



News from the Region: November 26, 2025



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.



'Tis the season! Festive events are popping up on [our events calendar](#).
[Check out local Christmas events](#), and [submit your own community events](#) to the calendar!

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 [history short stories 1-8](#) / [vignettes 9- 17](#) / [vignettes 18-22](#) / [vignettes 23-30](#). And, brand new, [vignettes 31 to 40](#)! (Word format; when you click, the file will save automatically to your Downloads folder. *This week's featured vignette (#22)*:*

Though Newfoundland and Labrador didn't become a province until 1949, the Methodist and Presbyterian churches there became part of the United Church of Canada in 1925. The churches there now make up the First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council. Gower Street United Church in St. John's, which dates back to 1815, is considered the oldest United Church in the region. Along with the nearby properties of the Anglican, Catholic, and Presbyterian churches clustered in downtown St. John's, the church is included in Canada's designation of the area as the Ecclesiastical District National Historic Site. The designation recognizes the churches' contributions to the "spiritual, educational, charitable and political fabric of society."

Family News

★ Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy Sabbatical Announcement

Shannon McCarthy will be on sabbatical from **Dec 1, 2025** to **March 2, 2026**. The Pastoral Relations Minister ([Adam Hall](#) – Northern Spirit) will be acting Executive Minister during this period. Shannon's Executive Assistant, [Chantal Winslow](#) will direct any other inquiries to where they need to go. [Full sabbatical announcement and details on our website](#).

★ Farewell and Best Wishes to Francesca Martina

This summer, we were excited to welcome Francesca Martina to our team as our Finance Admin. In her time with us, Francesca brought energy, dedication, and a keen eye for detail to every task she took on. Her contributions have made a meaningful impact, and we are truly grateful for the professionalism and positivity she brought to the role.

While we are sad to see her go, we are also happy to share that Francesca has accepted an exciting new position that will allow her to continue growing in her career. Please join us in congratulating her on this well-deserved opportunity.

Francesca will remain with us until the end of the year. We thank her for her hard work and wish her every success in the next chapter of her journey. Thank you, Francesca, you will be missed!

★ **Responses to Alberta Government, the use of the notwithstanding clause, and Bills 26, 27, and 29**

★ **New: Leaders from both Chinook Winds and Northern Spirit Regional Councils** have written Premier Danielle Smith and other elected Alberta government representatives urging immediate reconsideration of legislation that restricts transgender people's rights and uses the notwithstanding clause. We invite you to read the full message and to join us in encouraging the Alberta government to reconsider these laws that clearly infringe on human rights. [Read the full letter on our website at this link.](#)

★ Last week, on the Trans Day of Remembrance, church leaders from the Lutheran and Anglican churches of Canada, as well as the Moderator of the United Church, wrote a letter to Danielle Smith and government officials, expressing that *"we are compelled by faith, conscience, and pastoral responsibility to speak against your government's decision to invoke the notwithstanding clause to restrict the rights and freedoms of transgender people in Alberta."* [Read this letter on our website at this link.](#)

★ **Did you know: Northern Spirit Affirming Committee Facebook Group**

Hey, the Northern Spirit Affirming Committee has [a Facebook group! Join](#) and stay in the know!

★ **Ministers: Are You Missing Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse's Emails?**

I promise, I'm not ghosting you! Every so often **I send out an email to all ministry personnel in your region** — little check ins, updates, reminders and invitations. I understand there may be some who are not receiving them. If this is you:

- (1) **check your junk mail**
- (2) your **ChurchHub email address** needs to be up-to-date for the magic to work

If you haven't received a message from me in a while (or ever!), just send me a quick email at lfouhse@united-church.ca and I'll make sure you're added. I'd love for you to be included — no one should be left standing outside the metaphorical church gathering space wondering where everyone went!

★ **Posture of a Porter: Mini-Devotional for Advent** *(a resource from our Growth Animator)*

Discover what an ancient monastic rule can teach us about welcoming newcomers with this mini devotional, available as a [Word Doc](#) or printable [PDF booklet](#). This packet also comes with an accompanying [art piece](#). Use any and all of this resource in your own spiritual practice, with a group (including leadership teams) or as part of worship (this includes the right to reproduce the artwork with accompanying credit: Aaron Miechkota, 2025).

Preparing for guests with joyful anticipation this Advent *(a note from our Growth Animator)*

Advent is fast approaching! As we start to dust off decorations, and plan Christmas

activities, it is the perfect time to consider how we can be fostering a culture of invitation in our churches. Just as we wait expectantly for the arrival of two weary travelers to Bethlehem, we can also prepare our own hearts to offer welcome to the stranger.

[Click here](#) for some resources focused on cultivating invitation during the four weeks of Advent.

Christmas Comes Early: An Advent Gift to all of our Northern Spirit congregations

Northern Spirit has purchased a license for an **Advent Small Group Study with Four Worship Services**, as a gift for all of our congregations and churches to access for free this Advent season.

