



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL
The United Church of Canada
Learning and Gathering

December 13th, 2022

Northern Spirit Regional Council

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

December 13, 2022

News of interest to the people of the Northern Spirit Region.
If you have news to share, please write a short description and send it to

northernspirit@united-church.ca.

Family News

★ Holiday Office Closure

Please note that the Northern Spirit office will be closed for the holidays **from December 19, 2022 until January 3, 2023**. This is also the last Northern Spirit newsletter of 2022, but we'll be back in the new year! *Happy holidays!*

★ Northern Spirit directory almost ready!

We hardly dare say this, but we're close. Having a directory of all communities of faith, ministry personnel, governance members, and more will be a helpful tool in the midst of a sense of disconnection. Kathy Jackson's work continues even after she retires; Chloe and Julie have been working on adding a little more data to Kathy's work, and figuring out how to get you the password to the PDF directory. Look for this in early January.

Letter from the Regional Council chair: Planning for care and caution this Advent and Christmas

Rev Helen Reed offers some food for thought as we celebrate being together in person, online, or both this Advent and Christmas. She asks, "As you plan your Christmas Eve services, those services that we hope will be filled with Christmas Spirit and Christian Love incarnate, would you please consider how you will be loving your neighbour at this time? Would you encourage mask wearing? Especially during singing, would you encourage spacing?" [Please click here for the full letter](#), as you consider how your community of faith will hold space that is both safer

and sacred.

Weekly ministry personnel gatherings continue, Tuesdays through Advent

All Ministry Personnel are invited to join colleagues every Tuesday at 1pm over Zoom for conversation, support and information sharing. Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse, will be hosting the gatherings while Earl is away. NOTE: we will not meet on December 27th. Join the Zoom meeting at: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/87847286336?pwd=Si9rbzJYWjJS0lKSnhPeDN1T05vdz09>

Welcome to Chantal Winslow, Executive Assistant

We welcome Chantal Winslow as the new Executive Assistant! She will work with Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine, as well as areas of work that include all three Regional Councils. Chantal will work closely with Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy, and will bring her skills of administration, communication, and planning to key work such as: the minutes for the three Regional Council Executives and the annual meetings; planning Shannon's schedule; communications and connecting work; and more. [Please click here for Chantal's bio.](#)

Pastoral Relations Minister on medical leave

Pastoral Relations Minister Earl Reaburn is on medical leave until at least mid-December. Your prayers and support are most welcome; Earl tells us the situation is not life threatening. For now, Wendy Galloway has offered to do some coverage - many thanks, Wendy. Her email: walloway@telusplanet.net. Jes Beckerley will continue to be support staff to pastoral relations. Thank you to the people of the Regional Council for your patience and understanding.

Featured News

★ Moderator's Christmas message

In her [Christmas video message](#), Moderator Carmen Lansdowne reminds us that when so much seems uncertain and the news amplifies all the hard news stories, there is One who came to show us that all the ends of the earth should see the salvation of God—and that through that One, we are capable of coming together to achieve the impossible.

If you would like to include the video in your worship live stream, please use the downloadable version, available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3hZ2wlv>

★ No Room in the Inn 2022

This year No Room in the Inn has chosen the **Canadian Mental Health Association - Edmonton Region** for its 2022 campaign. This project will allow the 108 individuals and families residing in CMHA Edmonton housing properties better access to the buildings, and

increase the security of the properties & their tenants. Learn more at edmonton.cmha.ca/NRII.

★ Edmonton community snapshot: racism in context

Advent is a journey towards healing and radical inclusion, as embodied in the life and ministry of Jesus. As a church, we've committed to striving to become anti-racist. In a snapshot of community life in Edmonton, this [excellent and accessible report from the Edmonton Community Foundation](#) links wider historical realities to the exclusion and economic disadvantage we see today, and points ways into a different future. [You can also see the related blog post here.](#)

Introducing the United Church Rural Ministries Network

The mission of UCRMN is to "share the successes, the opportunities and the culture of the Whole People of God of the Rural Church, throughout rural Canada, specifically in the United Church of Canada," with an awareness we will be connecting with ecumenical partners who share rural communities with us. It is a goal to reach all rural communities of faith, whether 'lay-led' or with resident order of ministry folk." [Click here for their website, resources and more!](#) Get to know this network that exists to connect, support, nurture, and challenge rural and remote communities of faith.

Some key Regional Committees need your help!

