurchHub is not compatible with the Safari web browser. To access all the aspects of ChurchHub, we recommend using Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge as your web browser. Once again if you have any questions about or problems with ChurchHub please contact me via email. I am always happy to set up a Zoom meeting to walk you through your annual declaration.

In Other News ...

Camping Sunday: Reminder

Traditionally, camping is celebrated on the final Sunday in April. This year, Camping Sunday is 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. **Camp Whitney** has produced an informational video. You can view it on Facebook [here](#).

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. You are invited to join one of the final consultation sessions, on **May 1**, 10:00 am (MDT), or **May 4**, 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. The deadline for application is **May 25**.

The Northern Spirit 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/>.

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 ...

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. KAIROS 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!

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](#).

Bloom Where You’re Planted: Providence Renewal Centre Workshop

On **Wednesday, May 5**, 10-11:30 am (MDT), this workshop is being hosted especially for Moms via Zoom, led by Ruth Heine, who has spent most of her life, in various parish roles, working with families in a variety of settings. You are invited to join and explore ways of nurturing simple spiritual practices to awaken your awareness of God’s presence and movement in the blessings, joys and constant demands

of mothering. Learn how to create intentional space with habits and tools that can work for your unique personality and help you to bloom right where you're planted, nourished as you grow in God's love. To register before **April 28**, visit the Providence Renewal Centre web site: www.providencerenewal.ca, or telephone 780-701-1854. When you register, please advise if you will attend with young ones who might be in the background and or need to be with you, and Ruth will accommodate this in her planning.

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.

Introduction to Indigenous Lands and Issues in Canada

Adrian Jacobs, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre's Keeper of the Circle, and Indigenous Elders from across Canada, continue to host opportunities to explore the cultural and historic foundations to today's headlines. Join in online conversations in response to the Indigenous education mandates from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Final Report. The next session is on **Saturday, May 15**, 8:00-10:00 am (MDT), and will focus on the topic of Indigenous People and Resource Development, with the Rev. John Snow Jr. For further information, or to register, please [click here](#).

United in Learning

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

Northern Spirit Regional Council Office
13535 122 Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5L 2V7 780.435.3995
www.northernspiritr.ca

Earl Reaburn, Pastoral Relations Minister
ereaburn@united-church.ca

Kathy Jackson, Administrative Support
kjackson@united-church.ca