



NORTHERN SPIRIT
REGIONAL COUNCIL
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA




News from the Region: May 1, 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	Thu	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

♥ Our prayers and sympathies are extended to Rev. Paul Douglas Walfall and his family on the death of his mother, [Pauline Joan Walfall](#). Services will be held this week in Ontario; please hold Rev. Walfall in your prayers.

♥ The memorial service for Pat Bourque, former program staff serving the Northern Region of Alberta and Northwest Conference, will be held at Sherwood Park United Church at **1:30 PM on Thursday, May 16, 2024**. Plans are in place to make the service available live on line, using [Sherwood Park United's YouTube account](#).

★ **Important Northern Spirit Regional Meeting update: and registration for May 9 open!**

The planning committee has decided to restructure our AGM meeting originally planned for May 2 and 9. We will now meet ***May 9 and October 24***.

We invite you to join us on **Thursday May 9 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm on Zoom**. We will be focusing on connection, growth, and health in our Regional Council, along with possible follow up on the recent Remit. You can now register to attend the May 9th Annual Meeting evening: [register at this link](#).

We will reconvene on Thursday October 24 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm on Zoom. At this time we will elect 11 General Council 45 Commissioners, and focus on other business such as proposals. Please click here for the [Proposals PDF overview](#) (best for sharing and reviewing) and [click here for the Word version](#) (best for copying and pasting into a new document so you can build your proposal with the correct information and format.) Information on nominating Commissioners will be provided at the May 9 meeting, through the newsletter and website, and sent out again throughout the fall as a reminder. The deadline for GC45 Commissioner nominations is October 11, 2024.

★ **Northern Spirit Regional Council Affirming celebration and celebration of ministries service, Saturday June 1 at 2:00PM** 🌈

Having finished the formal requirements of the Affirming process, Northern Spirit is ready to launch into the next part of its Affirming journey. All are welcome to the Affirming celebration, online via YouTube, and in person, Saturday June 1 at Mill Woods United Church, 15 Grand Meadow Cres, Edmonton, AB. Pride picnic to follow! If you would like to send a note of congratulations, please email northernspirit@united-church.ca, or send a card to 8510 95 Avenue NW, Edmonton AB, T6C 1Y7. Our main listing will be updated as more details are added. [Please click here to share it widely!](#)

★ **Attention ministry personnel! The Annual Declaration deadline is June 30, 2024.**

Complete yours on [ChurchHub.ca](https://www.churchhub.ca) ("My Ministry Page") to avoid impacting ministry roles. Incomplete declarations mean removal from active status. Questions? [Contact your Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse](#).

★ **Reflections from a Growth Animator**

One of the simplest ways to grow our community of faith is to be genuinely welcoming when new people come to our church. Folks who show up are looking for a community where they can experience belonging. How we welcome them - or fail to - will determine whether they come back again. Although most people describe their community of faith as friendly and welcoming, newcomers often tell a different story.

How does someone experience your community of faith when they don't already know people there? [Read a story](#) from a United Church Growth Animator about a community of faith who offered exceptional welcome to their family. Perhaps there are lessons for all of our communities of faith for how we can strengthen our welcome and grow our church.

Featured News

★ Continued support for Search the Landfill; Red Dress Day May 5

As we enter the hope of spring, the communities, families and loved ones of Rebecca Contois, Morgan Harris, Mercedes Myran, and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe (Buffalo Woman) continue the exhausting work of calling for a search of the landfills near Winnipeg. Jury selection for the trial of the accused murderer has begun, with the trial to begin this summer, and this is a very hard time for the loved ones and communities. Our support in the form of words, presence and action is still needed; [please click here for some updates and some commitments](#) requested by Cambria Harris and Melissa Robinson, leaders at Camp Morgan. May their words guide and challenge us. As we get ready for [May 5, Red Dress Day](#), please, let's do what we can as church people to end this terrible epidemic of violence. That includes bringing our resources, buildings, and our hearts and spirits to support this struggle.

★ Climate justice/energy transition opportunity for young adults! May 20 deadline

KAIROS is seeking young adults in the Edmonton area to participate in its Strengthening Voices for a Just Transition project. This project aims to nurture a cohort of up to 12 changemakers to help guide us through the next stages of the energy transition and strengthen just transition policies and programs with principles from Indigenous peoples, young people, and those most affected by the climate crisis. [Click here for full information](#). | [Apply at this link](#). Deadline to apply has been extended to 11:59 p.m. PDT on Monday, May 20. You can also share these posts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#). If you have any questions, please contact Beth Lorimer, Ecological Justice Program Coordinator at blorimer@kairoscanada.org.

★ 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!

Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization has passed!

All 16 Regional Councils, the National Indigenous Council, and just over 80% of pastoral charges in The United Church of Canada voted in the recent remit process. Huge thanks to all who participated in learning spaces, especially Indigenous knowledge keepers; to all who were on the phoning teams that helped push us into a large majority voting on the remit; and to all who voted, participated, and learned together. The conversation is not over! More detail on numbers and next steps [is available here](#), and a [letter from Regional Council chairperson Rev Helen Reed is posted here](#). **Please share both in your pastoral charge.**

Wider Church News & Resources

★ May is Asian Heritage Month!

