



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

February 1, 2022

Articles and Information of interest to the people of the Northern Spirit Region.

If you have news to share, 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. Our Community of Faith Events Calendar is open 24/7 for posting about 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 word in the Regional Council Office of the death of Peter Pastuck, husband of Mary Ann Pastuck, DM, on January 25, 2022. A private family service was held on January 31. We offer our prayers and sympathy to Mary Ann and her family.

We also received word of the death of James New, father of the Rev. Chris New, on January 30, 2022. We offer our deepest sympathy to Chris and his family.

Featured News ...

They're Almost Here! Changes for this E-Newsletter (Updated)

The editors will soon publish the "News" and "Events" sections of this Newsletter separately. Every other week, we'll release "News" highlights from the Regional Council, including 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. "Family News" will be included in either issue, as it is received in the Regional Council Office. These changes are now set to begin **February 15**, with an "Events" issue. In early May, we will ask for feedback. Because of the two-week rotation, submission deadlines will be listed in each issue. Submission deadlines will be on the Fridays for each of the Newsletters. Next Events-only deadline: **Friday February 11**. Next News-only deadline: **Friday, February 18**.

Have a Heart Day

From now through February 14, all United Church Communities of Faith are invited to take some time by February 14 to mark a different kind of Valentine's Day. Have a Heart Day is a project of the [First Nations Child and Family Caring Society](#). Led by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, this non-profit organization works with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people of all ages to educate about, and advocate for, the rights of Indigenous kids across Canada, working directly with Indigenous kids and communities to do this. Have a Heart Day is about kids, and we hope non-Indigenous kids can learn about the different experiences of kids in Canada and take action out of a sense of compassion. We also hope Indigenous kids can speak from their hearts about what they want and need. For more information, ideas for activities, and resources, visit the [United Church Have a Heart Day](#) web page. And have a look here for suggestion on [Regional Council Snow and Ice Art Project to Have a Heart Day!](#)

2022 World Day of Prayer Service Planning

World Day of Prayer 2022, with the theme, *I Know the Plans I Have for You* (based on Jeremiah 29:1-14), will be **Friday, March 4**. World Day of Prayer is a movement that invites us to enrich our faith experience with those of Christians from other countries and cultures, and to bring hope to women touched by injustice. This year's service was written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. If your Community of Faith is not planning a service, please plan to join one hosted by another local church. A service video has been produced and will be available for anyone to view after February 1. Go to www.wicc.org and click on "World Day of Prayer 2022 Service Video". This video will be shown on many local cable TV channels: check your local cable network listings for Friday, March 4.

Pastoral Relations Liaison Training Workshops (Updated)

The Regional Council is offering 3 workshops in February which we hope all ministry personnel and interested lay leaders will attend. The material covered 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. 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 2 hours in length (7:00 pm to 9:00 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 an assorted variety of pitfalls and possibilities!

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?

We would like to know how many people might attend each of the sessions, so please send a brief email message to northernspirit@united-church.ca, or call Kathy Jackson at 780.435.3995.

Zoom Link (all sessions): <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/96452997146?pwd=MWhDUkNEUys4aWh4bWlwWDMxYzI4dz09>.

Meeting ID: 964 5299 7146; Password: 656653.

To join by telephone (Please use local number if feasible): 587 328 1099; or 855 703 8985 (Toll-free).

iCalendar (.ics) files (if desired, you can download and import the following to your calendar system):

https://united-church.zoom.us/meeting/tJlpcuuhpzwrHtLCSukRzbyTZwSTJerrPvkj/ics?icsToken=98tyKuCuqj4oE92SsR2BRowABo_4a_PxmGZcgrdxvyzwCBBYBrCDPVxBph6Asrg

Regional Snow and Ice Art Competition: Share your Photos (Updated)

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](#).

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

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](#). Moderator Richard Bott and the Rev. Dr. Kyongia (Kay) Cho will be hosting a special Korea Peace Appeal Ten Thousand Signature Campaign information session on **Thursday, February 24**, at 12:00 noon (MST), to encourage and support uptake of this campaign. Use [this link](#) to register and find out more.

As well, there is a [special opportunity](#) for young adults aged 18-30 to participate in Korea Peace Encounter with young adults from Korea, the United States, and Canada. The deadline to apply is **February 9**.

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.

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 ...

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](#).

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](#).

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](#).

Reminder to all Ministry Personnel

Please note that 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, 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.

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](#).

Upcoming Events and Learning Opportunities ...

CCS Fridays

Friday February 11, at 10:00 am (MST)

The Centre for Christian Studies is hosting, "Painting Canadian Lives", an online discussion of art and history and learning with artist Kellen Hatanaka. You can find [more information on the CCS website](#) at. Please [register online](#) to participate and to receive the Zoom link.

Queer Virtue Discussion

On **Friday, February 18**, 6:30-8:00 PM (MST), you are invited to join a discussion with the Rev. Liz Edman, author of the book, *Queer Virtue*. She will give us some key insights into what she has discovered in her work and how the elements of "queer virtue" can challenge us to rupture false binaries, "queer" lines that pit people against one another. All identities and backgrounds are welcome -

and bring your questions! Registration is required and free. [Register here for the Zoom link](#). [Learn more about Rev. Edman here](#). [Link to the Facebook event here](#). This event is co-presented by Affirming Connections and Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble, as part of our lead up to National Affirming/PIE Day, which happens every year on March 14! [Learn more here](#).

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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