



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Learning and Gathering

March 8, 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://northernspiritrc.ca/add-your-community-event/>. Upcoming deadlines: Friday, March 11 for the next Events issue, and Friday, March 18 for the next News issue.

Family News

We received word of the death of the Very Reverend Bill Phipps, on March 4, 2022. Bill was known throughout the church, in his pastoral ministry, as an Executive Secretary of the former Alberta and Northwest Conference, and as the 36th Moderator of The United Church of Canada. Bill made a difference in so many ways, and for so many people. He is remembered for the energy that fueled his passion for justice, his compassion, and his keen insights and understanding. We offer our prayers and sympathy to his partner, Carolyn, his family and friends, and the people of Hillhurst United Church, Calgary. Bill's [obituary can be read here](#), and a [statement from the United Church can be found here](#).

We have also received word of the death of the Rev. Evelyn Rigby on March 4. Evelyn served the Cold Lake-Pierceland, Coronation, and Woodland (Whitecourt) Pastoral Charges before and after her retirement in 2012. We offer our prayers and sympathy to Evelyn's family and friends.

News From the Pews ...

Clairmont United Church Celebrates Harold Imes, Ministry Personnel

A very special event occurred at Clairmont United Church, Clairmont, Alberta. Since September 6, 2020, we have had the good fortune of ministry with, for and to our congregation. Finally, on February 20, 2022, we formally covenanted with Harold Kenneth Imes as our new part-time Minister. The Rev. Gord Waldie presided. (Fun fact: years ago, their roles were reversed, when Harold presided in a covenanting for Gord.) We are so blessed that Harold accepted our call. In Harold's words, "My call is to inspire and nurture a caring community, to help others carry the light and hope of love in a weary world, and to remind us all where to find food, drink and rest for the journey." Harold is a very caring person. The best gift he brings to the church and ministry is himself, unique and special, made for good purpose by the Creator. In Truth, in Spirit, in Love, we welcome Harold to our community of caring where we celebrate the Christian Story!

Ottewell United Church Online Auction

Greetings all Bidders! You are invited to participate in an online auction being hosted by Ottewell United Church, Edmonton, from Monday, March 21, to Sunday, April 3. There are some wonderful items and some really great deals being offered. To browse the auction catalogue, register and bid on a variety of

items, please visit www.charityauction.bid/ottewellchurch. Once registered, you will receive more information regarding the bidding process.

Spirit of Hope United Church Affirming Celebration

On February 13, Spirit of Hope United Church, Edmonton, celebrated being recognized as an Affirming Ministry within The United Church of Canada. [Click here for the full story](#), with photos. The service was held in the gym as their newly-renovated sanctuary is not ready for occupancy yet. You can [view the renovations-in-progress](#) in the January 16 issue of "The Spark".

Featured News ...

Embracing the Spirit: Focus on Kirk Centre

The national *Embracing the Spirit* newsletter highlights examples of United ministries that are creating new paths and community connections. This month, Edmonton's Kirk Centre is highlighted. [Have a look here](#). Kirk United Church disbanded in 2019, but things are still happening in this location, including the activities of the Northern Spirit Regional Council Office.

PIE Day Video (and Homemade Pie) from the Moderator

Why PIE? PIE = Public. Intentional. Explicit. Those are the standards we hold ourselves to when we seek to live into being Affirming people and communities by, for, and with Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people. This year's PIE Day theme for March 14 is "Everyone Gets A Slice!". The Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Richard Bott, gets into some [pie making and PIE reflection in this video](#). An [update on PIE and other Affirming goodness](#) was sent recently to the Regional Council Affirming list. This list includes Affirming ministries, those who are in process, curious about the process, or supportive. Individual subscribers are also welcome! To be added to the Affirming contact list, email Julie Graham, jgraham@united-church.ca.

Statement for Peace in Ukraine and Donations Link

The invasion of Ukraine is costing precious lives and creating a humanitarian crisis as people flee to safety. The United Church has joined with partners who witness and work for peace and justice in the world, by issuing a statement condemning the invasion of Ukraine. You can see the [statement and other information here](#), and find a link here to make a [donation to support United Church Mission & Service partners](#) responding to rapidly emerging needs. We add our prayers of concern and support for the people of Ukraine, and for their families and friends here and throughout the world.

Looking at Guaranteed Livable Income Through the Window of Lent

Lent is the season for truth-telling and repentance, calling us to deep reflection on how we might address the persistent inequities in our country. Since 1972, The United Church of Canada has advocated a policy of guaranteed annual income that is more equitable and effective than existing government support programs. [In a new guide available here](#), resource people from Pacific Mountain Regional Council offer ideas for Lenten liturgies, prayers, study groups or outreach committees. Each segment contains a suggested scripture, hymn ideas, a reflection or implication for GLI advocacy, and an action idea. The guide also includes action suggestions.

Give it up for the Earth Campaign!

To mark the season of Lent, join the *Citizens for Public Justice* and the *For the Love of Creation* ecumenical group, to participate in the faith-in-action climate justice campaign, March 2 to April 14. [To register for materials and more, click here.](#)

Worship Resources for Sunday, March 20

As part of the Ministry Personnel Lenten event next week (March 17-18), the faculty at St. Andrew's College have prepared a Worship Service for use on March 20, in order to enable Ministry Personnel to fully engage in this continuing education event. The [components of this service are available here](#). [Details for the event are found here](#); and the [registration form, here](#). The deadline for registration is Monday, March 14.

Reminder to Ministry Personnel from the Office of Vocation

We are now into March, and you may have noticed that the Annual Declaration is still open. After some consultation about when is the best time to complete the AD, it is now active from **January 1 to May 15** this year. It is hoped that this will be a more convenient time to complete this. You do not need to get a new police records check done each year. A new police records check is only required if you are declaring new criminal charges or if your police records check is older than 2011. If you need assistance with completing your AD please contact me at kmedland@united-church.ca.

In Other News ...

Anti Racism Common Table letter on Hate Symbols at Recent Protests

The recent protests and border blockades have made for a very tense few weeks. This [open letter from the General Council's Anti Racism Common Table](#) asks us to accept the reality, and the impact, of the documented presence of white supremacist, racist symbols at a number of the protests. You're invited to read it with an open heart for the experiences of Black and Indigenous people, and people of colour, targeted by the beliefs behind these symbols.

Tony Snow, a member of the Indigenous church and Regional Minister in Chinook Winds, also [offers us this reflection from his perspective](#). May God give us the heart to absorb these words.

Final Call: Nominations for General Council Openings

Please bring your discernment to the search by the wider church for people to fill the many and diverse openings across our governance and task groups. The General Council has published its list of openings, with March 22 or 28 deadlines. [Please have a look at the opportunities here](#) (scroll down past jobs for elected/ volunteer positions. You can nominate yourself, and we are also invited to nominate others, after checking with them first.

Together We Worship Now Available at United Church Bookstore

Together We Worship helps worship leaders create engaging worship, with worship resources that empower you to easily lead a service of worship with as little or as much planning as you'd like. All you need is someone willing to read from the leader's sheet, and a way for people to see and hear the video sermon. Don't have a church sound system or a projector? Together We Worship can help you find a solution that works for your church for less than you think. With [Together We Worship](#), your congregation will experience liturgists and preachers from across the country, and around the world, to offer meaningful, engaging worship in an easy-to-use package for up to 75% less than the cost of pulpit

supply. With many different purchase package options, you are sure to find the package that fits your needs. Explore the [Together We Worship collection](#) at the [United Church Bookstore](#).

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.

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](#).

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