



News from the Region: May 28, 2025



Short reminders of our history for this Centennial year

Throughout 2025, we'll be featuring very short stories about United Church history. Thanks to historian Gayle Simonson in Edmonton, we can also offer 100-word history vignettes for use in your own community! [Here are vignettes 1-8](#). And brand new, [here are vignettes 9-17](#). (Word format; when you click, the file will save automatically to your Downloads folder.) For our next vignette, she writes:

Post-World War II and early into the baby boom, the United Church began a decade-long process to produce a new education program for all ages which came to fruition in 1964 with the release of the "New Curriculum." Following much consultation, in 1964 *The Word and the Way* prepared adults to present other volumes in Sunday Schools as they were released. It proved very controversial as it presented symbolic rather than literal interpretations of the Bible to reflect new learnings in other fields including science. One critic called it "a frontal assault on the Bible," though most United Church people seemed to accept it, just as they have continued to come to new and sometimes controversial understandings since.

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

★ **Northern Spirit Annual Meeting: Thursday May 29 - Sunday June 1**

We are looking forward to gathering, both in-person and online, this week at our annual meeting, Thursday May 29 - June 1. Everyone is welcome to join for our public Affirming event Friday evening, and our Celebration of Ministries & Centennial service on June 1 (details below).

A draft agenda for the meeting is available on [our website meeting page](#).

Workbook documents and Reports have also been posted! Even if you are not attending the meeting, the reports are a great way to learn about what's happening in the Region. [Access the full workbook documents here](#).

Or read the Reports -

1. [Reports from the Region and Wider Church](#) (includes Staff, Commissions, and Committees)
2. [Reports from Networks and Clusters](#)
3. [Reports from Community, Outreach, and Education Partners](#)

★ **From the Heart: understanding the impacts of AB's anti-transgender laws, 30 May, 7:00-9:00PM, Riverbend United Church and [on YouTube at this link](#).**

Join us for personal stories of the impacts of Bills 26, 28, and 29 on Albertan athletes, teachers, parents, children, and church members. Learn together how we can take action in support of gender-diverse people. Behind the headlines and debates, what is happening for transgender people in Alberta? This isn't only a legal and legislative matter; it has lived impacts on people's bodies, minds, hearts, and spirit. We thank our speakers, who are joining us to describe the impact on their lives. We invite you to come with an open mind and heart, and hear their stories, no matter your opinion on this legislation. [Please see all details here](#).

★ **Celebration of Ministries and 100th Anniversary service, 1 June, 10:30-12:30:** Join us in person at Riverbend United Church, and online [via this YouTube link](#), as we honour past and future with prayer, worship, and song. General Secretary Rev Michael Blair will offer the sermon. We anticipate that we will welcome people into the order of ministry in the United Church via admission from other denominations.

For those attending in person: a community choir will be part of our service. All welcome! [More details will be shared here as they are finalised.](#)

 Join *Living Spirit United Church* for their Centennial High Tea on **Saturday, June 7**, from 1 - 3 pm, at the Clean Energy Technology Center in Drayton Valley (5400 22nd Avenue). RSVP by June 2 to: livingspiritunuteddv@gmail.com.

 We invite you to join Westlock and Rainbow Pastoral charges as we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada. **June 15th, 2025** beginning at 11:00 a.m. at the Hazel Bluff United Church Highway 18, Westlock County. Old fashioned picnic lunch to follow (outside if weather permitting). Bring a lawn chair if possible. Ride share may be available. **RSVP by June 6th** to wuchurch@telus.net / 780-349-3556.

Centennial worship resources for your community of faith

Many elements of the June 8 national Centennial service are [now available on this resource page](#).

Have a look for the Northern Lights Centennial Service but also many other excellent resources on this page, to accompany your own local Spirit-led creativity.

