



Events Newsletter: April 8, 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

★ Staffing update: Farewell and best wishes to Charlene Burns

Indigenous Ministries and Justice, General Council, regret to announce that Charlene Burns' employment has come to an end. Charlene connected with our Regional Council as part of her wider work as a Community Capacity Development coordinator with the Indigenous church, and as an educator and connector in many shared spaces. Many of us in the Regional Councils have met Charlene at right relations events, gatherings with the Indigenous church, and at Regional Council, Conference, and presbytery meetings. Over the past fifteen years, Charlene has brought laughter and deep prayer to Indigenous Ministries and Justice, and a commitment to nurturing community with all people, and we thank her for this presence and her many gifts.

★ Invitation: National Moosehide Campaign against violence, 14 May

Canada is in the midst of an ongoing national crisis of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S-LGBTQIA+ people. The Moosehide Campaign is a call to all people in Canada to take a stand against racism and for justice. This year we are hoping for a record United Church turn-out at the virtual events, local walks to end violence, and fasts to end violence. [See all information about the national campaign here.](#)

National events include a sunrise ceremony, educational plenary, and workshops (all available via livestream). You can register [here](#) for virtual events (including livestream links to all the national campaign day events). Local marches are being organized across the country. Find your local march on the map located [here](#), or register [here](#) to become a community steward and organize your own events.

★ Discover the power of PAR month this May!

Wouldn't it be great to even out the yearly cash-flow of your Community of Faith? Not be so reliant on year-end giving in December? Have more money to do more ministry? Taking part in PAR month this MAY could be your answer! All the resources you need, including a full sermon, two sample letters, and announcements are ready for you to download and use, on the [Giving Monthly through PAR](#) page. For more information about PAR or other Stewardship Resources, contact Sarah Giles, Stewardship Support for Western Regions sgiles@united-church.ca

New & Featured Events

★ Affirming Circle Check In! In person, Saturday May 2, Athabasca United Church, 10:00AM-2:30PM.

All 2SLGBTQIA+ Affirming and Affirming- curious ministries and individuals from Athabasca and all the surrounding towns and villages are welcome to this time of sharing and community. Yes, there will be a free lunch, and a lot of community and story-sharing. Hosted by the Northern Spirit Affirm Team. Please contact Affirm chair Mickey Wilson for more information: revmickeywilson@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events and Learning Opportunities

★ United in Learning Spring courses from the national church

Feeling disconnected? Want to explore specific topics like myths about the church, speaking up for the Earth, racism, church tech, and much more? [See the latest newsletter here](#), and please share it. All courses require a free account, to help you access course materials. Have a look at the long list of excellent topics available to all of us, and please share.

★ **Ecumenical Earth Week resources, April 19-26**

Together with ecumenical partners we join our communities in love for the Earth, and deep concern about the immense strain it is under. We **pray** to connect with God and God's Creation. We **learn** about the realities and solutions to climate change. And we **act**— showing leadership for climate justice in our communities, and bringing a clear call for leadership to our Members of Parliament. From wildfires across the West and North to floods and devastating hurricanes, creation is groaning. Our efforts may seem small, but they are seeds to plant. We hope these resources will help you do that. Resources include a video from the Moderator, prayers, a nationwide map of events for you to add to, a leadership guide and more. Please [scroll down through this national page for all resources](#), including the downloads at the bottom of the page.

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](#).

★ **Webinar: Becoming an Apartheid-Free Community, April 20, online**

Do you Look at the Tragic Events in Israel/Palestine and feel both angry and helpless? Our faith calls us "to seek justice and resist evil". But how can I and my faith community have an impact on what is happening now so far away - in the land where Jesus walked and taught? Join us on April 20th for the webinar: *"Is it Time to Become an Apartheid Free Community?"* This webinar will help you explore how becoming an Apartheid-Free Community can be a good way for your Faith Community to help end the apartheid and bring peace with justice to Palestinians living under Israeli rule. Learn more [at this link](#). | [Register for this webinar here](#).

The webinar is organized by United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel, a network of United Church of Canada members/adherents and friends. We work for the end of apartheid in Palestine/Israel and for peace based on justice.

Calling all Retired Ministry Personnel! Retirees Luncheon, Thursday, April 23, 12:00 noon, Mill Woods United Church, 15 Grand Meadow Crescent NW, Edmonton. All Northern Spirit retired ministers are invited to the Spring luncheon! This gathering is an opportunity to catch up with friends that we might not have connected with for a while. A donation would be appreciated to help cover the costs of the lunch. All UC "Pensioners" are welcome! [Read the full invitation here](#). Please RSVP to the office with any dietary restrictions by **April 19!**

Get ready to enter the stories of our faith - Godly Play Core Training Intensive 2026, May 7-10, 2026, in person, Burnaby BC

Through an action/reflection model of learning you will learn more about creating

sacred space, building and working in community, nurturing spiritual development, using silence, story and play to make meaning. All learning takes place in a prayerful and playful atmosphere with creative and experienced Godly Play trainers. \$350 CDN to register for all sessions. Space is limited to 18 people. [More information and registration.](#)

Shared Way, Shared Witness: A Gathering on Ministry for a Collaborative Church, May 19–22, 2026, Montreal

This three day gathering for lay and ordained leaders in the Anglican and United Churches of Canada focuses on developing the skills, relationships, and theological imagination needed for collaborative ministry in a rapidly changing church. Together, we will explore two central questions: What is the church for, now? and What ministry do we need to sustain a vital Christian presence in communities across Canada? Through keynote presentations, workshops, and structured conversations, participants will engage emerging models of church and ministry that move beyond the colonial, Christendom patterns we have inherited. More information is available at www.sharedway.ca.

Learning on Purpose leadership development, June 15-26, Paris Ontario

The Centre for Christian Studies' transformative two-week leadership development course is coming to the Five Oaks Retreat Centre in Paris, ON, June 15-26, 2026. Whether you are discerning a call to ministry, starting a program of diaconal formation, building your skills for lay leadership, connecting your community engagement and your faith, or just trying to figure out what your purpose is, Learning on Purpose is for you. For more information, [visit our website.](#)

Whitehorse Worship Arts Festival & Contemplative Retreat, July 2-5, 2026, Whitehorse, Yukon

Join us in the Yukon for a four-day immersive gathering designed to heal and inspire. A partnership of the Anglican, Lutheran, and United Church traditions, this practice-forward retreat offers a restorative balance of **deep contemplation and vibrant, embodied worship.**

Click [here](#) for more information and registration.

Naramata Offering: The Queer Family Retreat, July 6–10, 2026

A week at Naramata with lake days, chosen family energy, and space for queer families of all shapes and stories to rest, play, and connect. Dates **Monday, July 6 – Friday, July 10, 2026.** All ages welcome. On-site arrival **Sunday, July 5** if staying on-site. [Full details on the Naramata website.](#)

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



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