



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

May 11, 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/>.

From the 3rd Annual Regional Council Meeting ...

Thank You!

The 3rd Annual Meeting is now behind us. A total of 165 people attended over the two Sessions on May 4 and 6, including Lay Representatives from Communities of Faith, Ministry Personnel, Guests and Staff. Thank you to all who participated, worshipped together, and carefully considered the work of Northern Spirit Regional Council. Appreciation is also offered to the Leadership Team of Gord Waldie, Convenor; Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister; Katharine Moore, Business Convenor; Blaine Gregg, Parliamentarian; Kate Rodd, General Council Guest; Deborah Hoekstra, Chairperson, and the members of the Planning/Tech Team; and members of the Affirming Task Group.

Video Greetings from the Moderator, Richard Bott: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vMq2f4kO-o>

Mission and Service Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXl6tqlw52w>

Further details about what happened at the meeting will be posted to the [Annual Meeting](#) page of the Regional Council web site as they become available. Stay tuned ...

General Council Commissioners

The 44th General Council will be held online, **July 22-26, 2022**. At its Annual Meeting, the Regional Council elected and covenanted with the following people as its Commissioners to the 44th General Council: Mary Annan, Retired OM, Edmonton; MPT Basele, OM, Wainwright; Daniel Chon, Layperson, Edmonton; Peter Chynoweth, Retired OM, Cochrane; Lloyd Henderson, Layperson, Yellowknife; Amy Kaler Layperson, Edmonton; Helen Reed, DM, Camrose; Scott Reynolds, OM, Irma/Viking; Leigh Sinclair, OM, Leduc; Gord Waldie, OM, Grande Prairie; Sarah Waldie Layperson, Grande Prairie; and Bruce West, Layperson, Sherwood Park. Alternates elected were: Deborah Hoekstra, OM, St. Albert/Edmonton; and Linda Marcotte, Retired OM, Yellowknife.

Pentecost Service for the Whole Regional Council

Join Northern Spirit Region on **Sunday, May 23**, for a Pentecost service! Led by ministers and lay people from across our region, this service shares the theme of the Regional Council Annual Meeting (May 4 and 6): "Loving Our Neighbour and Ourselves." We encourage you to use the service as an alternative to your community of faith's regular Sunday service, and offer your worship team a Sabbath Sunday. The service will be available on the [Northern Spirit Region YouTube channel](#), where you will be able to play the video from there, or share it on your own YouTube channel. It will also be available on Google

Drive, so that those with a slower connection can download it in advance. The download link will be emailed in the Regional Council E-Newsletter during the week before the service.

Featured News ...

Panel Series: Canadian Theological Society

The Canadian Theological Society brings a series of interesting panels, **May 31 to June 3**, during the Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences. It is hosted by the University of Alberta this year, and it's completely online. The schedule is here: [Canadian Theological Society Virtual Conference 2021](#). Registering involves a modest fee to the Society and the Congress. If you have questions, please contact Catherine MacLean at catherine@stpaulsunited.org

Reminder to All Ministry Personnel: Annual Declaration Deadline

From Karen Medland, Office of Vocation: Thanks to all of you who have already completed your annual declaration. I just want to remind you all that 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 ...

Asian Heritage Month Resources and Conversations

Asian Heritage Month continues through May, and the United Church has made available many resources, from prayers to personal reflections, that can be shared publicly. Please consider these for your Community of Faith and personal use. As our church continues to live into its commitments to being anti-racist, and as COVID continues to give some an excuse for anti-Asian racism, please consider what space your community of faith might create for prayer, worship, and conversations that honour the gifts of Asian heritage in our church and communities. See the [resource list here](#). ON May 18, United in Learning is offering an open session on racism and other realities with five Asian-Canadian church leaders. [Click here for details and to register](#). A further session for Asian LGBTQIA+ people will be held on June 15. You can find the [details and registration information](#) here.

Discussion: the Pandemic of 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](#).

