



NORTHERN SPIRIT  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA



---

*News from the Region: December 13, 2023*

---



© Ridvan Yumlu - PalPics

**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](mailto: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**

### **★ End of Year Notices: ★**

The Northern Spirit Regional Office will be **closed for the holidays from December 22, reopening January 2, 2024**. Adam Hall, Pastoral Relations Minister, will be on holiday from December 19 - January 2. There will be a brief Events Newsletter sent out next week, and then the Newsletter will resume in January 2024. Merry Christmas & happy holidays to all!

### **♥ Celebrating a Northern Spirit United Church Member!**

Dianne Nikiforuk, member of Living Spirit United Church in Drayton Valley, AB, was recently honoured at a Drayton Valley Town Council Meeting for her many years of service to her community. Her positive impact includes work with: The Pembina Crisis Connection Society, Grow.Eat.Together: Food Security in Drayton Valley, Warming Hearts day time shelter, Communities in Bloom campaigns, and a most important affiliation and participation in the United Church and its board - among many other community projects and events. Many thanks & congratulations from Living Spirit & from the Region, Diane!

### **♥ Two Barrhead area churches victims of arson**

Our kin in other traditions are grieving the loss or damage of two historic churches in the Barrhead area, St. Mary Abbots Anglican, a.k.a The Pioneer Memorial Church, near Thunder Lake; and St. Aidan's Church/ the Glenreagh, in Glenreagh. Both have been important community gathering spaces. Earlier reports said one was a United Church, but this was incorrect. [Please see more details here](#). Northern Spirit Regional Council expresses its sadness and condolences to the communities and to our Anglican friends.

### **★ Final reminder: Video from three-Region Remit learning circle 23 Nov, Board process**

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. The main resource page has also been updated with a new [conversation process for pastoral charge governing bodies](#).

---

## **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.

---

## **Wider Church News & Resources**

### **★ An Advent Message from Moderator Carmen Lansdowne**

The Right Rev. Carmen Lansdowne, Moderator of The United Church of Canada, shares her [Advent message for 2023](#). Advent is a time of expectant waiting for the Christmas miracle—a story of hope, bravery, and the willingness to have faith in God. It is also a story of generosity and of humans caring for each other.

### **★ Advent Unwrapped resources continue**

A reminder that there are great last minute and first minute resources at the national [Advent Unwrapped project!](#) And for alternative gift giving that prioritizes community needs, [Gifts with Vision](#) remains a great choice to share with your community of faith.

---

## **In Case You Missed It...**

### **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](mailto:filedrep567@wicc.org) or 250.493.5333.

## **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](mailto:alberta@treatylandsharingnetwork.ca).

## **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 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. Thank you in advance for your ongoing support.

---

## ***Worship Resources:***

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

[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.](#)
-



---

Northern Spirit Regional Council Office  
13535 122 Avenue NW Edmonton Alberta  
780.435.3995  
[northernspirit@united-church.ca](mailto:northernspirit@united-church.ca)  
[www.northernspiritr.ca](http://www.northernspiritr.ca)



*Image Credits:* Yumlu, Ridvan. Ethiopian and Eritrean Refugees Celebrate Christmas, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=59002> [retrieved December 13, 2023]. Original source: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/pal\\_pics/6713162773](https://www.flickr.com/photos/pal_pics/6713162773).

***Coptic Christians from Eritrea and Ethiopia, Orthodox Christmas Celebration at the Church of the Nativity, West Bank town of Bethlehem January 6, 2012: Hundreds of African Refugees from Eritrea and Ethiopia make a pilgrimage to Bethlehem to visit Manger Square and the Church of the Nativity for a Coptic Christmas. Bethlehem, Palestine, 6th January 2012.***

Copyright © 2023 Northern Spirit Regional Council, All rights reserved.  
[Sign-up to receive the Newsletter by email by clicking here.](#)