



News from the Region: March 18, 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

♥ You are warmly invited to celebrate a sacred and joyful milestone: **The Ordination of Kimberly Roy**. Date: April 19, 2026 / Time: 1:30pm / Location: Goodfish United Church Whitefish Lake Reserve. Please join us in witness, prayer, and celebration as we mark this important step in ministry and community service. A light lunch will follow the service. **Please RSVP** to kimberlyroy@hotmail.com so we have lunch numbers 🍴 For those with accommodation needs, we will be staying at the [Lodge at Metis Crossing](#).

★ 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!

Wider Church News & Resources

★ PIE Day round up and thanks

National Affirming PIE Day is in the books, and the creativity across the land was amazing! From karaoke and painting and crocheting lessons, to free pie via university chaplaincies; from handing out tarts at a skating rink to literally standing out in a snowstorm with flags and a "free pie for all" sign: it was a good, affirming day. Many blessings and thanks to all who crafted these creative, life-giving spaces of public, intentional, and explicit welcome. Now onwards to hopes for warmer weather and the summer Pride Festival season- while we resume our Lenten commitments that may or may not include pie.

★ International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: March 21

March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and there are many ways to mark the day. [See this GC news post](#) highlighting ideas for this day, and for ongoing anti-racist engagement. Feel free to post on the [United Church's anti-racism Facebook page](#) to share more about how you choose to mark the day individually or in your community of faith.

★ **Toward 2035 national survey: Share Your Voice**

The United Church of Canada invites anyone connected to the life of the church to complete a short survey on Toward 2035, the framework introduced in 2025 to guide our shared direction for the next decade. Your responses will help us understand how Toward 2035 is being received and what supports communities may need. There are no right or wrong answers—just your insight. Take the survey in English here: bit.ly/survey2035 (deadline March 31). Rooted in our Call and Vision, Toward 2035 invites us to imagine and shape the future together. [Towards 2035 resources can be found here](#). Scroll to the end of the page for downloads.

★ **Update on United Church refugee sponsorship**

The ongoing crisis in the Middle East has intensified pressure on our refugee program, driving a sharp rise in inquiries and sponsorships from churches. Our 2026 United Church submission quota has dropped to 50 regular spaces, while the LGBTQIA program remains stable at 75 annual spaces under the current agreement. Federal cuts have also affected Settlement Providing Organizations, reducing access to key newcomer services such as language, literacy, and employment programs. Drastically longer processing times that now average 24–54 months are also a reality. We give thanks for national staff, for the many caring experts in our networks, all communities of faith carrying sponsorships forward, and for all our many community partners who are deeply dedicated to offering safe haven. Above all, we offer prayers and action for the millions who cannot go home. If you are interested in sponsoring or have questions, the General Council is the best place to get answers, but the Regional office and experts can also help you out. Please email Julie at jgraham@united-church.ca and she can put you in touch.

★ **Aid for the Middle East: a call from United Church partner the Canadian Foodgrains Bank**

The headlines say it all, and have for over two years. If you are moved to [offer food aid for the millions in need across the Middle East, see details here](#). The Canadian FoodGrains Bank is a longtime and respected partner of the United Church who also works through a wider Canadian aid coalition. Together, we have trusted partners on the ground, working with communities deeply impacted by war and displacement.

Resource now available: Moderator's Easter Message

The Moderator's Easter Message is now available for pre-viewing and pre-planning. Access it along with use guidelines in [this letter from the United Church](#).

General Council Executive February Summary

Read the full summary now on the [General Council website](#).

Be Part of the Migrant Justice Network!

The United Church of Canada Migrant Justice Network will meet both during the day and in the evening over the next five months, to try to ensure the most people possible can participate. Are you passionate about supporting migrant justice and improving living conditions for migrants in Canada? The United Church of Canada's Migrant Justice Network invites you to be a part of our collective efforts to advocate for international students, refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and migrant workers. We welcome anyone aligned with the concerns of (im)migrants in Canada and globally. [Learn more, and register on CHURCHx.](#)

Stewardship: DID YOU KNOW?! ~ a message from Sarah Giles, Stewardship Support

The Legacy Planning course is **FREE** until June as part of the UCC's Centennial offer of free fees. This 'on-demand' course Bequests & Estate Planning can be done at your own pace. You won't believe how many times you will say "I wish I'd known that sooner!" when working through these short lessons. (You could even donate some money to M&S instead of paying to take the course! Just an idea from Sarah's brain, to your newsletter!) Find the link to Bequest & Estate planning here on ChurchX: [Called to Be the Church: The Journey](#) As always – I'd love to chat with you about ways that you are becoming more devoted disciples of Christ through your stewardship programs, or about digging into a stewardship plan! Email or book time Sarah Giles, Stewardship Support for the Western Regions at sgiles@united-church.ca or [Book time to meet with me](#). Let me know you've read the newsletter, tell me a good news story out of your church, ask for a great cookie recipe... let's connect!

In Case You Missed It...

Northern Spirit Staff Updates

*Julie Graham, Justice and Communications Minister, has ended her medical leave and started back to work March 2, beginning at quarter time. Julie thanks everyone deeply for their support and understanding over the five months she had to be off, and has missed you all. Please be patient during this time of transition back to her busy portfolio.

*Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, has also returned from her sabbatical.

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.

Stewardship Seconds (NEW Update for January-June 2026!)

Short, pithy sayings that pack a punch, to help infiltrate stewardship thinking into your community of faith. Add them to newsletters, worship, announcements, webpages, wherever people gather! Find them at the [Stewardship in Worship webpage](#).

Worship Resources:

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

[International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - March 21, 2026](#)

[Earth Hour - March 22, 2026](#)

[Fifth Sunday in Lent - March 22, 2026](#)

[Palm/Passion Sunday - March 29, 2026](#)

[Maundy Thursday - April 2, 2026](#)

[Good Friday - April 3, 2026](#)

[Holy Saturday - April 4, 2026](#)

[Easter Sunday - April 5, 2026](#)

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

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



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