If possible in your area, plan to participate together in the national service, which will be [livestreamed on YouTube here](#). Our Regional Council won't be offering a separate resources for worship, so that we can participate together as one United Church by using the gift of national resources

Inclusive space/ Affirming resource from Living Skies

The Living Skies Affirming Committee's Rev Sarah Beynon Giles and the entire committee have been working on a short starter guide to invite thinking about the many ways all our ministries in our Regional Councils can extend a wider welcome-whether you're officially Affirming or not! Here is [the PNG image](#). And [here is the PDF version](#). Use and share freely!

This is a permanent work in progress, of course, and these are just a few suggested ideas you can implement or build on. As we move through Asian Heritage Month and Jewish Heritage Month, and prepare for Pride Month and Indigenous History Month, this is a call and a support to help us keep on reflecting on how we live out God's radical hospitality in our own context.

Wider Church News & Resources

★ *Then Let Us Sing!* - Now available

We're excited to bring you [Then Let Us Sing!](#), the United Church's inspiring new hymnal featuring 165 new songs from diverse voices around the world. The Full Music Choir and Accompanist editions are now available to purchase at UCRDstore.ca. An online

platform, accessible through ONE LICENSE, will also begin rolling out over the next few months, eventually offering vocal and congregational scores for the entire collection. Learn more about the digital platform at ThenLetUsSing.ca. To celebrate the Centennial, a special *Then Let Us Sing!* Centennial Celebration Package is now available, featuring four pieces you can use in your community until June 10, 2025. You can find this package and many other Centennial worship resources on [The United Church of Canada website](https://www.united-church.ca).

Structural Change Evaluation Survey

In 2019, the United Church undertook a major restructuring moving from four courts to three councils with a commitment to evaluate the change against its intended outcomes after five years. That process is now underway and a survey has been forwarded to: all pastoral charges—to be completed at a meeting of the Board/Council; all ministry personnel; and all regional council staff, Office of Vocation staff, and General Council staff impacted by the change. If you did not receive the survey, please check your junk email. Also please ensure that the correct email address is attached to your ChurchHub profile. **The survey will be open until June 15, 2025.** Please be sure to make time to respond. Your input is vital.

Revised resources for the M&P Committee

Revised resources for the M&P Committee were [recently posted on the UC website](#). Some of the changes include: additions to M&P committee procedures, and new supplementary resources on annual performance reviews, developing healthy teams, and staff transitions. Please direct your M&P committees to these valuable [new and updated resources](#). If you have any questions about these new documents, please contact [Adam Hall](#).

New Toward 2035 Initiative

The United Church of Canada has unveiled an inspiring new initiative, "Toward 2035," as part of its centennial celebrations. This forward-looking vision aims to honour the legacy of past generations while charting a bold path for the future. In an open letter, Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary, emphasized the importance of this moment for reflection and imagination. [Read the full news story and the open letter from Rev. Michael Blair.](#)

In Case You Missed It:

2024 Strategic Plan Annual Report

As we live out our church's Centennial, we hear the call to be deep, bold, and daring in renewing our church for the next 100 years. The General Council Office's [Strategic Plan](#) is helping the church realize our Vision, working closely with regional councils across the country. We hope these stories of progress from year two of our plan will engage, inspire, and compel. Learn more about the plan by going to [Our Call and Vision \(opens in a new tab\)](#) on united-church.ca. Please [scroll down](#) to download the full text of the

2024 report.

Worship Resources:

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

[Pride Sunday - June 1, 2025](#)

[Seventh Sunday of Easter - June 1, 2025](#)

[Environment Sunday - June 1, 2025](#)

[Union Sunday - June 8, 2025](#)

[Pentecost Sunday - June 8, 2025](#)

[Trinity Sunday - June 15, 2025](#)

[Indigenous Day of Prayer - June 15, 2025](#)

[UN World Refugee Day - June 20, 2025](#)

[Second after Pentecost - June 22, 2025](#)

[Canadian Multiculturalism Day - June 27, 2025](#)

[Third after Pentecost - June 29, 2025](#)

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

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



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