We never tire of the story. Each Advent, we set out the beloved figures of the creche and are invited again into the mystery of incarnation. In this small group study and worship series, we look more closely at the figures and what they reveal about the human journey of faith, the bigger picture of Love, and the Divine Longing at the heart of Christmas.

Alongside four study sessions, you'll also receive complete Advent worship services—rich with liturgy, Advent candle-lighting, all-ages activities, Scripture, reflections, prayers, and music suggestions. Together, they invite us to approach the creche with fresh wonder, to notice who is present (and who is missing), and to be shaped by Love that is already here and still arriving.

This series is provided by *Prayer Bench* and offered as a gift to leaders and communities of faith through a **Regional License**. You can [sign up to access these Advent resources through this link](#). Merry Christmas! ♥♥

Wider Church News & Resources

★ New Prayer: 10th Anniversary of the TRC Final Report

December 15th marks the 10th Anniversary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We've written [this prayer](#) for you to use on your own or in church on Sunday, December 14th. It is consistent with the "Advent Unwrapped" liturgy for that day.

★ Messy Church Canada Connection event December 3, *online*

Thank you for all you do in sharing God's love! Advent, Christmas, New Year's, Epiphany – they all come so quickly at this time of year! It can be overwhelming to do all the planning and preparation!

The Messy Church Canada Team wants to support you! Let's connect, share ideas, and pray for and with one another. On Wednesday, December 3, 2025 there are 2 time options for gathering on ZOOM. You are welcome at one or both!

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 (same link for BOTH), 11:00 a.m. British Columbia / **12:00 noon** Alberta & Northwest Territories - OR - **evening session: 5:00**

p.m. British Columbia / 6:00 p.m. Alberta & Northwest Territories. [Join via this Zoom link](#). And save the date: the next Messy Church meeting will be *January 7, 2026*. We look forward to seeing you!

No Room At the Inn Campaign 2025

Every year the No Room in the Inn campaign raises money in support of a specific project of an Edmonton area organization that seeks to help those experiencing housing challenges. This year's campaign will focus on raising funds for **WIN House!** Details of the project and how you and your faith communities can get involved are [available here on the Anglican Diocese website](#). Thank you for your ongoing support of this important initiative.

Resource Now Available: Moderator's Advent Message

If you missed the sendout from the GC Communications team, please [follow this link to access](#) the Moderator's Advent Message for 2025, and related instructions.

In Case You Missed It...

The 2026 Minimum Salaries & 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.*

United Network for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (UNJPPI) Newsletter

UNJPPI is a grassroots network of United Church members, adherents, and other friends, established in 2012 in response to the calls from leaders of Palestinian churches in the Kairos Palestine Document. We believe it is important to understand the complex dimensions of the path to peace in Palestine and Israel. In our newsletters you will find resources, upcoming events and advocacy campaigns. We hope you will use these resources to help in the way of peace. Find our latest newsletter [at this link](#), or visit [our website](#) for more information and resources.

Joint Pastoral Letter from Chinook Winds and Northern Spirit Leadership

A pastoral letter from Regional Alberta United Church leaders regarding the provincial government's invocation of the notwithstanding clause in their labour dispute with the Alberta Teachers Association was sent out last Friday, and is [available to read on the Northern Spirit website](#).

Preparing a records transfer for the archives this winter?

- *Contact the archivist to receive forms and guides.
- * Schedule a transfer date with the archivist.

*Consider sending a box to Edmonton.

It's been a busy year sourcing and sharing historical information about our Communities of Faith. Before you put everything back on the shelf in the storage closet, consider what is unique and irreplaceable. What should be copied before it is hung back on the wall? The archivist, Leanne Templeton, is looking forward to speaking with communities about their record keeping. Please reach out to Leanne if you are planning an office tidy-up this winter, or if you would like to prepare a deposit to send to the archives. ****Please do not drop off records without an appointment.*** Leanne works part time at the Provincial Archives of Alberta and the best way to connect with her is via email: Ltempleton@united-church.ca.

Northern Spirit Climate Contacts

If your church passionate about climate justice? Do you have special climate-related projects or a justice team working on climate-related issues? The Northern Spirit office & Executive is working on assembling a contact list for communicating key climate-related actions and events. Please [contact the office](#) if your church has any contacts who would appreciate being on this list!

Worship Resources:

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

[First Sunday of Advent - November 30, 2025](#)

[World AIDS Day - December 1, 2025](#)

[UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities - December 3, 2025](#)

[National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women - December 6, 2025](#)

[Second Sunday of Advent - December 7, 2025](#)

[UN Human Rights Day - December 10, 2025](#)

[Third Sunday of Advent - December 14, 2025](#)

[Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 21, 2025](#)

[Christmas - December 25, 2025](#)

[First after Christmas - December 28, 2025](#)

[New Year's Day - January 1, 2026](#)

[Celebrate Epiphany - January 4, 2026](#)

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

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



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