



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

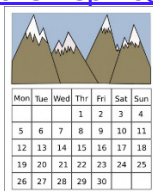


News from the Region: January 24, 2024



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.



★ 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 Reminders from our Chair

[Click here to read a letter from Rev. Helen Reed](#), reminding Northern Spirit about pieces to check off your annual to-do list, to ensure your church has a smooth year. Annual Statistics, Charitable Status forms, Annual Reports... don't forget them this year!

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.**

New Letter from Growth Animator

A Growth Animator... what is that?! [Click here to read a letter](#) from Jordan Cantwell, Growth Animator for the Prairies Regions!

Featured News

★ Updates on Remit voting: set a date; accessing your M&S or Community of Faith ID; invitation to a learning circle

Two letters were sent recently to all pastoral charges in the Regional Council: [Click here for the letter from General Secretary Rev Michael Blair](#), and [click here for the letter from your Regional Council leadership](#). Both have important reminders and resources on the Remit on creating an autonomous Indigenous organization within the United Church. You are urged to set a date for a vote if you have not done so already. Do not hesitate to call the Regional office with any questions, so that we can put you in touch with resource people. Beginning in late January, the Regional Council will be calling pastoral charges who have not voted.

In order to vote, you will need your Mission and Service number or your Community of Faith ID. Your Mission and Service number can be found in your ChurchHub account or in your PAR info, if you use PAR. When you sign into your ChurchHub.ca, your Community of Faith ID number should be in the upper right-hand corner of your screen. If either of these aren't set up for you or just don't work, don't hesitate to call

the office and we'll help.

Invitation: Remit learning circle 2, Tuesday January 30, 7:30 PM Central, 6:30PM Mountain. Open learning conversation with elder Gloria Cook, member of the National Indigenous Council; Rev Murray Pruden, Executive Minister, Indigenous Ministries and Justice; Rev Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister. [Please click here to register.](#)

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. If 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.

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 LGiffin@united-church.ca.

Wider Church News & Resources

★ United Church letter to the Prime Minister: support for International Court of Justice genocide case

The national church has released a letter calling on Canada to support South Africa's application to the International Court of Justice regarding Israel's breach of its obligations under the 1948 Genocide Convention. It also calls for a halt to Canadian arms sales to Israel. [Please click here to read the letter.](#)

★ Survey: Mental health and illness in Canadian congregations

Do you attend or lead a Christian church in Canada? If so, on behalf of a national partnership between the Flourishing Congregations Institute and Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, you are invited to participate in a ten-to-fifteen minute online survey. This survey will explore the experiences of Canadian congregants living with mental

illness or mental health challenges, attitudes towards and beliefs about mental illness and mental health challenges in Canadian churches, and the congregational supports and resources related to supporting mental health and wellbeing. [Click here for the survey](#).

★ Opportunities to serve the Regional Council and the national church

Both the Regional Council and General Council seek people to serve on a range of committee and task groups. Regional opportunities are being sent out through this newsletter and other channels over the next month. [Click here for the first Nominations Newsletter featuring the Pastoral Relations Commission](#). If you know someone who should be considered for one of the national roles, or if you want to lend your own unique talents to the church, let us know. Diversity—in terms of racial and ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, geographical location, vocation or economic status—makes us strong, as the church is committed to proactively address inequities and historic patterns of exclusion. [Click here for a summary of General Council openings](#).

★ An opportunity – maybe for you? - Prairie Candidacy Board

Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Council's Candidacy Board provides an essential role in assisting people to discern their call into ministry. The Prairie Candidacy Board is currently **seeking two lay members and a diaconal minister**. We currently meet on the **3rd Thursday of March, May, September, November at 1pm** (SK time) and **in person in January**. This could change depending on the availability of the committee members. If you are interested but have questions, please contact Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse by emailing lfouhse@united-church.ca or phone 1-800-268-3781, ext. 2005. If you know of someone who may be a good fit, please tap them on the shoulder and give them Laura's contact information. **Deadline for applications is February 26**. To apply for these vacancies click [express interest or nominate someone](#).

In Case You Missed It...

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](#).

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. | [Click here to review Northern Spirit's Designated Lay Ministers policy](#), updated December 2023.

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!

Worship Resources:

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

[Fourth after Epiphany - January 28, 2024](#)

[Fifth after Epiphany - February 4, 2024](#)

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

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

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

[Ash Wednesday - February 14, 2024](#)

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

[Black History Month 4 - February 25, 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**.

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



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