



# **NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL**

## The United Church of Canada

### **Regional Council News**

September 7, 2021

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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](mailto: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/>.

#### **Family News**

We have received word in the Regional Council Office of the death of the Rev. Robert Wright on August 21, 2021. Robert served as the Home Missions and Global Justice Minister for the former Alberta and Northwest Conference before he began his ministry with the Goodfish Lake and Saddle Lake Congregations in All Native Circle Conference. The funeral service was held in Goodfish Lake on Sunday, August 29. We continue to hold Robert's family and the people of the Goodfish Lake and Saddle Lake communities in our thoughts and prayers.

#### **Covenanting Service**

A Covenanting Service for the Camrose United Church, Helen Reed, DM, and the Northern Spirit Regional Council will be held on **September 26, 2021**, 10:00 am (MDT), at Camrose United Church. As an indoor, in-person gathering, consideration for pandemic precautions will be essential.

#### **Decommissioning Service: Telfordville Church Building**

Community United Church would like to invite friends and neighbours to a Decommissioning Service for the church building at Telfordville (49563 Range Road 21), on **September 12<sup>th</sup>** at 10:30 am (MDT). They would be delighted to visit and share memories afterwards. Coffee and tea will be available: light snacks to share are welcomed, or feel free to bring your own lunch. For more information call (780) 848-2227.

#### **Appreciation and Congratulations**

The Northern Spirit Pastoral Relations Commission reports several changes in pastoral relations to acknowledge: at the end of June, the Rev. Gordon Oaks concluded his many years as Pastoral Care Minister for McDougall United Church, Edmonton; in July, the Rev. Linda McLaren completed her ministry with Garneau United Church and Garneau United Assisted Living, Edmonton, and began her new position in ministry with Jasper United Church; on August 1, Linda Roberts began Candidate Supply Ministry with Hillcrest United Church, Fort Nelson; and on September 1, Sungsoon Park began Candidate Supply Ministry with First United Church, Fort McMurray; and Anne Telford, DM, began Pastoral Care Ministry with McDougall United Church, Edmonton, along with her current calls to the Morinville and Namao Pastoral Charges. We offer appreciation and blessings for these pastoral relationships, and for all of the ministries of Northern Spirit Communities of Faith and Ministry Personnel.

## Featured News ...

### **The United Church of Canada will Celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2025!**

A denomination-wide celebration of this important milestone will require planning, and so Centennial Celebrations Committee is being formed, and has just launched a new and exciting call for Nominations! We are looking for a small group of individuals to serve on the planning committee and hope that this invitation will be circulated widely to encourage those with the interest, gifts and experience to apply. The United Church is committed to working towards the full participation of people with disabilities, those who identify as Indigenous, racialized, or Francophone, and those from other marginalized communities. Attention will also be given to including younger leadership and the migrant voice within the church. For more information, and to nominate someone or express interest, please visit the [Centennial Celebrations Committee](#) page on the United Church web site, where there is a link to the *Expression of Interest* form. The deadline for submission is **September 15, 2021**.

### **All Saints Day Memorial Service**

On Monday, November 1, 2021, All Saints Day, the Moderator, Richard Bott, and other leaders will lead a service of remembrance for those we have lost through the COVID-19 pandemic. You are invited to submit the names of people to be remembered during the service using this form: [All Saints Covid-19 Memorial Service](#). Please submit names prior to **October 1, 2021** to ensure they will be included (every effort will be made to include names shared after this date). For submissions in French, please use this form: [Célébration commémorative de la Toussaint en mémoire des victimes de la COVID-19](#).

### **Election Resources**

With less than two weeks to go until the federal election day on **Monday, September 20**, you will likely have noticed an increase in advertisements, and announcements of all-candidates meetings. There is now a candidate on every corner and social media feed! Find out which candidate will serve you and your community best by asking questions using United Church of Canada election resources found on our [Faith and Politics webpage](#).

