

Learnings from the Edmonton Being Good Relations “Cluster”

There is a small group of us gathering as the Edmonton Cluster, with representatives from the Faith Communities of St. Albert United, Grace United, Sherwood Park United in the Park, and Salisbury United. We continue to liaise with the Being in Good Relations InterRegional Network, while finding our call to action for Edmonton and surrounding areas.

Cecile Fausak’s forging of a communications network between Chinook Winds and Northern Spirit is good for collective United Church political action in Alberta, such as protesting the Alberta government’s K-12 curriculum.

Northern Spirit is a vast region. We are fortunate that Julie Graham has become our Regional Minister for Justice and Communications along with Living Skies and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils. We do not see this as just a 1/3 of a position as there is common work across the three regions. Her considerable experience, sensitivity, grace, good humour and strong facilitation skills are greatly appreciated.

Some members of the former Being Good Relations Edmonton and Area Cluster learned that building Settler-Indigenous relationships and trust where one lives is what we are called to do. We go where we are invited.

Dr. Pat Makokis gave a clear call to the United Church at our learning event in October 2019 for settlers to educate settlers. She and Elder Charles Wood invite churches to work in unity to support the well-being of Saddle Lake. There is an invitation to visit when it is safe to do so. Louise Rogers has created a good relationship with Elder Charles Wood and her offer for settlers to bring the feast was appreciated and accepted.

The Edmonton Cluster also supports the Kisewatsiwin Kohkom’s Grandmothers’ group. A number of gatherings were held in the Beverly United Church after it closed. Sewing machines, meals and coffee, set up and clean up were provided by our cluster. Being together is good medicine. The Kohkoms also shared traditional teachings with mainstream and East African community members, and our cluster. Many Indigenous people and newcomers live in the area.

Moving from the head to the heart starts with a personal journey: think, reflect, feel, care and act. People are at different places along this suggested continuum. We look forward to identifying other Witnesses and Faith Communities in our area to join with us on our journey.

Respectfully submitted by:
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