St. Andrew's College Announcement

It is with sadness and celebration that Richard Manley-Tannis, St. Andrew's College Principal, has shared the news that Dr. Sandra Beardsall will be retiring from her long commitment to, and care and nurture of St. Andrew's, its students and scholarship, intent on threading ecumenical conversations that have, do and will nurture collaboration to share the Good News. Her journey as Professor of Church History and Ecumenics with the college began on July 1st, 1997 and the College will mark July 31st, 2021 as the ending of a wonderful and blessed 24-year relationship. Though there is sadness with her departure, Dr. Beardsall is wished joy and wonder as she continues on her own path of questioning, wondering and laughing as a Beloved Child of Creator.

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**.

Employment Opportunity: Accompanist

Riverbend United Church, Edmonton, is seeking a qualified candidate with excellent piano skills and experience with choral accompaniment. Previous church accompanist experience would be an asset. For the Job Description and other details, please visit: [Riverbend Accompanist 2021](#). The closing date for applications is **May 14**. Riverbend is an open, welcoming, and affirming church, situated just off Whitemud Drive in southwest Edmonton. For more information about the congregation, please visit: <http://riverbendunited.org/>.

Employment Opportunity: Director of Music

Robertson-Wesley United Church, Edmonton, Alberta, is inviting applications for a Director of Music, to commence in the summer or fall of 2021. This is a 30-hour position, which includes organ playing (on a Gabriel Kney three manual tracker-action organ), direction of a 25-30 voice choir with paid section leads, two handbell choirs, and collaboration with the ministry team. Further information and the application procedure can be found at www.rwuc.org.

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.

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 released a great ["how to" video](#) 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 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

Hosted by Adrian Jacobs, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre's Keeper of the Circle, and Indigenous Elders from across Canada, the next session will be 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. Join us for conversation in response to the Indigenous education mandates from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Final Report. [Registration info here](#). Please check the times carefully!

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

On **Monday, May 17**, from 2:00 to 3:30 pm (MDT), You are invited to join Affirming Ministries for their International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia [Livestream Event](#), featuring songs, prayers, stories and reflections from Two-spirit & LGBTQIA+ folks, and their experiences. We will hear about how inclusion and acceptance within society and within the Church helps to end homophobia, transphobia, & biphobia, how folks have overcome these challenges, and what allies can do to help support the Two-spirit & LGBTQ+ communities. This free event is open to everyone! The [International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia](#) was created in 2004 to draw the attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex people, and all other people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and/or expressions.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola: Providence Renewal Centre Program

Come & see! On **Tuesday, May 18**, via Zoom, you are invited to meet Faith Nostbakken, Facilitator, and some past participants of this program that is scheduled too to begin in the Fall of 2021. There is no charge for this introductory session. For more information and to register, please visit the Providence Renewal Centre web site: www.providencerenewal.ca, or telephone 780-701-1854.

Affirming Leaders Day

You are invited to join in, from anywhere in the world, for [Affirming Leaders Day](#)! On **Saturday, May 22**, from 10 am to 4:30 pm (MDT), Affirming Connections will host this faith-based development and connection day for allied and LGBTQ2S+ folks, featuring, Civil Rights Activist, the Rev. James Lawson; Queer Singer/Songwriter, Semler; and Pop Culture Critic/Scholar/Author, Anthony Oliveira. The gathering will reflect on the ways in which our communities have been strained and constrained by the pandemic and the increasing polarization of an "us vs. them" mentality, and how we can resist the urge to "other" others, while still standing our ground and working for justice. To purchase tickets for this Zoom Webinar, click [here](#). For 25% off the ticket price, use Promo Code: NORTHERNSPIRIT.

Affirming Gathering for Northern Spirit: Pride Planning Edition

All Northern Spirit Affirming and LGBTQIA+ supportive ministries and people are welcome to join in on **May 26**, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm (MDT) as we share plans for supporting Pride month through June and beyond. Here's the Zoom link (please share by email only; please do NOT share this on social media or post it on a website):

<https://united-church.zoom.us/j/95326115161?pwd=YW1HZ0NDQ3JNSm5hc3FwQld2SXB5Zz09>.

United in Learning

[Click here](#) to find out about upcoming learning opportunities being shared by United in Learning. There is always something new, so visit the site often.

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