



Events Newsletter: January 28, 2026



Upcoming events 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.

Check out our [local events calendar](#), and [submit your own community events](#)!

News from the Pews and Other Ministries

♥ We are sad to share news of the death of *Rev. Raymond Olsen*, in December 2025. A celebration of Rev. Ray's life will be held Saturday, February 7, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Riverbend United Church, 14907 45 Avenue NW, Edmonton, AB. [Read his full obituary at this link.](#)

♥ We celebrate with **St. David's United in Leduc, AB**, as they celebrate their church becoming officially Affirming! 🏳️ They will be celebrating this designation on [March 15 at 10:30 a.m.](#)

★ **Faithful Footprints: 2026 Funding Cycle Opens**

The Faithful Footprints Grant supports United Church communities of faith in making decarbonization upgrades to their buildings. Grants of up to \$20,000 are available to help reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening long-term sustainability. **The 2026 funding cycle opens January 28, 2026, with Expressions of Interest accepted beginning that date.** Learn more about eligibility, timelines, and how to apply on the [Faithful Footprints Grant webpage](#).

★ **National Nominations**

The first calls for [nominations for 2026](#) have launched! Do you have the expertise the church is seeking for these denominational groups? Do you know someone who does? Serving on a committee is a great way to live Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice. [Click here for all available roles](#).

New & Featured Events

★ **Save the date! Regional Connection Event, April 25 and 26, Grande Prairie**

The Regional Council is travelling to you! The weekend of April 25 and 26, all of Northern Spirit is invited to join us in Grande Prairie for a time of connection, learning, and worshipping. More details will follow as planning continues - check our website later this week! (*Future connection events are also in planning, for those not neighbouring Grande Prairie or those who can't attend in April.*) We look forward to gathering this Spring!

★ **Uncharted senior youth retreat, February 14-16, Kananaskis**

Uncharted is a retreat for youth ages 16-17, and this year it's at Camp Chief Hector in Kananaskis. Registration has been extended, so there's still time to sign up, but it will be closing soon. Bursaries are available and we encourage you to use them! Enter CHART25 or CHART50 for 25% or 50% off, or send us an email at firstthirdministry@united-church.ca for the 75% and 100% codes. Don't let money be the barrier to attending! For more information, or to register, you can e-mail [Kevin Guenther Trautwein](#) or [check the website here](#). Please share with your communities!

★ **The Great Exhale: A Gentle Pause for Faithful Souls: Clergy Retreat, May 5-6, Star of the North Retreat Centre, St. Albert, AB**

*A retreat for clergy: **All active ministry personnel** (currently in, or searching for, a call or appointment) from Prairie to Pine, Living Skies, and Northern Spirit Regional Councils are warmly invited to **The Great Exhale**, a retreat for rest, renewal, and connection, held May 5–6 at **Star of the North Retreat Centre** in St. Albert, Alberta. Designed with spaciousness in mind, this retreat offers time to rest, reflect, pray, laugh, walk, and simply breathe—alongside worship and shared learning. The retreat will be*

facilitated by **Rev. Jordan Cantwell**, with gentle sessions focused on listening deeply, reconnecting with God, and renewing imagination for ministry. Flexible registration options are available to support accessibility. More information can be found on the registration form. **Registration deadline is March 15.** Click [here to register](#). Contact Laura Fohse, Vocational Minister for more information.

★ **Lenten Prayer Meetings**

Come together, let us pray. Every Sunday during Lent come let us gather to pray. Each prayer meeting starts at 4:00 p.m. Mountain Time. ALL ARE INVITED. Everyone in the Edmonton area is invited to join in-person: all prayer meeting locations are [listed on our website](#). For all our communities not in the Edmonton area, we invite you to join us in one of two ways: over Zoom ([connection info on our website](#)); or by gathering to pray in your own community at the same time, joining your prayers and spirits to ours. *The prayers of the people of God are powerful and effective.* (James 2:16, paraphrased). [Full details](#).

Upcoming Events and Learning Opportunities

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action: Interfaith Breakfast, February 4, 2026, 9 a.m. MT, Edmonton

The Edm. Interfaith Centre for Education & Action invites you to our inaugural Interfaith Breakfast, "Belonging in a Time of Uncertainty". Join us at the University Club of the U of A, 11435 Saskatchewan Drive Northwest, Edmonton. Lieutenant Governor Salma Lakhani will be the keynote speaker. All are welcome. Join us in a meaningful morning of celebrating the strength of our diversity! [Tickets and full details at this link](#).

An Invitation to Wonder: Online Discernment Weekend, February 20–22, 2026, online

Is something stirring in you? A wondering about ministry — what it is, how it looks, and whether it might be calling your name? Join us for *An Invitation to Wonder*, a gentle online retreat for people exploring a call to ministry in The United Church of Canada. While our original hope was to gather in person, we will now be offering this retreat online via Zoom, allowing participation from near and far. Instead of full days on screen, the weekend will unfold in intentional blocks of time, with room for group exploration and personal discernment woven throughout. This is not a commitment. This is not a decision-point. This is simply space to listen - to your heart, your questions, and the Spirit moving within you. Click [here to register](#). Deadline for registration is **January 31**. All are welcome — youth, young adults, mid-lifers, elders, lifelong United Church folks, newcomers, seekers, and those simply curious. *If something is nudging in you... come and wonder with us.*

★ **Save the date: WUC Chinook Winds and Northern Spirit Conference and AGM, April 9 - 11, 2026, Edmonton AB.**

Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton, Alberta. *Theme:* Justice and Hope. Interesting speakers are being finalized. Watch for the poster and registration form which will be out soon.

Imagine children's retreat, April 17-19, Sylvan Lake, AB, Kasota East Camp.

Mark your calendars! The *Imagine* children's retreat (ages 8-11) will be **April 17-19** in Sylvan Lake, AB, at Kasota East Camp. Children and their leaders are invited to come to this springtime sleep over for games and crafts, singing, worship, and campfire. Bursaries are available. To learn more, visit [First Third Ministry](#) or contact [Kevin GT](#).

[*Past Newsletter issues are archived on our website.](#)



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