



## NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

### The United Church of Canada

### Regional News: January 24, 2023

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News of interest to the people of the Northern Spirit Region.  
If you have news to share, please write a short description,  
with a clear headline and a link to more information,  
and send it to [northernspirit@united-church.ca](mailto:northernspirit@united-church.ca).

Our local events calendar for United Church ministries is coming back to life!  
[Click here to view it.](#) And [click here to submit your event.](#)

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## Family News

### Spirit Celebrations!

- *Sherwood Park United Church* invites you to join them in celebrating their covenanting with Rev. Marlene Salmonson on **Sunday, February 12th, at 2:30 p.m.**
- *Southminster-Steinhauer United Church* wishes to invite your prayers and well-wishes as we celebrate the retirement of Rev. Dr. Nancy Steeves from active ministry. Nancy's last Sunday as part of the ministry team was January 22, 2023. You are welcome to offer greetings by way of her [online retirement card](#).

### ★ Reaching Out To Northern Spirit Retired Clergy

My name is Jen Carter-Morgan and I am a diaconal ministry student at the Centre for Christian Studies. Over the next 6 months I will be doing a field placement in spiritual care in the Northern Spirit Region under the guidance of the Ministry and Personnel Support Committee. I'm hoping to connect with retired clergy across our region over the coming weeks and I'd love to chat via phone, Zoom or in person with as many who would like a visit. If you know of someone who might be in need of a visit or you yourself would like a visit please don't hesitate to reach out to me. My phone number is 780-298-4362 or you can reach me via email at [jencartermorgan@gmail.com](mailto:jencartermorgan@gmail.com).

### Earl's return!

Our Pastoral Relations Minister, Earl Reaburn, has returned from leave. If you sent questions his way in the past few months, please re-send them to the Northern Spirit Office. Thank you to everyone for your patience during Earl's absence, and **WELCOME BACK TO EARL!!**

### We have a Regional Council directory!

And we hope it will be a good connecting/ re-connecting tool for you. It's a password-protected PDF designed to connect Regional Council members with: Regional governance; ministry personnel on call or appointment, retired ministry personnel and lay delegates who attended the 2022 Regional Council Meeting; communities of faith and other ministries; some partner and wider-church groups; and staff. An email invitation was sent out in early January.

Please [have a look at our new directory page](#) for instructions if you didn't get an email, keeping in mind that for reasons of privacy and security, there are some restrictions on who can access the directory.

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## **Featured News**

### **★ You're invited: Being Good Relations Network survey**

The Being Good Relations Network is a United Church-based network covering all of AB, Northeast BC, and Yellowknife, working alongside Chinook Winds and Northern Spirit Regional Councils. It also includes relationships with four Indigenous communities of faith, emerging faith and spiritual circles, the wider Indigenous church, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations in our communities and provinces/ territory. All people supportive of right relations between Indigenous peoples and non- Indigenous people are welcome.

That's why you're being included in this invitation, whether or not you have experience or background with Being Good Relations. **If you're committed to right relations, the network wants to hear from you** as it works on its future path. [Click here for the survey.](#)

If you'd like to know the questions in advance, [a non-fillable PDF is available here.](#)

And the [network's page is here.](#)

### **★ Hello United Church Affirming Ministries!**

My name is Angela Glasel and I am a member of Robertson-Wesley United Church. I wanted to let you know that, with Rev. Karen Bridges, we have made the exciting decision to put on a **2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference**. We are hoping to find out the needs of the community and how RWUC can offer support. This conference will also highlight the excellent work that is being done in Edmonton. The conference will be held **June 22nd - 24th**, at Robertson-Wesley United Church. [Please let me know if you have any questions and if you would like to be involved.](#)

### **★ Is it time for your professional boundary refresher?**

All ministry personnel, candidates, and licensed lay worship leaders are required to refresh every 5 years. If you have not taken a boundaries training since 2018, now is your time! Here is the schedule for upcoming online trainings:

*Intro to Boundaries:* **March 18<sup>th</sup>** from **11am-3:30pm**

*Social Media Boundaries Refresher:* **February 25** from **11am-2:30pm**

*Finances & Gifts Boundaries Refresher:* **March 1** from **11am-2:30pm**

*Retiring with Grace Boundaries Refresher:* **March 24** from **11am-2:30pm**

To register for the online workshops

visit: <https://catalog.churchx.ca/catalog?pagename=Boundaries>.

Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse, will also be offering **an in person opportunity** in Edmonton sometime in September. More information will be provided at a later date.

### **★ New Year.... New Annual Report!**

It is once again time to start compiling Annual Reports! A reminder to please submit a copy of your annual report to the Northern Spirit Office, at [northernspirit@united-church.ca](mailto:northernspirit@united-church.ca).

## **2023 Annual Declarations**

It's a new year AND... it's time for alllll ministry personnel (including candidates and honorary associate ministers) to locate your most recent criminal record check, visit ChurchHub, and complete your annual declaration! First time doing this? Forget what you did last year? NO PROBLEM! Vocational Minister, Laura Fouhse, is here to help (contact info is on the website) or you can follow the handy dandy how-to guide [by clicking here](#). Why leave for tomorrow what you could do today?!

