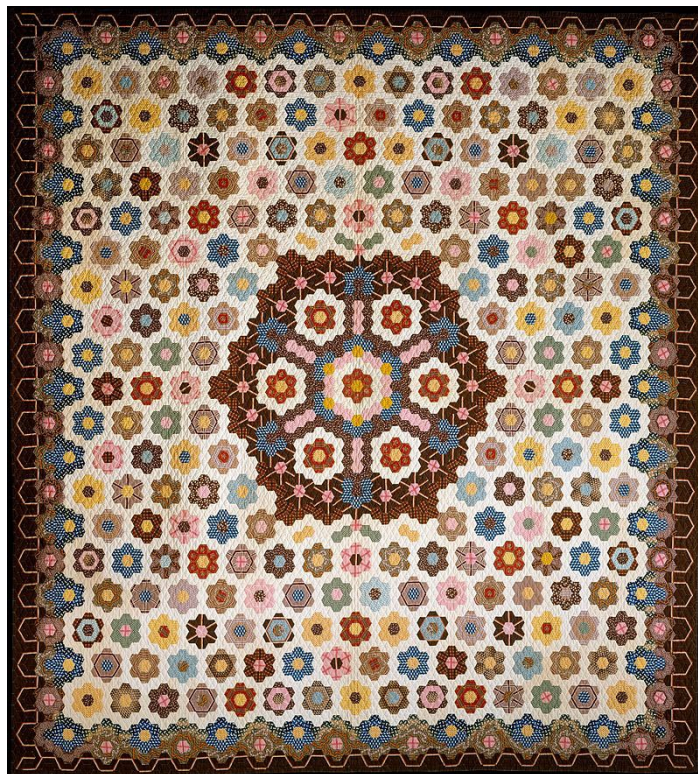




NORTHERN SPIRIT
REGIONAL COUNCIL
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA




News from the Region: January 10, 2024



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.



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

★ 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

♥ Remembering elder Charles Wood

Our truth and reconciliation work relies on both our own commitments and guidance from Indigenous people and communities, and in that journey there are some people who are exceptionally generous with their time and wisdom. The late Elder Charles Wood, Saddle Lake Cree Nation, was one. He built countless bridges to non-Indigenous communities, including years of work related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and accompaniment with the Being Good Relations Network, now shared between Indigenous communities of faith, Northern Spirit and Chinook Winds. We will deeply miss his presence with us at meetings and gatherings, his living out of the Seven Sacred Teachings, and his example to us all. We offer heartfelt condolences to the family and community. Rev Cecile Fausak [offers a personal tribute here](#), and [the obituary is posted here](#).

★ A New Year: Reflecting on Time, Talent, & Treasure

Here we go again with another year of possibilities stretching out before us. Our Regional Chairperson, Rev. Helen Reed, has written a letter reflecting on the New Year, and on ways we in this Region can offer our time, talents, and treasures. [Click here to read the full letter](#).

★ New: Northern Spirit Prayer Cycle for 2024

Hot off the virtual press, we have a cycle designed by Chloe Burns to help us pray alongside and for all of our ministries in the Regional Council. Also included are special Sundays and other days, especially those expressing particular care for Creation, ministries such as camping, and communities who are in need of justice and peace. [Click here to download the PDF file](#). Please note that there is an alternate prayer cycle created by a group out of Ontario. You are welcome to use it, but this new one is created by the Regional Council and strives to reflect all communities of faith and non congregational/ community ministries, including some that may have recently closed or are planning to. Any corrections can be sent to northernspirit@united-church.ca.

★ Planning team for our Regional Affirming celebration: you're invited!

At our May 2023 meeting, Northern Spirit Regional Council voted to become an Affirming Ministry. This was wonderful news after several years of a process of education guided by the Affirming Task Group. Now one more step remains: a public Affirming celebration. A couple of people have already volunteered. **Are you interested in joining them for this short-term commitment?** We'll meet online to create a celebration through worship, and to develop creative ways to engage the whole Regional Council in the celebration. One possible celebration date is Pride Sunday within the United Church, 2 June 2024, but the planning team is free to recommend the date to the Executive. **Please contact Julie Graham, staff support, at jgraham@united-church.ca by the end of January.**

Featured News

★ **Regional meeting 2024: May 2 and 9 online**

The Northern Spirit Executive has chosen Thursday May 2 and 9 for an online regional meeting. More details will be shared through the winter and spring. The need for face to face connecting has not been forgotten! The Regional Council strongly encourages us to plan for Cluster and other gatherings, as we continue to work towards renewing relationships and communication that struggled through both the restructuring and the pandemic. Please remember that Regional funding is available for such work; [see the Network and Clusters page for details](#). If you have a Cluster that's up and running or soon will be, please contact Chloe Burns at the office, so we can update the Clusters and Networks contact list: northernspirit@united-church.ca Please let the office know how we can support your important work.