The United Church of Canada celebrates the [long, rich, and continuing contribution of Asian heritage](#), which has been a significant part of United Church life since Church Union in 1925 and even longer. You can find prayers, liturgies, and additional [worship and study resources for Asian Heritage Month](#) in the Worship section of our website.

★ April/ May Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage: in your own community and with national church leaders

Throughout Lent, many communities of faith across Canada, and around the world, with their bodies prayerfully mapped Gaza onto their own communities through the worldwide Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage. This renewed invitation is for everyone! Walk or roll together in your own community, preferably before May 13. Pray and act for a ceasefire, and for more than a ceasefire- for a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. Then, if you can, join national church leaders for the final leg of their pilgrimage. KAIROS member church leaders, including Moderator Carmen Lansdowne, will gather in Ottawa on May 22-23 to bring these calls in person to the Government of Canada and Parliamentarians. They'll urge them to take immediate and sustained steps to advance and promote the calls made in the [Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage](#). Please see the [United Church site](#) and the [KAIROS site](#) for more details. If you would like to plan a pilgrimage in your community, please let the Regional Council know so that we can support you.

★ Here's a [new, introductory little guide for planning your pilgrimage](#), especially in smaller communities. Email Regional Justice Minister Julie Graham at jgraham@united-church.ca.

★ No Cause for Despair: Finding Holy Joy and Vocation in the Midst of Secularization, Tuesday, May 7, 2024: 10 am – 3 pm (ET), Hybrid

Does the deep secularisation of western societies mean that God has disappeared, or is it rather a path through which God leads the people to new discoveries, a new dependence on grace? Join Dr. Stefan Paas, author and expert on church planting and mission, for the day as he explores faithful responses to secularization. He presents a hopeful perspective, rooted in a realistic appraisal of reality and rich theological

reflections. The format of the day includes lectures and group work for participants in person or online (via Zoom). Full details - [in person](#) / [online](#).

Advance notice: call for General Council 45 Commissioners

In 2025 we'll celebrate the United Church's 100th birthday, and see a return to an in-person General Council in Calgary. It's going to be a big and busy year. Important preparation for the 45th meeting of the General Council will include the election of General Council Commissioners, who serve a three-year term, attend the in-person meeting, and attend multiple online meetings through those three years as part of the overall governance of our church. Your Regional Nominations Committee will soon launch a process for identifying people who wish to stand for election, which takes place at their Regional Council meeting. For now, [here's the description of a Commissioner's role](#) for your discernment pleasure. Please share it freely.

In Case You Missed It:

Alberta's proposed transgender legislation and new Regional Council action resource

The Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive believes that taking action against Alberta's proposed legislation targeting transgender children, youth, and families is a key part of our work as an Affirming Regional Council, and as a community that supports the dignity, rights, safety, and thriving of all children and youth. In this spirit, the Region offers this education and action resource. We hope this resource helps you discern your own calls to action and faithful witness to God's all-embracing love. The resource includes: Legislation summary; our responses as church; moving to advocacy; what are the possible impacts of the proposed legislation, a closer look at the proposed legislation; and some more resources. [Click here to download the PDF](#).

Directory Update

The 2024 Regional Council Directory Update is now posted! The directory is a password-protected PDF designed to connect Regional Council members. As of April 2024, the directory will be updated on an ongoing basis. If you are saving the PDF on your devices, be sure to [check back](#) once in a while to make sure you are accessing the most up-to-date information! If you did not receive the link to the directory, [contact the office](#) for the full access details.

Worship Resources:

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

[Sixth Sunday of Easter - May 5, 2024](#)

[Rural Life Sunday - May 5, 2024](#)

Northern Spirit Regional Council Weekly Newsletter: NEWS Edition, May 1, 2024

[Asian Heritage Month 1 - May 5, 2024](#)

[Mental Health Sunday - May 5, 2024](#)

[Seventh Sunday of Easter - May 12, 2024](#)

[Asian History Month 2 - May 12, 2024](#)

[Christian Family Sunday - May 12, 2024](#)

[International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia - May 17, 2024](#)

[Pentecost - May 19, 2024](#)

[Asian Heritage Month 3 - May 19, 2024](#)

[Trinity Sunday - May 26, 2024](#)

[100th Anniversary Kick-off Service - June 9, 2024](#)

* [Click here to access Northern Spirit's 2024 Prayer Cycle](#)

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

Notice: We have moved!

The Regional Council office has moved into a smaller space as of April 2024.
Our new mailing address is:

8510 95 Ave NW,
Edmonton, AB
T6C 1Y7

Our phone number has also changed. The new office number is:

1(800) 268-3781, extension 6029.

Email remains the same: NorthernSpirit@united-church.ca.



Northern Spirit Regional Council Office

8510 95 Ave NW Edmonton Alberta

1(800) 268-3781 ext. 6029

northernspirit@united-church.ca

www.northernspiritr.ca



Northern Spirit Regional Council Weekly Newsletter: NEWS Edition, May 1, 2024

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