



# **NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL**

## The United Church of Canada

### **Regional Council News**

December 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/>.**

#### **Advent Greetings for the Northern Spirit Region**

The staff of the Regional Council extends to everyone its warm wishes for a blessed Advent and Christmas Season. We look forward to the hope, peace, joy and love that we anticipate during Advent, and the renewal that is possible with the birth of the Christ child.

The Regional Council Office will be closed for the Christmas Break from December 20 to January 3.

This week's Newsletter is the final edition for 2021. The next edition will be January 11, 2022.

#### **Welcome to the Northern Spirit Region**

We have just received word in the Regional Council that the Rev. Dr. Dale Johnson, OM-Retired, has moved into our Regional Council. We extend a warm welcome and look forward to getting to know him.

#### **Covenanting Service**

The Covenanting Service for Linda Roberts, Hillcrest United Church, Fort Nelson, and the Northern Spirit Regional Council will be held on Sunday, December 12, at 2:00 pm (MT). You are invited to join the Zoom gathering with this [Link](#) (Meeting ID: 856 6350 7414, Passcode: 508465). To dial in by telephone, you can find your local number [here](#).

#### **Appreciation and Congratulations**

We wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and congratulations to the Rev. Stephen Sparks, who will be retiring at the end of this month. We are grateful for Stephen's (over) 36 years of service to our Pastoral Charges, the former Presbyteries and Conference, and now, the Regional Council.

#### **Farewell from Affirming Coordinator Shylo Rosborough**

For several years Shylo has worked alongside the Regional Council in its Affirming journey, and before that with the former Edmonton Presbytery. He is moving on to an exciting opportunity! We take this chance to thank Shylo for all his accompaniment, wisdom, and knowledge, and his presence with Edmonton and area ministries, the wider Regional Council, and the Affirming task group of the Regional Council. He writes, "I want this message to serve as a thank you to all of the people I have met along the way. I want to thank you for all of your hard work, the joy you bring, the passion you have, and most importantly I want to thank you for your acceptance of me. I truly felt loved and accepted in every single space I have visited and every single one of you holds a special place in my heart. I want to thank you all for the best 2.5 years, and thank you for showing me that there are faith communities all over Alberta as well as Canada that care and want to support the LGBTQ community. I just want to say that you are like

family to me, and I really hope that any queer individuals that come into your spaces feel the same way.” Click here for Shylo’s [video goodbye](#), and [here](#) for the accessible text. Blessings on the way, Shylo!

## 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).

### **Moderator’s Advent Message**

In his Advent message, Moderator Richard Bott reminds us that our Advent preparations might help the light of Christ’s love to shine in the night’s sky. Click [here](#) for the video message, or written transcript.

### **A Message from Faith Lift Campus Ministry**

At the University of Alberta, all students, staff and faculty members are welcome to seek support from the Faith Lift Chaplain, or to participate in programs offered by Faith Lift Campus Ministry, sponsored by St Paul’s United Church, Edmonton, on behalf of The United Church of Canada. It is financially supported by individuals, congregations, groups, Mission and Service, and Northern Spirit Regional Council. [Please click here](#) to read a message from Denise Davis Taylor, Chaplain for Faith Lift Campus Ministry, and consider how you can support Campus Ministry as a Legacy Project to continue the good work of The United Church of Canada into the future.

### **TUXIS Parliament of Alberta**

The TUXIS Parliament of Alberta is the longest continuously running Youth Parliament in Canada and, for the last century, has represented the youth of Alberta from its diverse communities and ridings. Our Parliament engages youth aged 15 to 21 years, across the province in leadership activities, professional development, public speaking, and informing them about the parliamentary process. The flagship event, the Winter Session, features week-long debate in the Alberta Legislature on important issues, and has produced some of the finest leaders of our province for the last 100 years, including past and current MLAs, Queen’s Court members, civil servants, and professionals. In 2021, the 102<sup>nd</sup> Winter Session will be held from **December 26 to 31**. A [Press Release](#) has been issued by this year’s Premier, Yuvraj Singh, and more information and registration can be found on the [TUXIS web site](#).

