



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

January 18, 2022

Announcements and Information of interest the people of the Northern Spirit Region. If you have news to share or information about an upcoming event, please send it to Kathy Jackson, Office Administrator: 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/>.

Coming Soon: Changes for this E-Newsletter

After considering feedback from subscribers, and aiming to make newsletters more accessible, the editors have decided publish the “news” and “events” sections separately. Every other week, we’ll release “news” highlights from the Regional Council, with a short list of wider church and ecumenical/interfaith news and resources. In the alternating weeks, we’ll send an “events” summary, listing upcoming events in date order, with a section for larger events and regular annual occurrences. Event announcements must include a date and time, and will be removed once they are over. These changes will begin **February 1**, with a “News” issue. We will continue these new practices for 3 to 5 months, and ask for feedback in early May. Because of the two-week rotation, we will establish submission deadlines, publicized in each edition. “Family News” will be included in either issue, as it is received in the Regional Council Office.

Featured News ...

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

[Click here for this year's resources](#) for **January 18-25**, offered by the Middle East Council of Churches. Please note that in-person Week of Prayer for Christian Unity worship services may be cancelled due to the pandemic; please be sure to double check.

A New Affirming Ministry in the Northern Spirit Region!

You are invited to join the Spirit of Hope United Church, Edmonton, on **February 13, 2022**, at 1:30 pm, to celebrate the community of faith's decision last June to become an Affirming Ministry. People can attend in-person (under covid protocols) at 7909 82 Avenue NW in Edmonton, or online at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQjtHaUrQltTzkzMqUoV1ug>.

Save the Dates! Pastoral Relations Liaison Training Workshops

The Regional Council will be offering 3 workshops in February which we hope all ministry personnel and interested lay leaders will attend. We are hoping the material we cover will not only explain to Liaisons and ministry personnel how to guide Communities of Faith in creating their Profiles, but also help ministry personnel to understand what they are seeing when they search for a new position. And now that ChurchHub is developed and stabilizing, we can actually tell people how it works (more or less), and show how access by ministry personnel and Communities of Faith differs. The workshops are 90 minutes long (7:00 pm to 8:30 pm MST), and are scheduled as follows:

Session One: Wednesday, February 9th: All Communities of Faith are to have a “Living Faith Story” posted in their ChurchHub account. What is it? Who writes it? And, where do they start?

Session Two: Wednesday, February 16th: Applications, Interviews and Negotiations! Need we say more?

Session Three: Wednesday February 23rd: Guiding a Community of Faith on using ChurchHub. What does their account look like? What’s in there (statistics!)? And, how does it work?

Further information will be included in an upcoming Newsletter.

Stewardship Best Practices

What would it mean for you to “raise more money” for your Community of Faith? More impact? Less stress? More gratitude? More lives changed? *Stewardship Best Practices*, a module of ***Called to be the Church: The Journey***, can help. This **March** there are opportunities for congregations AND community ministries (chaplains, camps, outreach ministries, etc). Gather a team and talk about what makes your ministry worth supporting, get some tips on how to tell your story, invite generosity, express gratitude, and more! [Check here](#) to learn more about *Called to be the Church: The Journey*. If you want dates and details for either the training for congregations or community ministries, contact Vicki Nelson vnelson@united-church.ca (1-800-268-3781 Ext. 2045)

Regional Snow and Ice Art Competition

We’re stuck with COVID for another winter. Let’s create some beauty and community out of it! Our Regional Council is hosting a low-key competition whose goals are to bring us together safely across all ages, spark creativity, and show love for our neighbours. Think especially about children and youth, and how your local seniors’/ elders’ community or building can be included (can you build on their lawn with permission? Decorate trees outside the window with ice ornaments?) Any team or individual can register, or can simply post photos and follow along. Full information is available under “Events”. [Here’s our public Facebook group](#). Please join! [And here’s the latest update](#).

In Other News ...

Continuing Work on the TRC, Residential Schools and Burials (Updated)

The United Church has grouped all resources together on one page of its web site, entitled, [Bringing the Children Home](#). Please have a look for an overview of our church’s national commitments, and the work that lies ahead. [A media release is available here](#). In related, and good, news, the government of Alberta recently announced it will [review and postpone proposed changes to the Alberta K-6 curriculum](#). The Regional Council called for this at its last Annual Meeting, out of strong concerns that the proposed social studies curriculum did not respect commitments Alberta made to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding respectful teaching of Indigenous histories and the residential school system.

Attention all Ministry Personnel

Happy New Year! Don’t celebrate too much, but the 2022 Annual Declaration for ministry personnel is now open, until **May 15, 2022**. It’s free, and only takes a few minutes. Just log into your account on churchhub.ca to get started. (Remember that Chrome or Edge are preferred browsers for ChurchHub; Safari is not optimal). If you make your mandatory Annual Declaration (about whether you’ve had criminal charges in the last year or not) each year, you do not need to get a new police records check! Need help accessing ChurchHub? Please contact ministry@united-church.ca.

General Council 44 and Commissioners: Overview

Unbelievable as it may seem, the upcoming General Council 44 is the first since the major church restructuring in January 2019. There are many changes to how General Council will take place, above and beyond the reality that it will also be only online. [Please click here for a basic overview](#), and share this link as needed. [Click here to see the main GC44 website](#).

And, while Commissioners do not “represent” the Regional Council or group they are drawn from, they are an important connecting point for us all. [Click here for a list and biographies of General Council Commissioners and Alternates](#) from Northern Spirit Regional Council.