Can you share the load - a shared job makes the work easier! Helen Reed, Chair of the Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive, explains some of the urgent needs for your time and skills. Please [see the invitation from Helen](#), and let us know how you can help.

New stories from the Being Good Relations Network

The Being Good Relations Network covers Northern Spirit and Chinook Winds Regional Councils, and focuses on living out the TRC Calls to Action, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Caretakers' Calls to the United Church, and other commitments. Anyone can join the network, which focuses on accompanying each other, and faith communities and wider communities, on that wider journey to right relations. Have a look at the [Network page's newsfeed](#) to see updates from communities of faith involved in Being Good Relations, shared in the spirit of sparking your creative commitments and lifting your spirits. New members are welcome! Want to join the email list for occasional updates? Have a story to share Email Julie at jgraham@united-church.ca

Book a time to talk about stewardship

Are you thinking about year-end or wanting to make a stewardship plan for 2023? Would you like to talk about legacy giving to your congregation, but don't know where to start? Do you have questions about growing giving to Mission & Service? Vicki Nelson is your stewardship support person and is available to share resources, answer questions, or brainstorm

with. Don't know where to start? Book a phone or zoom conversation with Vicki today using [this link](#).

Get Support to Create your Stewardship Campaign!

If your congregation hasn't undertaken a stewardship campaign in a while, consider registering for a 2-week learning module on creating a congregational giving program with Called to be the Church: The Journey. There are 2 opportunities to participate in the program coming up in January 2023. [Learn more here](#).

Lawsuit against the UCC on maternity homes; and apology resources

The United Church has been [named in a lawsuit](#) related to its role in running maternity homes, often known as "homes for unwed mothers". [Read the General Council statement here](#). The United Church ran a number of such homes, often with other denominations. In 2020, the Church apologized for "...our participation in the separation of mothers from their children. Our role in pressured, coerced, or forced adoptions created a legacy of pain and suffering. We helped create a culture of shame." Please see, and refer people to, this [link for all resources related to the 2020 apology](#). Living into this apology is the work of the whole church, and all members of our United Church community are urged to read and reflect on these resources. Thank you for making your community of faith aware.

In Other News ...

Deadline for Mission & Service Transfers Changed!

Beginning in January 2023, the deadline for Mission & Service transfers will be January 15. That means that pastoral charges need to make their final 2022 Mission & Service transfer by **January 15, 2023**. We are making this change because it will improve our accountability, accuracy, and transparency when reporting back to you on annual results. We also expect that January 15 is closer to when the majority of communities of faith have finalized—or nearly finalized—their year-end financial statements. If you have questions or need support to set up electronic transfers, please contact Nicole Chicote at 1-800-268-3781 x3072 or nchicote@united-church.ca.

Summary of the first meeting of General Council Executive

Following the end of the initial meeting of General Council 44, a new Executive has also begun its work. It's Advent, we're all a bit or a lot tired, and there's so much to absorb. As you're able, though, [have a look at this concise summary](#) of the important business that was before the Executive.

Gifts with Vision

The United Church of Canada provides Mission & Service support to partners for their ongoing work in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and right here in Canada. Gifts with Vision turns gift giving into an opportunity to do something extra for our church partners. Through Gifts with Vision, you give gifts to friends or family to support specific partner activities. With your gifts, we help create healthy places to live, promote justice, provide social services, and enliven worship. Check out the [online gift catalogue](#) today!

Northern Spirit regional annual meeting wraps up; hold May 4-7 2023!

Notes on the proceedings and from the small groups are now available on the [Regional Council meeting page](#), along with summary notes thanks to Susan Waldie and Bev Diebert (Living Skies). Please hold **Thursday May 4 - Sunday May 7** for a hoped-for in person meeting of the Regional Council, location to be announced. People are needed for the planning committee! Please email northernspirit@united-church.ca if you are interested in helping create this long-delayed meeting space.

New United Church national insurance plan for your ministry starting December 1

Effective **December 1, 2022**, The United Church of Canada is launching an insurance program aimed at providing United Church ministries with more affordable and accessible property and liability insurance coverage. UCC Protect/United Assurance insurance offers coverage to address the unique needs of congregations and incorporated ministries such as camps, seniors' homes, and education centres. This plan is the only insurance program endorsed and funded by the General Council Office. [See these Frequently Asked Questions](#) for details on the transition from UCC Protect to United Assurance. [Here's a website summary](#) to share with your Trustees, Board or Council.