★ **Reminder for Ministry Personnel: Annual Declaration 2024**

You've made it through another intense Advent and Christmas season! We know, and appreciate, how much you have put into your ministry as you enter this season of Epiphany. Of course, there are always more tasks and ministry waiting for you in 2024. The **Annual Declaration** process is one of those important (and simple) tasks to add to your list. Follow the link below to ChurchHub and complete your **Annual Declaration** by February 16th and your name will be entered into an **Early Bird Draw** for a chance to win a \$50 Gift Card, of your choice: <https://churchhub.ca/>. Need help accessing ChurchHub? Please contact ministry@united-church.ca. Questions about the **Annual Declaration** process can be answered by your Vocational Minister or feel free to send an email to L.Giffin@united-church.ca.

★ **Reminder of Remit vote; new video and upcoming open learning circle**

Many thanks to all pastoral charges who have already voted on the Remit about creating a self-determining Indigenous organization within the United Church of Canada. We have until 31 March 2024 to submit our voting results, and you are respectfully encouraged to remember that not voting at all is recorded automatically as a No vote. The Regional Council wants to support you in this process, so please don't hesitate to get in touch through the office. Please remember that we continue to update [the Remit resource page](#).

Updates: Both the Regional Council and the General Secretary will be sending letters to all congregations soon and we ask you to watch for those. On **Tuesday January 30, 7:30 PM Central**, you are invited to an open learning conversation with elder Gloria Cook, member of the National Indigenous Council, Rev Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, and (we hope) a third knowledge keeper, to be announced. [Please click here to register](#).

And lastly, a brand-new video about the Remit is now live: [please click here to access it](#). It answers additional church questions about the remit process, and features people from the non-Indigenous church.

★ **As the Centennial Approaches: Archives Requests**

As Communities of Faith within our Region start to plan celebrations in recognition of the United Church of Canada's 100th anniversary in 2025, many are thinking of ways to explore, acknowledge, and share our history. Requests for Archives materials are expected to markedly increase as this milestone approaches. To ensure that our Archivists & Volunteers have enough time to fulfill your request for historical materials, please start planning now & reach out early!

Wider Church News & Resources

★ **Upcoming Stewardship Online Courses**

If you have any questions about resources or ways to receive support with stewardship work in your community of faith, please reach out to Vicki Nelson at vnelson@united-church.ca.

A great place to kick-start your stewardship work is through one of our programs. Here is what is upcoming:

Setting Up Your Giving Program – Starts the week of January 16 and requires a team (3-5 people) to participate. This course is designed for you to develop the resources you need to get your Congregational Giving Program off the ground! [To register or learn more click here.](#)

Communicating Impact: Narrative Budgets and Storytelling at your AGM - Tuesday, January 23 at 2pm Mountain & 3pm Central. This 60-minute session for church leaders--both clergy and lay--will talk about how communities of faith can better communicate their amazing impact during their annual meeting and through annual reports. We will do a special look at narrative budgets and how this tool can transform how ministry is spoken about in connection to finances. [To register click here.](#)

Stewardship Best Practices - is a 9-session deep dive into the spiritual practice of stewardship. This course that begins in January, and wraps up in April, will help your team create a full year stewardship plan, and transform how you talk about money and generosity in your congregation. [Find out more and register here click here.](#)

Getting Started in Stewardship – February 22 at 3pm or 5:30pm Central Time. Come on your own, or come with a team and join United Church people from across the country to learn some stewardship first principles. This 90 minute course is the place to start if you are new to stewardship or need a refresher. [Register or learn more right here.](#)

★ **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources, Thu, Jan 18, 2024 – Thu, Jan 25, 2024**

The 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is on the theme "You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbour as yourself" based on Luke 10:25-37. This year's theme was prepared by an ecumenical team in Burkina Faso. Resources include an Order of Service, a Bible study, and various reflections on the theme. There are also hymn suggestions and resources for children, high schools, and university

campuses. [Download all these free materials here](#). The United Church also [offers resources here](#).

★ **FAQ on General Council decisions re Designated Lay Ministers**

At the October 2023 Annual Meeting of the 44th General Council, General Council offered individual Designated Lay Ministers a pathway to commissioning or ordination. [Click here for additional information](#) and clarification about what this means and how it works.

★ **Alberta's Anti-Racism Action Plan Progress Report**

Launched in July 2022, Alberta's Anti-Racism Action Plan is driving progress and the government has released its inaugural progress report. The inaugural annual report highlights significant cross-government actions taken over the past year to combat racism, celebrate diversity and strengthen social inclusion, and it is part of the government's pledge to provide updates on the advancements achieved. [Click here to read the full progress report](#).

In Case You Missed It...

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.

Worship Resources:

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

[Second after Epiphany - January 14, 2024](#)

[Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - January 18, 2024](#)

[Black History Month 1 - February 4, 2024](#)

[Black History Month 2 - February 11, 2024](#)

[Transfiguration Sunday - February 11, 2024](#)

[Black History Month 3 - February 18, 2024](#)

** 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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