### **Wanted: Digital Images of Northern Spirit Churches**

Attention all photographers. We are building a photo library of the United Church buildings in our Regional Council, and we could use your help. We ask that submissions be in JPG or PNG formats (phones take JPGs), 1 MB or larger. The minimum preferred dimensions are 600x400 or 400/600. Bigger is better than smaller. Images can be emailed to the Regional Council Office: [NorthernSpirit@united-church.ca](mailto:NorthernSpirit@united-church.ca), and submissions must include wording as to how to credit the photo, and permission for its use in all media.

### **Networks and Clusters List for Northern Spirit: Help us Update!**

[Please click here for a PDF list of all known Networks and Clusters](#) (updated Fall 2021). We'll update this a couple of times a year, and these contacts will also be included in our Regional Council Directory. Don't see your group listed? Give the Regional Council Office a call! Holding a public event or sharing a resource? Please let staff know so we can share it in the newsletter or on the web site. You can find the [Networks and Clusters home page here](#).

### **New Statutory Holiday: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action number 80, the Government of Canada recently passed legislation making September 30 a federal statutory holiday commemorating

the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#). The new holiday only applies to federally regulated employers. The United Church of Canada and its communities of faith are governed by provincial employment statutes. However, the General and Regional Council offices will be closed on **September 30** this year, while conversations with the National Indigenous Council and the National Indigenous Elders Council determine future practice. Our Regional Council offers the guidance that Communities of Faith designate September 30th as a paid holiday for their Ministry Personnel and lay employees, at the discretion of their Governing Body. This day provides an opportunity for Canadians to recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools. This may present itself as a day of quiet reflection or participation in a community event.

### **Orange Shirt Day**

Orange Shirt Day on **September 30** is not limited to the children in your life! [Orange Shirt Day](#) is for everyone. Please consider looking into plans at your local school and within the community; and planning on how your community of faith or ministry can use its resources (including your building in some cases) to hold space for an all-ages focus on truth-telling and learning about residential schools. [Click here](#) for information on a full week of online learning events from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

## **In Other News ...**

### **Reflections on Emancipation and Anti-Black Racism for Canada**

We are pleased to announce to you the publishing of the book, "*Reflections on Emancipation and Anti-Black Racism for Canada*." This book has been published by First United Church, Fort Saskatchewan. At our recent Regional Council Annual Meeting, we proposed that August 1 be observed annually in The United Church of Canada as Emancipation Day. As we discussed the proposal, it was clear that many people did not know about this part of our history. This book is, in part, a response to the need for us to educate ourselves about the history of our country. You are encouraged to purchase and read this publication as we seek continue to build a new day in Canada, and raise awareness about Emancipation Day. The cost per copy is \$15, and it includes contributions from 12 ministers, theologians and historians from across the United Church and beyond. [You can order your copy here](#).

### **Emancipation Day Service Available on YouTube**

August 1, Emancipation Day, honours the ending of enslavement of Black people in Canada and across the British Empire, though much liberation work remained and remains. A panel discussion entitled: "Challenging Colonial Legacies through the Commemoration of Emancipation", examining the legacy of black slavery and the ongoing ways systemic anti-black racism exists in Canada [is available here](#).

### **Strength and Blessings to Indigenous Walkers and Supporters this Summer**

Since May, Indigenous communities have been carrying the weight of confirmation of hundreds and likely thousands of unmarked burials of children forced to attend residential schools. Powwows, feasts, and ceremonies have helped carry this pain. Walking the land and honouring the lands and waters are an expression of healing and sacred commitment.

### **Protesting the Killing of Palestinian Children**

As part of its continuing concern about the routine human rights violations aimed at Palestinian children living under Israeli military occupation, the national church has released this action call to Minister Marc

Garneau following the killing of two Palestinian minors. [Please click here](#) for background and letter-writing resources.

### **Supporting Equitable Access to Vaccines for All Our Neighbours**

As many Canadians begin to see the way out of the COVID-19 pandemic through vaccines, The United Church of Canada is adding a [vigorous advocacy campaign](#) to its [COVID-19 Global Response](#) and continuing to ask people to financially support global partners dealing with the ongoing pandemic. ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches, notes that Global South nations will reach herd immunity levels only in 2024, if ever. The new chapter of the COVID-19 Global Response appeal asks people to [advocate](#) with the Canadian government for more vaccine sharing; [donate](#) to the ongoing appeal; and show solidarity by [buying a vaccine](#) for someone in the Global South (you can do this as a gift, and even choose when the gift is delivered. [Click here for the summary page](#). Please share and consider prayerfully what you or your Community of Faith might offer.

