



## *News from the Region:* January 22, 2025



### **Short reminders of our history for this Centennial year**

*Throughout 2025, we'll be featuring very short stories about United Church history. Many thanks to Gayle Simonson, a lay member of the United Church at Southminster Steinhauer in Edmonton, an experienced history researcher, and a writer who has written for historical journals and UCC publications. She is a key volunteer in the United Church archives for both Northern Spirit and Chinook Winds. Gayle's generosity means that we'll have frequent reminders of our history with a focus on ordinary people. For our second vignette, she writes:*

The Basis of Union to form the United Church of Canada was signed in 1925. Methodist Louise McKinney, an activist who was the first woman to sit in the Alberta legislature, was one of only four women to sign and the only one from western Canada. Along with Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby and Emily Murphy, she was one of the "Famous Five" who, in 1929, had women in Canada declared as "Persons."

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**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).

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

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## Family News

♥ **Covenanting:** The covenanting service between Rev. Shane Goldie and St. Andrew's United Church, Spruce Grove, will be held **Sunday, February 23, 2025**. The service will be a part of our regular service time, which starts at 10:00 a.m. We will be providing a light lunch after the service to which all are invited. Come and share with us as we take this next step on our covenantal journey in faith.

### ★ New Staff Phone Numbers

The United Church Staff phone system has changed!

**Adam Hall's new phone number:** 1-587-407-0329

**Northern Spirit Office / Chloe Burns' new phone number:** 1-587-407-0330

These numbers are already set up and in service. The former 1-800 numbers will not work after today, January 15. Please spread the word and save our new phone numbers! Many of the tri-Regional and National staff numbers are changing as well: [all staff contact information is available on the website](#).

### ★ Reminder re Annual Meetings for Communities of Faith with Pastoral Charge Supervisors

For Communities of faith who have appointed Supervisors, those supervisors must be present (either in person, via technology, or phone) during the entire duration of your Annual Meeting. Because of that, it is absolutely imperative that you reach out to your supervisors and discuss the time, date, and location of your annual meetings prior to determining the date and announcing those dates publicly. [Please click here to read the full letter from the Community of Faith Support Committee](#).

### ★ Ministry Personnel in Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils....

*(including active, retired, honorary associates, and candidates in appointment) - from Office of Vocation Minister Rev. Laura Fohse:*

In response to a number of requests (and my own desire) I will be hosting a 1 hour (roughly) connection/prayer/communion Zoom gathering on the **4th Tuesday of each**

**month at 1pm (CST) / 12 pm MT. We will start next Tuesday (Jan 28).**

You are welcome to bring your lunch with you to the gathering (but you may need to share with those who forgot) Also bring **communion elements** (obviously) and a **candle** (or whatever helps center you).

Here is the Zoom link. It will be the **same link each month,**

<https://united-church.zoom.us/j/81483053358>

**★ Rescind legislation targeting transgender people: Northern Spirit Executive letter to the AB government**

The Regional Executive and the Affirming Committee have written a letter to the premier and relevant ministers calling for immediate rescinding of Bills 26, 27, and 29. These greatly limit transgender, Two Spirit, and gender diverse children and youth's access to appropriate medical care, sports, and correct naming, and greatly reduces all students' access to sexual health education everywhere in Alberta. It is possible that BC and NWT teams travelling to AB for tournaments will also be affected.

*"We reject a society where the rights of some take precedence over the rights of others. Such a society is not in keeping with the commandment to love one another. Our faith leads us to condemn all three bills and their intended impacts. We believe Albertans want their government to treat all people equitably, to protect everyone's human rights, and to ensure anyone facing barriers to health care are provided with science-based treatments and support to navigate the medical system."* Please [read the letter and download the PDF here](#).

**★ And over to you: action for people and communities of faith on AB bills 26, 27, and 29**

This is your invitation to express your concerns about Alberta's Bills 26, 27, and 29 and their impacts on transgender children, youth, and loved ones. Following the lead of the letter from the Executive and the Affirming Committee, you are invited to write or call in your own response as a person of faith and a community of faith. [Click here for resources for letter writing, and links to further resources from Alberta groups](#).

