



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

May 18, 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/>.

Family News

The Regional Council Office has received word of the death of Clyde Blackburn on May 16, 2021. Clyde was a life-long member of the United Church, and was married to Mary Faith Blackburn, a retired Designated Lay Minister who served Clairmont United Church. We offer our sympathy and prayers to Mary and her family.

Featured News ...

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. Print resources for the Pentecost Service can be found at these links: [Bulletin](#), [Hymns](#), [Sermon](#), and [Supplemental Prayers and Readings](#).

The video of the Pentecost Service is available in two ways.

On the [Northern Spirit Region YouTube channel](#): You will be able to play the video from there, or share it on your own YouTube channel.

From Google Drive, so that those with a slower connection can download in advance. (Note that there are two versions. Choose "compressed" if you have a slow connection. Hover your mouse over the video image to see the file title.)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xwzBt6hXTe_vV4P_bsAy4ONCDP79oaEg?usp=sharing

News from the Regional Council Executive

The May 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.

Call to End Violence in Palestine and Israel through Meaningful Negotiations

The United Church has followed the lead from its partners in Palestine and Israel and has [released a letter](#) calling for the cycle of violence to stop. "Palestinian and Israeli partners are clear that negotiating

a just peace is the only way out of the cycle of bombs and guns” says Moderator, the Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott. “I invite United Church people to [pray for the peace of Jerusalem](#) and to put faith into action by [writing to urge Minister Garneau to uphold international law](#).”

In some cases, media coverage is missing the fact that a spark for the current violence was the eviction of Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah, a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem targeted by militant Jewish settlers. [Read more background and see a related action here](#).

Indigenous History Month and Day of Prayer

This year the Indigenous Day of Prayer falls on **Sunday, June 20**. You are invited and encouraged to include the Day of Prayer in worship, recognizing the many words of truth and witness Indigenous leaders in and beyond the United Church have shared with us over the years. [See resources here](#).

Calls to the Church: Listening to the Wisdom of the Elders

As we begin Indigenous History Month in June, John and Tony Snow will offer a four-evening reflection on engaging with the Calls to the Church, June 1, 2, 3 & 4, from 7:30-8:30 pm (MDT). For more information, or to register, please visit [LeaderShift](#), Pacific Mountain Regional Council.

In Other News ...

3rd Annual Meeting Follow-Up

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. As follow-up information, including a written summary, recordings from the meeting, and the proposals becomes available, it will be posted to the [Annual Meeting](#) page of the Regional Council web site. Stay tuned ...

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=QX16tqlw52w>

General Council Commissioners

The 44th General Council will be held online, **February 14, and 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.

Asian Heritage Month Resources

Asian Heritage Month continues through May, and the United Church has made many resources available, 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](#). United in Learning is

offering an open session on racism and other realities with five Asian-Canadian church leaders at 5:00 pm (MDT) on **May 18**. [Click here for details and to register](#). A further session for Asian LGBTQIA+ people [will be held June 15](#).

Music United: Seeking Regional Convenors

Music United is a volunteer association of people passionate about music in The United Church of Canada. Musicians, clergy, laity, worship committee members - all are welcome to join in as they seek to further the cause of music within the church. People give of their time and talents as they are best able to do. Regional Convenors act as resource persons for area musicians and worship leaders, providing networking opportunities, either virtually or in-person, as well as liaising with the regional Music United office. For more information about Music United, and the Convenor position description, please visit their web site: <http://musicunited.ca>.

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.

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 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 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 provides space to talk about this complex issue without taking a position on it. Themes will include: 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.

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. Hold the date and watch for more details. Here's the Zoom link (please do NOT share this on social media or post on a website - share by email only): <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/95326115161?pwd=YW1HZ0NDQ3JNSm5hc3FwQld2SXB5Zz09>

Nature as a Spiritual Practice: Providence Renewal Centre Program

On **Saturday, May 29**, from 9:30 to 11:30 am, you are invited to join Linda MacIsaac and Carol Sebastian, members of the PRC Program Team, as they explore Nature as a Spiritual Practice on the beautiful wooded grounds of the Centre. Participants will learn and pray together (at a safe distance, among the trees), and times of private meditation will be offered. Participants are asked to bring their own water and a snack, and to dress for the weather, as the program will run rain or shine. For more information, or to register by **May 24**, please visit the Providence Renewal Centre web site: www.providencerenewal.ca, or telephone 780-701-1854.

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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