



NORTHERN SPIRIT
REGIONAL COUNCIL
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA



News from the Region: November 29, 2023



News of interest to the people of the Northern Spirit Region.

If you have news or events 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.

Local Advent Events:

Many Communities of Faith have posted their Christmas season events on our web calendar: [CLICK HERE](#) to see local craft sales, bazaars, concerts, worship services, and learning gatherings planned for December.



★ Add your local events to our Northern Spirit events calendar! ★
[Click here to view upcoming events.](#) And [click here to submit your event.](#)

Family News

★ **Video from three-Region Remit learning circle Nov 23**

Many thanks to the 140 people from our Prairies and North Regional Councils and beyond, who came out to learn and discuss with knowledge keepers Charlene and Russel Burns and Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy. A recording of the session is now available on our Regional YouTube channels: [click here to access it](#). In the new year we will host one or two more such circles.

Advent letter introducing Northern Spirit's new Growth Animator

[Click here to read a letter from Jordan Cantwell](#), Northern Spirit's Growth Animator, offering Advent Greetings. *Advent is a time of anticipation, waiting and preparing for the coming of Christ and all that means for each of us... What will be born anew in you?*

Featured News

★ **Letter from the church to the PM: ceasefire now; naming the genocide taking place**

At its recent meeting, the General Council Executive, its corresponding members, and the members of the National Indigenous Council issued a plea to Prime Minister Trudeau to advocate for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, recognizing that, in the view of legal experts, genocide is currently taking place. Its central calls can be echoed and added to through a letter or call to the Prime Minister's Office and your Member of Parliament. Our pressure is important here, because until a ceasefire is reached, there is no way forward. Currently the federal government is still not pushing for a ceasefire. The letter states that "the failure to clearly do so is unconscionable." [Please see the letter here and share widely.](#)

★ **Broadview article on Prairie people supporting transgender dignity and rights**

In September, a number of United Church people involved themselves in opposing the "Million Person" marches that opposed transgender rights in schools, and school curricula that respects diverse sexualities, gender identities, and families. [Have a look here](#), and look for the article in the February print edition.

Treaty Land Sharing Network on the Alberta side of Treaty Six- landholders sought

The [Treaty Land Sharing Network](#) is thrilled to announce that they will be formally **expanding to the Alberta side of Treaty 6 in 2024**. "Since shortly after we launched in 2021 we have been in discussion with a committed group of people there who have formed an Alberta working group, and, earlier this year, completed a successful pilot project in the [Beaver Hills Biosphere](#) east of Edmonton. We are busy updating our outreach materials, printing more signs, applying for grants, and connecting with potential members. **If you know of any landholders in Alberta** who may be interested in joining the network, please send them our way!" Contact the network at alberta@treatylandsharingnetwork.ca.

Wider Church News & Resources

★ An Ecumenical Opportunity: World Day of Prayer 2024 Seeking Coordinators

The theme for the World Day of Prayer 2024 is written by Palestinian Women. The women who have done these services in their local area are not able to carry on and WDP is looking for new coordinators. We are trying to revive this great ecumenical tradition among churches in Canada. Please contact me for more information. Linda M. Ervin (Diaconal Minister) at filedrep567@wicc.org or 250.493.5333.

2023 M&S Givings Reminder!

2023 is drawing to a close and on behalf of Mission and Service we want to thank you for your contributions. The money received from Communities of Faith like yours enables us to feed hungry children, help those devastated by natural disasters and war and fund the vital work our partners are doing. And now we are asking you to send in your Mission and Service contributions as soon as possible to ensure this work continues. **Remember, to have your contributions counted towards 2023 you must send them in postmarked before January 15th, 2024.** Thank you in advance for your ongoing support.

Advent liturgy on witnessing to peace in Palestine and Israel

The [United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel](#) (UNJPPI) [offers us this Advent liturgy](#) (PDF file), drawing on the lived experience and stories of United Church members who have been [Ecumenical Accompaniers through the World Council of Churches](#) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It includes new words to O Come Emmanuel, and stories from accompaniment with Palestinians living under military occupation. As Israelis and Palestinians continue to confront the impacts of horrific violence, in the name of the Prince of Peace may we add our prayers, worship, resources, and action to efforts to support them and to do what we can to support them in creating a just peace. A reminder that there is an action posted on the Regional website which links to United Church tools and information from other sources.

Climate vigils December 8-10: lots of resources available to help host one

From November 30 – December 12, 2023, the [United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties \(COP28\)](#) will be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. This global conference can serve as an important catalyst for leaders and communities of faith to pray, learn and act for climate justice. Please see [For the Love of Creation](#), an ecumenical site for climate justice advocates, for lots of ideas. The theme of COP 28 is Unite. Act. Deliver. Let's help this be so.

In Case You Missed It...

Pastoral Charge Supervisors & Liaisons: Policy Update and Call for Volunteers

- The Northern Spirit Pastoral Charge Supervisor Policy has been updated. Key changes include specifications around appointing Lay Pastoral Charge Supervisors, and Retired Ministers to their former Pastoral Charges. **Please note that as of January 1, 2024, all Pastoral Charge Supervisors should be reimbursed for their time & effort with \$30 per hour of work on the Pastoral Charge's behalf**, in addition to having their travel costs reimbursed by the Pastoral Charge. For any active ministers, this should be paid in the form of an honorarium. [Click here to read the full updated policy.](#) (A previous newsletter incorrectly said this policy would come into effect on January 1, 2023 - this was a typo: 2024 is the correct year. Thanks to those who noticed!)
- **The Region is in need of both Supervisors and Liaisons.** Training is being offered, and no previous experience is necessary. *Pastoral Charge Supervisors* support Charges who do not currently have appointed or called ministry personnel, by acting as a resource and attending governing body meetings (in-person or online) ([Manual I.2.5.2](#)). *Pastoral Relations Liaisons* assist Charges with Pastoral Relations processes by supporting Community of Faith Profile and Search Teams (this does not require being on those teams) ([Manual I.1.5.3](#)). Both roles can often be carried out by phone, email, and Zoom. **Please contact Adam if you are interested in learning more about either or both of these important Regional roles:** Adam.Hall@united-church.ca.

No Room In the Inn Campaign for 2023-24

The No Room In the Inn campaign this year is in support of **A Safe Place**. A Safe Place is a residential facility opened in 1984 for those who are escaping intimate or family violence. It is located in Sherwood Park. A recent review of their facility found major and unexpected issues with the roof. [Click here to view the poster with full details.](#)

Gift Sharing Season: a Letter from our Chair....

[Click here](#) to read a letter from our Executive Chair, Rev. Helen Reed, with reminders of our shared blessings and opportunities as Advent season approaches.

Worship Resources:

See United Church [Worship Resources](#) for upcoming Sundays and special celebrations.

[World Aids Day – December 1, 2023](#)

[First Sunday of Advent - December 3, 2023](#)

[UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities - December 3, 2023](#)

[National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women - December 6, 2023](#)

Northern Spirit Regional Council Weekly Newsletter: NEWS Edition, November 29, 2023

[Second Sunday of Advent - December 10, 2023](#)

[UN Human Rights Day - December 10, 2023](#)

[Third Sunday of Advent - December 17, 2023](#)

[Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 24, 2023](#)

[Christmas - December 25, 2023](#)

[Mission and Service New Year's Eve service and sermon](#)

* *Votes for the remit process now underway!* We invite you to learn more and explore the [remit process](#). Please also see a post on the Northern Spirit website with answers to frequently asked questions & further resources, [here](#). The remit vote deadline date is March 31, 2024.

- [Click here to access past Newsletter issues.](#)
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