While this legislation will have less immediate impact on our members in NWT and BC, it's possible those travelling to AB for health needs and children's sports will see an impact. And above all, this legislation targets some of the most vulnerable people in Canada. It is a concern for all Canadians.

Questions? Want to discuss this further? That's welcome too. Please contact [the Affirming Committee](#) via staff support Julie Graham, [jgraham@united-church.ca](mailto:jgraham@united-church.ca) and she will pass you on directly to the committee. We don't post their personal emails for privacy reasons.

**★ The Affirming Committee wants to hear from you! Read on. And: Affirming check in delayed and coming soon**

Thank you to people who asked what happened to the check in for Affirming ministries

and allies. It is coming! The Affirming Committee is planning to hold one, but has been busy working with actions related to the Alberta legislation targeting transgender children and youth and their loved ones. (See the letter linked in this newsletter- and there's more to come, including an action invitation for everyone.)

A Northern Spirit check in will be held in March. Northern Spirit members are most welcome to the [Living Skies Prep for PIE Day gathering February 4](#) (see the Events newsletter from last week, or next week's.) And there's an additional invitation for you to discern, below.

**★ Affirming Committee retreat Feb 20-22 in St Albert: come discern if you want to be part of the Affirming Committee**

This committee supports the Regional Council in its Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Affirming commitments, supports Affirming and Affirming- curious ministries, advises other parts of Northern Spirit's governance, connects with community partners, and will be exploring how "Affirming" can better embrace disabilities rights and identities. Here's [the Affirming website home base](#).

All this, and it's a fun place to hang out! The committee is short on membership beyond the Edmonton area and Lloydminster. It really needs wider community perspectives, and greater racial and ethnocultural and age diversity. Might you be interested in joining this working committee? Get in touch and we'll talk about you coming to the retreat, or other ways of discerning! Contact chair Mickey Wilson: [revmickeywilson@gmail.com](mailto:revmickeywilson@gmail.com).

**★ Planning Worship event: format change**

The Planning Worship Together team has decided to do something shorter and sweeter this month, in place of the day retreat at St. David's in Leduc. We will be at [the High Level Diner](#) in Edmonton, **Thursday, January 30 at 10:30 am** for cinnamon buns, coffee and brainstorming Lent 2025 ideas. Afterwards there will be an option to gather somewhere to do more planning if that excites you. Please note the High Level Diner has free parking spots across the street (behind the movie theater). All those planning one or more worship services this Lent are welcome.

**★ Updates from your Executive:**

*Centennial:* That the NSRC Executive will be doing our Centennial reflections and celebrations in the midst of our in person annual meeting. Everyone in the region is invited to mark the Centennial in their own location and partner with neighbours for any other events. No one is tasked with coordinating other events but please use the Newsletter and website to promote your events and ideas.

*Annual Meetings dates established into the future:* The tri-region staff proposed, and the Executive agreed, that dates be established for our Regional Council's in-person annual meeting occur once every three years for the last weekend in May whenever possible (excepting when Pentecost falls on that weekend, etc). Celebrations of

ministries worship services will be held in person every year. Online annual meetings will be held in November, with one night for learning and discussing if there are proposals put forward, and one night for business. The agenda for online annual meetings will be restricted to necessary business. Additional spaces and gatherings can be planned separately addressing other pieces (education, support, etc).

*2025 AGM: **Save the date** for the 2025 in-person Regional Annual Meeting, which will be held **May 29 - June 1**, at Riverbend United Church, Edmonton.*

### **Annual Declaration Reminder: A Message from Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse...**

**This message is for alllll ministry personnel (including candidates in an appointment and voluntary associate ministers) - GUESS WHAT?! Its that wonderful time of the year when you get to dust off your criminal record check, visit ChurchHub and complete your annual declaration!**

**First time doing this? Forget what you did last year? NO PROBLEM!** I'm here to help. This link... [How to Complete the Annual Declaration](#)... is a handy dandy info sheet that will explain the whole process to you. BUT if you find this confusing (or would just like to chat with me), feel free to email me [lfouhse@united-church.ca](mailto:lfouhse@united-church.ca). So why not visit ChurchHub now while your excitement is peaked?

