



NORTHERN SPIRIT  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

## News from the Region: June 11, 2025



**100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
1925-2025

**COMMEMORATING 100 YEARS**  
Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice  
The United Church of Canada · 1925—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:

The first ministers in the United Church in 1925 included Robert and Egerton, the sons of Ojibway missionary Henry Bird Steinhauer, who had established the Methodist mission at Whitefish Lake, Alberta in the 1850s. Robert served in a number of Indigenous congregations in Alberta and, like his father, spoke out about the treatment of native people. In 1936, he became the first indigenous person to receive a Doctor of Divinity degree from their alma mater Victoria College. Egerton served first in the west and from 1918 to retirement in 1926 worked with the Ojibwa on Lake Huron. Together they published a hymn book in Cree in 1920.



(Photo: Robert Bird Steinhauer, ca. 1887)

**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

### ★ Centennial greetings from the Regional Council

We turned 100 the day before this newsletter went out; let's declare the whole year a Centennial. [Here are video greetings from the Regional Council Executive.](#)

### ★ Centennial thank you!

Thank you to all who have held and will hold creative, Spirit-ed community gatherings to commemorate our 100th birthday. Our regional calendar and community of faith social media show the wide range of creative happenings, from choirs to tree-planting, community history conversations to plans for future ways of serving and funding our communities. Congratulations to all who created these spaces.

### ★ Jasper United offering its land for temporary housing

Jasper United Church was destroyed in last year's wildfire and is offering the use of its land for interim housing for at least two years. The Jasper Recovery Coordination Centre anticipates being able to fit six CorCan units and upward of 10 wellsite trailers on the United Church land – a total of 20 to 30 dwelling units. [Please see the full media](#)

[story here](#). The headlines have faded but recovery and healing are continuing and slow. We pray for the healing and wellbeing of congregants and the community they serve. Please remember to include Jasper, its people, and its churches in your prayers, especially our United and Anglican family who lost so much.

★ **Letter to Alberta Chiefs in support of their reminders of Treaty relationships**

The Being Good Relations Network has written a solidarity letter to the Treaty 6, 7, and 8 chiefs, expressing solidarity with their strong reminder that all of Alberta is Treaty land and that this fact is central to the province's continued courting of separatist groups. [Please see the full letter here](#). Your community of faith is most welcome to use the letter as a resource for writing your own.

★ **Pastoral letter from the Moderator and Regional letters on the wildfires**

Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine regional councils often collaborate. Now we are facing a collaboration none of us want: wildfires. All three Regions have communities who have been forced to flee or are facing evacuations, and all three are relying on the courage of first responders and the efforts of relief agencies. As our Moderator, Rt Rev Carmen Lansdowne said, "As I write this, you continue to face the devastation and displacement from wildfires across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. The New Creed speaks of our commitment to "live with respect in creation," a teaching from Indigenous members of the church. We acknowledge that these fires are the result of our lack of respect." [The letter is here as a PDF file](#). Living Skies' own [statement is here](#); Prairie to Pine's [is here](#). Northern Spirit's fire situation is now also starting to worsen and communication to the Region is being considered.

♥ **The Power of Prayer: call for daily prayer for wildfire impacts.**

Keewatin Circle, the Indigenous United Church in Manitoba, invites you to pray with them for all communities in Canada regarding the forest fire emergencies. **Praying will take place for 1 hour each evening beginning at 7:00pm CDT (Manitoba/NWO), 6:00pm Mountain and CST, 5:00 pm Pacific.** We are praying for the following:

- *Rain*
- *Safety of all communities*
- *Safety of evacuees*
- *Safety for all those responding to the needs of evacuees.*
- *Safety for those who are in communities fighting fires.*
- *As well as the animals both domestically and wild*

We are asking that all communities pray with us, as prayer is stronger when we come together in time of need.

## Wider Church News & Resources

### ★ Action for Gaza from the national church and ecumenical partners

United Church people, including those fasting, are encouraged to phone their MP's Parliamentary or Constituency office every day for 40 days. At the heart of this is a call for Canada to impose comprehensive sanctions on the Israel government, as non-violent means of applying pressure on Israel to cease its bombing and its deliberate withholding of desperately needed food and medical aid. The action calls for an embargo all trade with Israel until it ends the genocide in Gaza and its military occupation; and for placing diplomatic, economic and political sanctions on the Israeli government. There is the [full action call](#) from the national church. Mennonites, the KAIROS ecumenical coalition, and others, are participating in similar calls, as the already unspeakable circumstances in Gaza continue to worsen, and starvation deaths climb.

Reminder: all are invited to this rare online **opportunity June 19 to hear directly from Canadians who have recently served in Gaza**. [All details are here](#). Organised by the Justice Peace group in Living Skies Regional Council.

### ★ Whose land is your church on?

As we move through Indigenous History Month and prepare for National Indigenous Peoples' Day, Harrow United Church in Winnipeg delved into this question and [came up with this public tour](#) looking at the history of the Métis community displaced in the 1950s in order to build the neighbourhood and the church. St Martin's United in Saskatoon has a very similar history. What stories about non-Indigenous church buildings could each of us help surface, and work with Indigenous communities to tell? As the 100th year of the United Church continues, let's bring more truth-telling to light.

### Indigenous Day of Prayer June 15, and Indigenous Peoples' Day June 21

June is Indigenous History Month and June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples' Day. This is a time to celebrate the outstanding achievements, history, cultures, and diversity of Indigenous peoples. This is also the time of summer solstice. Check to see what First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and organizations in your area are doing to celebrate, and join in. Check to see how your municipality, schools, and libraries are marking this time. Take in the Indigenous programming on APTN (Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network) and the CBC.

This year, the United Church celebrates [National Indigenous Day of Prayer](#) on **Sunday, June 15**. New worship materials are available on the [United Church website](#). This year's resources feature an order of service from the perspectives of both Bible and Bundle by the Rev. Agnes Spence of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, and another marking the 10th anniversary of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action from the Rev. Emma Seamone of Carberry, MB.

### ***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](https://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](https://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://TheUnitedChurchofCanada.org).

### **LAST CHANCE: 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.

### **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.](#)

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### ***In Case You Missed It:***

#### **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.

## 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](#).

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## *Worship Resources:*

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

[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](#)

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

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