## **COVID-19 Concerns Continue ...**

### **Seeking Information and Guidance from the Church?**

As we continue to face the challenges of the current pandemic, new information continues to be produced. 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.

### **Re-Opening your Church Building: Discernment and Planning Resources**

As we move towards re-opening our buildings to various gatherings and needs, and in-person worship, we know that complex discernment and planning that will be necessary. Lay leaders and Ministry Personnel need to be part of these conversations. To assist, we've created two new resources, a discernment process, and a blank planning template. For these, and other resources, [please click here](#).

### **Advice re United Church Communities of Faith and Vaccination Policies**

Some Communities of Faith and church leaders have been asking whether Communities of Faith may set rules around COVID vaccinations for members and others who participate in church activities on site. Cynthia Gunn, Legal Counsel for The United Church of Canada, has prepared a Q&A resource to help Communities of Faith discern how they will deal with this issue. [Click here to have a look](#).

### **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 ...**

### **Indigenous Studies Program Certificate: Vancouver School of Theology**

VST offers a certificate in theological studies, through its Indigenous Studies Program, that is open to congregational members, ministry staff, and anyone who may wish to deepen their understanding

about how the Indigenous context impacts Christian faith and theological thought. There are no post-secondary pre-requisite requirements and, as continuing education, there are no degree credentialing requirements. Certificates are a great avenue for learning more without a lot of pressure. For more information, please check out this [Poster](#), which includes a link to more information about the VST Indigenous Studies Program.

### **Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity**

This two-year ecumenical program, offered by [Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre](#) in Saskatoon, is designed for those seeking to engage in their maturing years with wisdom and grace, supported by a number of United Church learning centres. The first sessions begin in September. [Please click here for details.](#)

### **Korean United Church: Jesus and the Marginalized Panel Discussion**

On October 18, at 5:30 pm (MDT), you are invited to join an online panel discussion of Jesus and the Marginalized, the fourth and latest book from *An Intercultural Adventure*, an ongoing series of seminars for Koreans in The United Church of Canada. Theologians, clergy, and a United Church national staff person will discuss how this book relates Jesus Christ to the hopes, joys and struggles of Koreans in the United Church. The panel will assess its attempt to enculturate Christology into the Korean diaspora context in Canada, its meaning for the United Church as an intercultural church, and its contribution to Asian American theology. Non-Koreans are welcome to attend and join the conversation. The panel discussion will be in English. It will be followed by Korean and English-speaking break-out groups. Participants can indicate which they prefer when registering for the event. Registration link: [united-church.zoom.us/j/97926572021](https://united-church.zoom.us/j/97926572021). To buy the book, please click [here](#).

### **Hold Space for Important Justice Days this Fall**

This is just a small reminder of important spaces for education and prayer coming up this fall. We'll include links to resources as they are available closer to the dates. We hope these will give you extra support for putting the Gospel and prophetic calls to justice and peace into worship and programs.

**Monday October 4:** some communities will hold vigils in support of missing and murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit people. This is an important part of our church's commitment to the TRC Calls to Action and Apology. Please check local options. We will post information about online events open to all.

**Sunday October 17:** International Day for the Elimination of Poverty. Look for resources from the national church and our related Regional Council networks, with a special focus on learning about [Guaranteed Livable Income](#). Also keep in mind a six-part series on bridging from charity to ending poverty, starting **October 13** at [United in Learning](#).

### **United in Learning**

[Click here](#) to find out about Fall 2021 learning opportunities that are being offered by United in Learning. Upcoming topics include webinars for Church Treasurers, Bridging Poverty and Privilege, Pathways Toward Regeneration, and Racial Justice workshops. There is always something new, so visit the site often.

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