



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

January 25, 2022

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. 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/>. The deadline for submission of news articles or event announcements is the Friday before publication of the Newsletter.

Family News

The Regional Council Office has been notified that the Rev. Lorne Heffelfinger, late of Edmonton, passed away on January 13, 2022. Lorne served as Ministry Personnel in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and then in Leduc, Beaumont and South Cooking Lake, Alberta, before and after his retirement in 1994. We offer our prayers and sympathy to his family and friends.

The Regional Council Office has also been notified that the Rev. Bob Seal, late of Edmonton, passed away on January 15, 2022. Bob served as Ministry Personnel in Forestburg, Edmonton, Vegreville, and in Goodfish Lake and Saddle Lake, before and after his retirement in 1996. We offer our prayers and sympathy to his family and friends.

Northern Spirit Regional E-Newsletter Changes (Updated)

As you may know, the editors have decided to publish the “news” and “events” sections separately. Every other week, we’ll release “news” highlights from the Regional Council, and in the alternating weeks, we’ll send out an “events” summary, listing upcoming gatherings or learning 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. Deadlines for submission of news articles and/or upcoming events will be the Friday before publication of the relevant issue, and specific dates will be communicated in each issue.

Upcoming Submission Deadlines: Friday, January 28, for the February 1 News Issue; and **Friday, February 4**, for the February 8 Events Issue.

Featured News ...

Resources for Online and Hybrid Congregational Annual Meetings

We’re edging into that time of year again. Community of Faith Annual Meetings are an important point of community and decision making, but pose particular challenges in a pandemic. And we’re all so tired of having to think about that. We hope these resources will make your important work a little easier as you discern and plan. Here’s a summary of the continuing different-from-normal [requirements related to your meeting](#). Please note that this includes a continued exemption on the requirement for an annual meeting, lasting (at this point) until **June 30, 2022**.

For voting, have a look at our [2021 article detailing how best to carry out a vote online](#). And, lastly, here's a [new resource for those of you considering a blend of in person and online meeting](#).

Korea Peace Appeal: Our Partners Ask us to Bring our Voices

The Korean War began in 1950. While open clashes ceased in 1953 with the signing of an armistice, a peace treaty has not yet been established and the war is not over. For more than 70 years, the Korean people have endured a constant state of hostility and war. The [Korea Peace Appeal](#) is a global campaign that seeks to collect 100 million signatures by 2023, the 70th anniversary of the armistice. The National Council of Churches in Korea, a longtime United Church partner, has challenged The United Church of Canada to add ten thousand signatures by the summer of 2022. [Click here for the full information and a link to the petition](#). Both North and South Korea have used the conflict as an excuse to perpetuate violations of human rights to maintain power, countless resources have been focused on military spending rather than on people's health and welfare, and millions of Korean families remain separated from each other on opposite sides of the border sealed in 1953. Yet the people of Korea have not lost hope. May we join our voices with theirs in this global call for true peace.

News from the Regional Council Executive

The January Newsletter from the Executive is now posted to the Regional Council web site. Please click on [Executive Newsletter](#) to see what the Executive has been doing on our behalf.

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 Profile, 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 ministry personnel and Community of Faith accounts differ. 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?

Regional Snow and Ice Art Competition: Share your Photos

More teams are signing up to share their group art, sculptures, or mighty snow forts. Any team or individual can register if they want a shot at a prize, or they can simply post photos and follow along. Share your photos with us! [Here's our public Facebook group](#). [And here's the latest update](#).

General Council 44 and Commissioners: An Overview (Updated)

The 44th General Council begins on **February 13**. Here are the [details about important upcoming dates](#). [Please click here for a basic overview](#), and share this link with others 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 within this Regional Council. Please keep all of the Commissioners, resource people, guests, and staff in your prayers.

In Other News ...

Lesser Evils: Lenten Reflection Book for the Whole Church

We confront dilemmas every day: Do I wear this mask? Do we close in-person gatherings? Do I take this parking space? The United Church's latest Lenten book and study, *Lesser Evils*, supported through Mission and Service, is all about coping with uncertainty. Who doesn't need help coping these days? [Click here for full information.](#)

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.](#)

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 (chaplancies, 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)

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 ...

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](#).

A New Affirming Ministry in the Northern Spirit Region!

Everyone is 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>.

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 you need to know about Anglican-United Shared Ministry*, *Preaching the Big Questions*, *Racial Justice Workshop*, and much, much more. There is always something new, so visit the site often.

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