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## **Wider Church News & Resources**

★ All the latest national news is here, in the **January edition of E-ssentials**. [Click here to read](#).

★ **Hardisty Lake United Church Camp: Registration is now open for the 2025 Summer season!** All information is available [on their website at this link](#). Spread the word!

### **Here from the beginning: the story of Black people in the United Church project**

Whatever your ethnic or racial background, you're invited to support a Centennial story-telling project focused on the lives and contributions of Black people in the United Church of Canada. This exhibition celebrating Black individuals' remarkable contributions and experiences within the church amplifies these voices and showcases their incredible impact on our faith, history, and community. *Here from the beginning / Ici depuis le début: Celebrating the history of The United Church of Canada through the lens of Black people is the overall project, and it has two related parts:*

*Telling the stories of individuals we want to honour.*

*A travelling historical exhibit.*

[Click here for details and a shareable poster](#).

## **Opportunity: Pilgrim in Mission, between May-September, 2025**

Are you interested in engaging with global partners in their own contexts to witness first-hand the mutuality of partnership? About the rich history of Mission & Service partners, and the priorities that they are addressing? The United Church of Canada invites United Church of Canada individuals interested in learning about global partners and the Global Partnership Program to apply to the Pilgrimage of Learning initiative, comprising of 4 delegations each visiting one partnership region (Latin America & the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Middle East) between May and September, 2025. Join this pilgrimage to intentionally live into The United Church of Canada's commitment to Mutual Radical Accompaniment and to decolonizing the church's participation in global partnership. [Click here for full details.](#) Deadline: 31 January 2025.

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### *In Case You Missed It:*

#### **New Prayer Cycle Available for 2025**

The Northern Spirit prayer cycle for 2025 is [now available at this link!](#) This prayer cycle is created to ensure every congregation in our Region is held in prayer over the course of the year. Our prayer cycles are always linked on the [Worship Resources page](#) of our website.

#### **Youth Climate Corps support letter from the Regional Executive; invitation for your community of faith**

In December 2024, the Northern Spirit Executive voted in favour of sending a letter of support to the federal government, calling for the creation of a Youth Climate Corps at the invitation of a young adult member of a United Church in Edmonton. [Here is a link to the letter.](#)

Your community of faith or ministry is also invited to consider this invitation from young adults, and to sign on. **You can find the [full text of the open letter here](#), and you can [sign onto the letter here](#).**

#### **Call for nominees for Moderator**

The next Moderator will be elected by the Commissioners of General Council 45, in August 2025. The Moderator is responsible for giving spiritual leadership to all in The United Church of Canada, presiding at meetings of the General Council and its Executive, visiting throughout the United Church, and serving as the primary spokesperson and representative. [Learn more about the nomination process and responsibilities at this web page](#), which will also be updated with nominees' names.

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### *Worship Resources:*

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

[Third after Epiphany - January 26, 2025](#)

[Fourth after Epiphany - February 2, 2025](#)  
[Black History Month 1 - February 2, 2025](#)  
[Fifth after Epiphany - February 9, 2025](#)  
[Black History Month 2 - February 9, 2025](#)  
[Sixth after Epiphany - February 16, 2025](#)  
[Black History Month 3 - February 16, 2025](#)

\* [Click here to access Northern Spirit's 2025 Prayer Cycle](#)

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

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**★ Reminder for treasurers: Communicating salary changes to ADP**

The 2025 Minimum Salaries and Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel document is now available online. You can find it in the Downloads section at the bottom of the [Ministers' Salary Schedule and Cost of Living Groups webpage](#). **The increases to salaries of ministry personnel are not automatically made by ADP. General Council Office staff do not update ADP with minimum salary data. Your pastoral charge ADP administrator must update the minister's salary in TeamPay or inform ADP of the new salary amount for the pay period beginning January 1.**



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