### **Full Mission and Service Boxing Day Service Available Now**

This year, Boxing Day lands on a Sunday. In order to support ministry leaders planning two back-to-back services, and because Boxing Day has social justice roots, the Mission and Service Team has prepared a full [Boxing Day Service](#). Reflections can be offered by one worship leader or many. They can be shared separately or gathered into one sermon. The liturgy also contains prayers, hymn suggestions, and children’s time.

## General Council 44 Equity Support Team Opportunities

The General Council is looking for six individuals to form a team to support General Council 44 as it strives to be a space of equitable participation and decision-making. [Please have a look at the details here](#). The closing date is January 10 (not Nov 24 as noted on the website.)

## Invitation: Record a Scripture Reading for General Council 44

The Worship Planning Team for the 44th General Council invites you to participate! We are seeking a variety of ways to present the scripture reading for possible use in the worship for GC44, happening online between February and August 2022. We invite you to submit a video recording for Mark 8:27-30. This could be you reading, dramatizing, telling, or living the theme of the passage. This telling of the story could be indoors, outdoors, in multiple languages, or however you imagine it. [Click here for the full information](#) and to share this invitation with others. What you send in might be used during a worship service throughout the span of the General Council. The deadline for submissions is **December 15, 2021**. Submit your video here: <http://ow.ly/2W6a50GRIUw>

## In Other News ...

### Reminder: 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](#).

### Gifts with Vision Resource

This year, the United Church is providing the widest choice of gifts ever on [giftswithvision.ca](http://giftswithvision.ca)! Celebrate special occasions and make a difference in the world through Gifts with Vision – with no excessive packaging and no exchanges. Select gifts online now or anytime at [giftswithvision.ca](http://giftswithvision.ca) and help save and transform lives without even leaving home.

### 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](#).

### 40 Days of Anti-Racism Wrap-Up

Thank you to all of you in the Northern Spirit region who were able to take part in any aspect of the “40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism”, in community with the wider church. The forty-day journey has now ended, but the trail to living into anti-racism continues. All resources are available online: a survey to help with future work and a retreat opportunity for **December 21** are the more immediate opportunities. [Please see the full summary here](#).

### **Advance Notice: Regional Ice and Snow Art Competition!**

As a wise person once said: “If you choose not to find joy in the snow, you will have less joy in your life, but still the same amount of snow.” To help us find joy in snow and ice this continuing COVID winter, and to help us strengthen community, we’re holding an all ages Regional Council Snow and Ice Art Competition. This is your advance notice! This is your chance to dust off your creativity and your communal spirit (and your good mittens), to dream up some plans for freezing art or magnificent snow sculptures or mighty castles, and to gather your team. Our theme: *Love our Neighbours*. Our timing: mid January to late February. Who: everyone! Kids and elders especially welcome. Prizes, judging, and ways to upload photos and videos of your masterpieces: details to come soon. In the meantime, [please share this PDF summary and invitation](#).

### **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 ...**

#### **Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry**

As we emerge into a new context of living with COVID, The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning is able to again offer the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program. Twelve, weekly, 3-hour online sessions will be held from 8:00 to 11:00 am (Mountain), on Mondays, **January 10 to April 4, 2022**. Class time will offer creative uses of on-line tools for large group, small group and individual reflections, conversations and activities, facilitated by a variety of resource people. Activities between classes will help participants engage course content in

their local contexts. For more information, visit: [www.interculturalleadership.ca/duimonline](http://www.interculturalleadership.ca/duimonline). For information about bursaries, contact: [schmidt@councilofchurches.ca](mailto:schmidt@councilofchurches.ca).

### **Anti-Racism and Your Music Ministry**

Is it racist to sing hymns or anthems from a culture that is not your own? Should worship leaders be concerned or enthusiastic when they want to share a new piece of music that doesn't come out of North America or Western Europe? To explore these and other key questions, join this 90-minute webinar, at United in Learning on **January 12, 2022**, beginning at 11:00 am (MST). [Click here to register](#).

### **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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