## **Financial and Ministry Assessments**

Have you completed your Financial and Ministry Assessment yet? These provide valuable information to the Region, and help connect Communities of Faith with the resources they need. [To access the forms, click here](#). If you are unsure whether your Community's Assessment has been completed already, or if you have any further questions, please contact the Northern Spirit Regional Office.

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## **Wider Church News & Resources**

### **★ Affirming PIE Day is coming up- new resources are posted!**

Celebrate National Affirming/PIE Day on Tuesday March 14, 2023! Why PIE? PIE = Public. Intentional. Explicit. Those are the standards we hold ourselves and our welcome to when we seek to live into being 2SLGBTQIA+ Affirming, Welcoming, or Inclusive people and communities. This year, a number of PIE Day events are on offer, reflecting the 2023 theme, Year of Intention. And everyone is invited to contribute their own event, featuring PIE, pie, and pi: irrational and infinite love! [Have a look at the PIE Day site](#) to access resources and post your event or worship. [Check out the liturgies and other resources](#) already posted.

### **★ Accessing Minutes for Mission/ Your Generosity Matters 2023**

Sharing stories about Mission & Service's important work is a key part of life in our denomination. Thank you for consistently telling these amazing stories of meaning making and lives transformed through gifts given to Mission & Service. A reminder that booklets are no longer mailed to congregations, but instead you can access content in a few different ways. Please contact Vicki at [vnelson@united-church.ca](mailto:vnelson@united-church.ca) with any questions.

The downloadable PDF of the 2023 Your Generosity Matters booklet is available at UCRD [right here](#). And [watch this page for a print copy you can order](#) (not available yet, as of late January 2023). There are also [weekly stories on the United Church website](#). These can be printed out, and are free to use wherever and whenever you like. Finally, the God's Mission, Our Gifts: Philanthropy e-News is a great way to get monthly updates. [You can sign up here](#).

### **★ United Church sponsors over 100 people seeking refuge**

With the help of the Refugee Advisory Group and hundreds of volunteers from many communities of faith across the country, the United Church submitted applications to sponsor 171 refugees from overseas in late 2022. This was a very fast process that demanded a lot of work.

Of the 171, 12 are Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR), 6 are LGBTIQ2+, 9 are stateless, and 53 are Afghani, with 30 through the Operation Afghan Safety (OAS) program. Refugees were sponsored by communities of faith across the country, including Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Toronto, and Ottawa. [Read the full story](#). Deep gratitude to all who worked hard in the weeks before Christmas to prepare a welcome or to prepare for a difficult and life changing move to Canada.

### ★ Overall update on refugee sponsorship

The national church does not know how many allocations we will receive for 2023, but we will most likely receive this information by mid-year. We therefore encourage communities of faith who want to continue to be involved in the refugee program to consider sponsoring LGBTIQ2+, BVOR (including LGBTIQ2+), and Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) cases, as there is no limitation on how many can be sponsored under these categories. [Please see the latest Refugee newsletter for more details.](#)

### Streaming It Forward

A large number of Communities of Faith in the region are now publicly live-streaming or posting recordings of their church services -- thanks covid ;). One of the opportunities this creates is that churches without in-person worship leadership can still gather and watch a church service on a screen in their sanctuary as an alternative to bringing in pulpit supply. Here's an idea: if your church regularly streams another congregation's service, consider sending them a donation as a note of appreciation for their online ministry.

### Embracing the Spirit grants on pause; lots of other options available to your ministry

A number of ministries in our Regional Council have benefitted from Embracing the Spirit grants over the years. As The United Church of Canada embraces the exciting transition into the new strategic plan it will pause some current granting opportunities, including Embracing the Spirit (Innovation, Growth, and New Ministry Grants). However: please read on, because there are still many, many national grants available to your ministry. [Please click here for an overview.](#)

### Cost of living changes

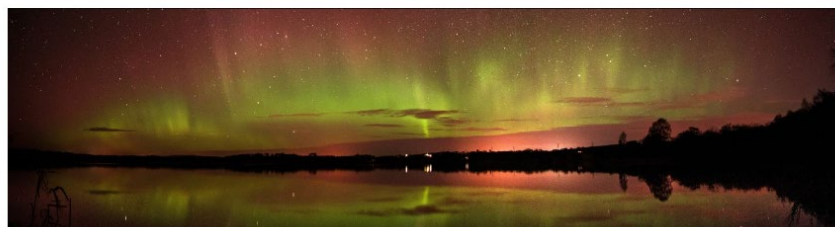
A reminder that on December 21 Community of Faith treasurers and administrators received information regarding the outcome from the triennial review of cost of living group assignments. The revised [cost of living group assignments data is here](#). Northern Spirit data begins on p. 22 of the document called "Revised COL Group Assignments 2022". [Have a look at our website for more information](#); this is a national process, and the Region is sharing this as information only.

### United in Learning

United in Learning, the church's main online events service, has moved to an exciting new platform! [Have a look here](#). The United Church's Edge Network also offers online courses related to change and innovation. [See their courses here](#).

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**Notice:** St. Albert United Church has two **hymn boards with numbers** looking for a new home. Please contact Betty at [gorbett@telusplanet.net](mailto:gorbett@telusplanet.net).



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