The United Church Academic Awards and Scholarships Sub-Committee Needs You

Individuals with the skills and experience to assess the merits of various applications are being sought for the Academic Awards and Scholarships Sub-Committee. This committee awards grants and scholarships for theological and academic work, including the McGeachy Scholarship. Opening date: January 5, 2022. Closing date: **January 27, 2022**. [Click here for more information](#). To apply for this vacancy, please [express interest or nominate someone](#).

Worship Planning: February is Black History Month

The celebration of February as Black History (or African Heritage) Month continues all through February. Officially recognized in Canada since 1996, this is a time to honour the contributions and struggles of peoples of African descent. [Click here for a wide range of worship resources](#). Please see information about an important opportunity below, under “Events and Learning Opportunities ...”

Stewardship News and Resources: Discover Your Gifts - Share Your Gifts

Five weeks of sermons, prayers, liturgies, and children’s/youth resources for the season of Epiphany make combining worship with stewardship easy. Now available on the United Church [Stewardship in Worship](#) webpage. And: your Annual Giving Program is here! The newly updated resources for the Called to Be the Church: Congregational Giving Program are now available. The giving kit will not be mailed to congregations this year. It is available [from the United Church Bookstore as a free digital download](#) or the regular paper kit.

St. Andrew’s College Seeks Chief Administrative Officer

St. Andrew’s College invites applications the full-time position of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), commencing March 1, 2022. [For more information, have a look here](#).

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.

COVID Won’t End Until It Ends for Everyone

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, Provincial and Territorial Government web sites for updated guidance and direction related to the pandemic: [Health Canada](#); and the provinces of [Alberta](#) and [British Columbia](#); and the [Northwest Territories](#).

Events and Learning Opportunities ...

Dialogue Circles: Listening to Indigenous Voices: A Guide on Justice and Right Relationships

Three sessions will be held over the course of 3 months, **January 19**, **February 16** and **March 16**, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM (MST). Each group of 5-8 participants, led by one facilitator, will meet three times for 2 hours in length. To learn more or to register, please visit: <http://tiny.cc/LTIVcircles>. To learn more about the dialogue process, please visit [Listening to Indigenous Voices](#).

Support Circles for People of Colour in the United Church

On **Thursday, January 20**, 2:00-3:30 pm (MST) Mountain, all people of colour (including those who identify as Indigenous, racialized, mixed-race, and/or non-white) are invited to join this monthly time of sharing, mutual support and community building. This is a monthly gathering, held on the third Thursday of the month (next gathering is **February 17**), for those who are looking for support around experiences of racism in the United Church. To join, please [register here](#).

An Ecumenical Milestone for Theological Education!

The partner schools of the Saskatoon Theological Union are pleased to invite you to a short online service of worship, 10 am (MST), **Thursday, January 20**, as we sign and celebrate our new STU Covenant, as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Representatives of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad, and St. Andrew's College will give brief reflections on the significance of this Covenant in the deepening relationship we share together in the task and joy of theological education. For more information, please contact Shawn at shawn.sanfordbeck@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca, or call 306 441 6367.

Event Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87803664220>. Meeting ID: 878 0366 4220

Emmanuel College News and Upcoming Events

You are invited to check this out. Broadview Magazine recently published a piece that highlights the Emmanuel College [Ministry Integration Seminar](#) in the [Master of Divinity program](#) along with [Continuing Education Offerings](#).

Thursday January 20, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon (MST): [Virtual Vocations Fair](#). This is an opportunity to connect with Emmanuel graduates as they share about their work in various spiritually-informed careers. In addition, a representative from the Canadian Armed Forces will present on chaplaincy careers in the military.

Saturday, March 5, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm (MST): [Day with Emmanuel – Virtual Open House](#). Join live on Zoom to experience the Emmanuel Community. Meet current faculty and students and learn about the programs and applications process.

Also, through its [Centre for Religion and Its Contexts](#), consider joining these three workshops from the "Things They Didn't Teach Me in Seminary" Seminar Series:

Managing Conflict in the Congregation: February 4, 7-10 a.m. (MST), Online. [Click here for details and registration](#).

Anthropology for Ministry: March 11, 8-10 a.m. (MST), Online. [Click here for details and registration](#).

Engaging with Black History Month in the United Church: A Conversation

On **Wednesday, January 26**, from Noon to 1:30 pm (MST), you are invited to learn more about Black History Month. How are Communities of Faith engaging with Black History Month? Join this Zoom gathering to share and learn about what's happening across the Church, as we reflect together on what meaningful and justice-led engagement can look like. [Register here](#).

A Cup of Hope: Online Festival of Faith

From **Monday, January 31 to Friday, February 4, 2022**, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm (MST), you are invited to join this event, sponsored by the northern ministries of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council. Presenters will share about what a vibrant, viable, and vital Community of Faith looks like, regardless of size, context, or amount of paid ministry time and staff. We're inviting you to take a cup of hope from four streams of engagement: Thriving and Hopeful (each morning a different look at what thriving looks like now and into the next decade); Hope in the Theory of Change (how to apply what you've heard and learned from the whole festival); Hopeful Decisions Matter (how to make healthy decisions that build up community); and Hope in Ministry (tools and stories for ministry: AFFIRM, pastoral care, First Third, and reconciliation). You can [register here](#). For more information please contact [the Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier](#).

Godly Play Training

It is not too late to register for the upcoming online Godly Play Training scheduled for **January 29** (8:30-12:30 PST/9:30 start MST); **February 12** (8:30-12:30); **March 12** (8:30-4:30) and **April 9** (8:30-4:30) for full accreditation. The Training will be led by Godly Play Trainers from Alberta and British Columbia. Anne, Mary and Ruth hope that you can join them. [Click here for more information, or 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, *Webinars for Church Treasurers*, *Daring to Share: What Do You Need to Know about Anglican-United Shared Ministry*, and much, much more. There is always something new, so visit the site often.

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