



# NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

## The United Church of Canada

### Regional Council News

November 23, 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 received the news of the death of Liam Hoekstra, son of the Rev. Deborah Hoekstra, on November 17, 2021. We offer our prayers and sympathy to Deborah and her brother, RW, and their family, as well as Darrel and the others who have been Liam's extended family of caregivers throughout his 21 years of life. Please hold all of them in prayer as they walk this sad and difficult journey.

#### Covenanting Service

A Covenanting Service for the Vermilion River Pastoral Charge, the Rev. Igbekele Segun and the Northern Spirit Regional Council, will be held on **Sunday, December 5**, 2:00 pm, at First United Church, 4918 52 Avenue, Vermilion, Alberta.

#### Featured News ...

##### Assistance for Flooded Communities in British Columbia

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council has [updated us on options](#) for supporting flood-affected communities in the province. We have confirmed there will not be a Mission and Service appeal at this moment; the longer-term impacts of the floods and associated trauma will be part of ongoing conversations. If in doubt, please contact the Pacific Mountain Regional Council office, 1-800-934-0434 (toll free in BC) or 604-431-0434, or [pacificmountain@united-church.ca](mailto:pacificmountain@united-church.ca).

##### Leadership Counts National Survey

To help us more fully live out our commitments to equity, diversity, and the full participation of everyone, the United Church has launched **Leadership Counts**. This voluntary survey will help us to learn more about the breadth of identities present among the United Church's ministry personnel, staff, and members of national committees (including their racial identities, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, and more). What we learn will help us to develop strategies to support who we are and more effectively meet our commitments. Invitations with links to the survey have been sent to all ministry personnel and all lay people serving on national committees. **Because each individual has received a personalized link, please do not forward your email to others to complete.** (Check your junk folder if you have not received yours). The survey is voluntary, but the more everyone shares, the more we can recognize the wide diversity in United Church leadership, so we encourage you to participate.

You can find out more about **Leadership Counts**, including answers to frequently asked questions, on the United Church [web site](#). If you have questions or concerns about the survey please contact the staff coordinating this project through [leadershipcounts@united-church.ca](mailto:leadershipcounts@united-church.ca).

### **Giving Tuesday: YEGO Rwanda**

For several years, St. Andrew's United Church, Edmonton, has supported and raised funds for YEGO Rwanda, an organization created to provide programming and assistance for survivors of the 1994 genocide, and to work towards a vision of a better future for the people of Rwanda. Next **Tuesday, November 30**, St. Andrew's will be participating in Giving Tuesday for YEGO Rwanda, and invites others to join them. For more information about the St. Andrew's campaign, please click [here](#). For more information about YEGO Rwanda, please click [here](#).

### **Deep Winter Song**

15 years ago, Gord Oaks Jr. created a beautiful Winter Solstice celebration called *Deep Winter Song*, an "acoustic" musical presentation exploring and celebrating the Mystery of the Winter Solstice, Christmas, and this wondrous dark season of winter. On **December 19**, at 7:00 pm (MST), you can join for a night that will include traditional and modern songs of winter, inspiring stories & poetry, angelic voices, delightful and mystical moods, beautiful projections, a time of Sacred Sound Journey, and a Solstice Fire Ritual. Deep Winter Song will be presented virtually through Eventbrite. For more information, please see the [Poster](#), or to purchase tickets please visit [Eventbrite](#).

### **The Nativity and Palestine Today: Resources and Actions**

A group of United Church people from across the Prairies and Ontario have gathered some resources for Advent, Christmas, and the **November 29** United Nations' International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Have a look at the actions, events, and worship resources [here](#).

### **Advent Resources!**

The season of Advent is almost upon us, and [Advent Unwrapped](#) is here to support you with at-home activities, worship resources, blog posts, and lots more! Keep up to date with all the latest news and content by checking out the [Facebook page](#) or subscribing to [the newsletter](#).

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

### **2022 Multifaith Calendar Now Available**

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action is a non-profit society. Currently it is selling the 2022 Multifaith Calendar (published in Canada) which shows the major and minor holidays, feasts and fasts, of thirteen different religions. There is a description of each festival and a complete list for the whole year arranged by religion. Calendars cost \$16 each, plus shipping, and can be ordered through the society's [web site](#).

