



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Gord Waldie, Chairperson

November 3, 2021

Friends and Siblings in Christ,

May the Grace and Peace of Christ be with you all!

At our Annual Meeting in May we passed a proposal encouraging and urging us, as a Regional Council and as individual people and Communities of Faith, to respond to the reality of racism within our communities. At our last Executive Meeting we took time to discuss more deeply how that proposal can be put into action.

Whether we choose to admit it or not, racism is a part of life in our cities, in our towns, even in our faith communities. Some instances of racism, often the most violent or egregious, make it into our evening news. Many of them happen without most of us even being aware. Some of them happen in our presence and we do not notice or recognize that racism is present.

In 2020 the United Church of Canada made a choice to work towards being an anti-racist denomination. As members of the United Church, as Communities of Faith within the United Church, we are invited and urged to join in this work. This could take the form of intentional study and discussions in our local contexts. It could take the form of naming that anything which denies that all our neighbours are created in the Image of God (racism, homophobia and heterosexism, sexism, transphobia – to name a few) is unacceptable and sinful. It could take the form of actively resisting those same things. It could take the form of participating in the national church's *40 Days of Engagement of Anti-Racism*. It is my belief that if we are to live as if the Realm of God, the Reign of Shalom is real and present in our midst we must act on those things that shatter shalom and fight against the Realm of God.

As we on Executive discussed what it might mean for us as a Regional Council to take on this work we knew we needed people to guide us. When we talked about becoming an Affirming Ministry we set up a Task Group to guide us. The Affirming Task Group is not doing the work for us, they are leading us as a Regional Council in doing the work. To become an intentionally anti-racist regional council we need the same thing. So, we are looking for people with passion to join a Task Group that will help us all learn what it means to be intentionally and actively anti-racist as a part of living out our calling to be the church, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil (and probably give us a few nudges or challenges along the way).

If you are interested in helping to lead Northern Spirit Regional Council in this way, or if you can think of someone who would be a great resource for this work, please contact the Regional Council Office (northernspirit@united-church.ca; or 780.435.3995).

Racism is a reality in our culture. But God is at work, calling us to rethink how we build our communities. Becoming anti-racist will improve our understanding of what it means to follow the God who created this wonderfully diverse world and called it all very good. It will remind us that we are called to love the whole world as we have been loved.

God has called us to do this thing. How will we respond?

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gord Waldie", is centered on a light beige rectangular background.

Gord Waldie
Chairperson of NSRC Executive and Convenor of the 2021 Annual Meeting.

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Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive and
Convenor of the 2021 Annual Meeting