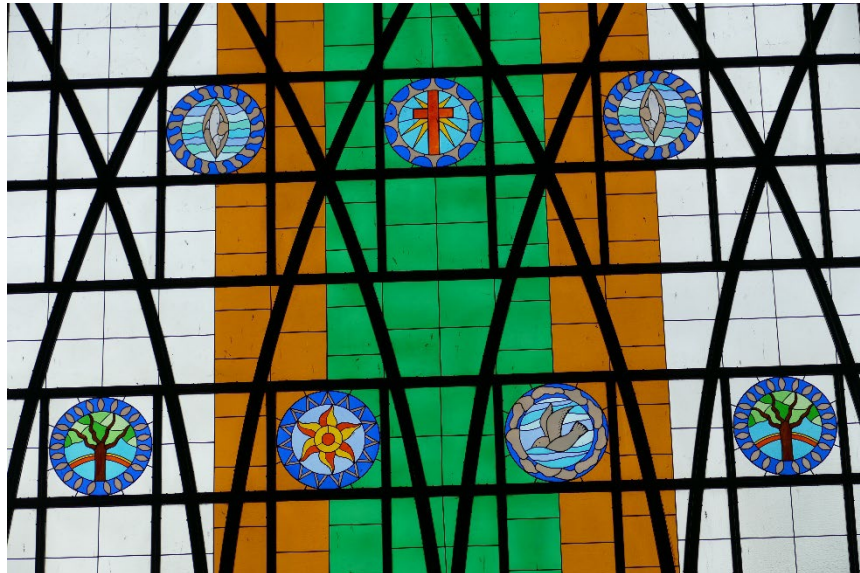




News from the Region: February 4, 2026



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.

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

Family News

♥ We honour the life and mourn the death of *Rev. Norm Macdonald*, in Edmonton, on January 20, 2026. [Read his obituary at this link.](#)

♥ 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.](#)

★ **Register now for the 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 are now available on our website](#), and you can [register to attend this event here](#). (*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!

Resource: Description of Lay Representative Role

As many churches prepare to hold annual meetings and elect Lay Representatives to the Council, the Executive has prepared a document outlining the purpose and responsibilities of this role. [Click here to view this document \(pdf\)](#), and share with anyone in your community considering or taking on this important role.

Wider Church News & Resources

★ **Black History Month: Here From the Beginning**

Unveiled last year as a Centennial project, [Here from the Beginning](#) is an in-person and [virtual exhibition](#) that showcases the contributions and experiences of Black people within the United Church, amplifying voices that have long been overshadowed. It is a celebration of faith, history, and community. [Learn more and explore the exhibition online](#).

★ **The Moderator's PIE Day message: now available**

Every year, on March 14th The United Church of Canada celebrates National Affirming PIE Day. This year for PIE Day 2026, we celebrate every kind of creator—woodcutters, crocheters, gardeners, and bakers—who help weave connections in our communities. [Access the Moderator's PIE Day video in advance and review release information at this link](#).

★ **Words of Solidarity from The Moderator or The United Church of Canada to Full Communion partners in the United States, and to the bishops of Greenland and the National Council of Churches in Denmark**

The Moderator has sent words of solidarity to The United Church of Canada's Full Communion partners in the United States, and to the bishops of Greenland and the National Council of Churches in Denmark, in what has been a turbulent and difficult start to 2026. Being community is always important, but especially now, in these

unsettling and unsettled times. Let us link arms in solidarity with our siblings in Christ. [The letters in full can be read here.](#)

★ **Coming this Lent: Kitchen Conversations with the Moderator**

Recently announced is [Kitchen Conversations with the Moderator](#), a new six-part video series coming this Lent exploring food, faith, and the power of invitation, hosted by the Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath. The series debuts with a Shrove Tuesday pancake feast in the Moderator's home kitchen on **February 17**, with new episodes following each Sunday throughout Lent, and concludes with a special Easter message from the Moderator. Stay tuned for episodes on the [Kitchen Conversations webpage](#) and The United Church of Canada [YouTube channel](#).

2026 Annual Declaration – Now Open

The portal for completing the **2026 Annual Declaration** is now open on ChurchHub. All ministry personnel (active, voluntary associates, and retired), including candidates, are required to complete the annual declaration **before April 30** in order to remain in compliance with United Church standards for ministry personnel and to maintain eligibility for calls, appointments, and licenses for sacraments and marriages. Access the declaration by logging on to ChurchHub: <https://churchhub.ca/>. Once logged on, you will need to:

- Declare whether you have had any criminal charges in the past year
- Attest that you have reviewed the *Creating Safe and Respectful Environments Policy and Procedures*
- Attest that you have reviewed the *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel*

Follow [this link](#) for a guide to assist you in this task or contact Laura Fohse, Vocational Minister, for assistance.

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.](#)

In Case You Missed It...

The Manual, 2026 Now Available Online

Looking for *The Manual, 2026*? The latest edition is now available at the top of the [Handbooks and Guidelines page](#). It is also available in French on [EgliseUnie.ca](#). Any errors and/or omissions should be reported to ntreksler@united-church.ca.

Toward 2035 Strategy Resources Now Available

[Toward 2035 \(T2035\)](#) is a hopeful, church-wide strategy designed to guide us toward a future that is resilient, inspired, and diverse. This strategy is grounded in the truth of our emerging reality and compelled by our continued call to discipleship. To include people in the pews in this vital conversation, a [new resource page](#) has been developed. Please use these resources in your communities and share them widely.

Worship Resources:

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

[Black History Month 2 - February 8, 2026](#)
[Tranfiguration Sunday - February 15, 2026](#)
[Black History Month 3 - February 15, 2026](#)
[Ash Wednesday - February 18, 2026](#)
[First Sunday in Lent - February 22, 2026](#)
[Black History Month 4 - February 22, 2026](#)
[Second Sunday in Lent - March 1, 2026](#)
[World Day of Prayer - March 6, 2026](#)
[International Women's Day - March 8, 2026](#)
[National Affirming PIE Day - March 14, 2026](#)

* [Click here to access Northern Spirit's 2026 Prayer Cycle](#)

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



Northern Spirit Regional Council Office
8510 95 Ave NW Edmonton Alberta
1-587-407-0330
northernspirit@united-church.ca
www.northernspiritr.ca

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