### **2021 No Room in the Inn Campaign**

Since 1990, the Edmonton and District Council of Churches, through its *No Room In the Inn* Committee, has coordinated this ecumenical justice housing initiative based on the Biblical story of Mary and Joseph seeking a safe place to stay when there was no room in the inn. This annual campaign invites people of Edmonton and area churches to think about those in our community who do not have adequate and safe housing. During this pandemic when we have had to spend so much time "at home" we have

become more aware than ever of the importance of a safe place to live. The 2021 *No Room In the Inn* campaign is now under way, and is inviting Communities of Faith to support L'Arche Edmonton, which provides supportive housing and help for adults with special needs. With the funding raised in this year's campaign, L'Arche Edmonton will be renovating and upgrading one of their seven houses in the Edmonton area. For more information about the campaign, please see the 2021 [Poster](#) and [Brochure](#), or email [nrii.edm@gmail.com](mailto:nrii.edm@gmail.com). For more information about L'Arche Edmonton, please visit their [web site](#).

### **Master of Theological Studies at St. Stephen's College**

St. Stephen's College, Edmonton is now accepting applications for the 2022-2023 academic year to all of our programs, including Master of Theological Studies, and Doctor of Ministry. Applicants interested in various dimensions of human services, care, and social transformation are invited to explore [newly crafted MTS programs](#) in "Faith and Culture", "Spiritual Care", and "Contemplation, the Arts, and Social Engagement". For more information, please contact [st.stephens@ualberta.ca](mailto:st.stephens@ualberta.ca) or 780.439.7311.

## **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.

### **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.

### **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 ...**

### **40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism Continues: Final Week's Highlights**

This week's topics (from November 23 (Day 37)), include presentations that explore anti-racism in worship, migrant justice, access to fresh water in Indigenous communities, and more, including: [Light and Dark Images in Advent](#), by Adele Halliday and Alydia Smith; [Fresh Off the Boat](#), by Ariel Saigan;

[Poverty is Made](#), by Honarine Scott and Springwater Hester-Meawassige; and [Concluding the 40 Days](#), by Adele Halliday. The links above will bring you to each day's content; or, you can explore everything on the [40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism website](#).

### **National Webinar for Church Treasurers**

The next installment in this continuing series is on **November 24**, at 5:00 pm (MST). [Click here for details!](#)

### **Faithful Footprints Workshops**

On **November 30**, at 12:00 noon (MST), learn how to access up to \$30,000 in grants for green retrofits of church buildings, to improve energy efficiency or invest in renewable energy, as well as resources, energy efficiency tips and tricks. Join us! Please contact [jhisco@faithcommongood.org](mailto:jhisco@faithcommongood.org) for more information, or to register.

### **In Grief and Hope at Christmas**

Celebrating Christmas can be challenging for those grieving the loss of a loved one. Providence Renewal Centre invites us to join with others to create an intentional time of remembrance during this season when emotions and traditions can heighten the experience of loss and grief. Explore ways to experience joy amidst the grief, and to celebrate memories, and allow a special time to mourn amidst the Christmas season. This evening event will be held **Tuesday, December 7**, from 7:00 to 8:45 pm (MST). For more information, or to register by **December 1**, visit the [Providence Renewal Centre](#) web site.

### **CCS Friday: Transgressive Devotion**

Join in **on Friday, December 10**, 11:00 am 12:00 noon (MST), for an online conversation with Natalie Wigg-Stevenson on her new book [Transgressive Devotion: Theology as Performance Art](#). In it, she argues that theology done as performance art stops trying to describe who God is, and starts trying to make God appear. CCS Fridays are workshops hosted by the Centre for Christian Studies, to explore how we might respond faithfully to emerging issues in local contexts, and are open to anyone who might be interested. You must [register to participate](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email about joining the meeting.

### **United in Learning**

See and share all the latest information about events from United-in-Learning! [Click here](#) to find out about all of the learning opportunities offered by United in Learning, including *A John the Baptist Christmas*, *Webinars for Church Treasurers*, *Anti-Racism* and *Music Ministry*, and much, much more. There is always something new, so visit the site often.

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