



NORTHERN SPIRIT
REGIONAL COUNCIL
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA



Events Newsletter: August 26, 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

★ Regional update on the Albert referendum

Planning to support the Regional Council's engagement with the October 19 Alberta referendum continued through the summer; [here is the update](#). Here is the [link to the Region's position](#); a reminder that this position does not dictate to communities of faith, but is rather a position that recommends and explains a course of action. All communities of faith are invited to engage the process of learning and listening as we

prepare for both the Alberta referendum and its ongoing effects after the vote. A task group to guide Northern Spirit's response started meeting in July. Members: Mickey Wilson, *Ryley, AB*; Lana Whiskeyjack, *Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Edmonton, AB*; Paul Douglas Walfall, *Edmonton, AB*; George Mafuleka, *Lloydminster, AB*; Lorne Gushue, *Yellowknife, NWT*; Gail Allan, *Edmonton, AB*. Staff support: Julie Graham. All of us are encouraged to help ensure as many people as possible vote. Some people, including those affected directly by the referendum questions, [are not eligible to vote](#). And of course, the entire country, including our BC and NWT family members, is affected by this vote. The Moderator will be sending a letter to all communities of faith via the Regional Council. Please watch for this in early September.

★ **Introduction to the Alberta referendum and United Church**

responses, Wednesday September 2, 6:30-8:00 p.m., followed by coffee hour conversation 8:00-8:30, online

Join Northern Spirit and Chinook Winds Regional Councils for a Zoom community conversation and learning space on the 19 October 2026 Alberta referendum. We will: learn about the origins of the referendum; explore the ten questions and their implications; look at Northern Spirit Regional Council's position and why it was taken; have a look at resources and learning spaces; and share in questions and conversation. Everyone welcome. Regional Council delegates, all ministry personnel, Board chairs and members, and congregational communicators are especially requested to attend. [Please register at this link](#). / Full details [on our website](#).

★ **Here from the Beginning exhibit coming to our Region: Consider hosting!**

Black people have played a significant role in the history of The United Church of Canada, but their stories have often gone untold. As we move through our 101st year, we invite you to join us in bringing these stories to life. *Here from the Beginning* is a [bilingual French and English physical exhibition and an online experience](#). The in-person exhibit of 25 stand up banners is traveling across Western Canada throughout Fall 2026 and early 2027, hosted by United Churches in partnership with their communities and community groups.

Consider being a host or come out and support other hosts with your presence! This is an opportunity to work alongside Black communities and historians, francophones, museums, schools, and much more. It's your chance to uncover community stories that need listeners. Join us for this celebration of faith, history, and community. Please contact Julie Graham, regional minister, for more information, a guide for planners, funding support, and more: jgraham@united-church.ca. You can also [use this form](#) to express interest, share plans, and request funding.

★ **Harm Reduction Sunday, 30 August 2026**

In August 2025, General Council 45 supported the resolution for a Harm Reduction Sunday to be observed across the United Church. Since then, much has happened in Canada to do with the lives of people who use drugs.

Harm reduction services have come under attack through provincial government regulations and policies. Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan have closed Safe Consumption Sites and related services, resulting in increased overdose responses in the wider community. Other provinces are experiencing increased surveillance, stigma, and the closure of supports for people who use drugs and those living precariously. Yet there are positive ways people of faith can respond. [Please read and share the full reflection here.](#) Worship resources are [available here](#). Both worship and conversation are very important steps towards actually talking about the reality and impacts of drug use. And talking helps break the cycle of silence, misinformation, and judgement.

★ Migrant Justice Announcement

Who is my neighbour? The Gospel call us to an expansive view of our neighbourhoods. When you think of who your neighbour is, who comes to mind? [Stats Canada reports](#) that currently there are over 2.5 million non-permanent residents like temporary workers and students living in Canada. Loving our neighbour includes supporting our migrant neighbours. As we look to the vision of **Toward 2035**, to become an increasing multiracial and intercultural church we see migrant justice as a central part of our witness as a deep, bold, and daring church. [Read more about the Migrant Justice Network, including dates for two fall sessions.](#)

Want to explore more ways your community of faith can live into the vision of [Toward 2035](#)? Contact Jordan Cantwell (jcantwell@united-church.ca), your regional Growth and Stewardship Animator, for more information.

New & Featured Events

★ Regional Connection Event: Camrose, October 24-25, 2026

The next Region Connect Gathering will be held in Camrose, AB, on October 24 & 25, 2026. All are invited to this space of connection and discussion, with a special Celebration of Ministry worship service on Sunday the 25th. [Registration is now open for this event](#), with a registration deadline of **October 1st**. [Full details on our website.](#) *(Please note that these connection events are planned to be ongoing and moving around the different parts of our Region. If this time or place doesn't work for you, stay tuned! Our next connection gathering is being planned for Spring 2027).*

★ Happening at the same time: YouthTREK in Camrose (Oct 23-25)

Calling all youth in grade 7-9: YouthTREK is coming to Camrose, and you're invited! YouthTREK is a chance for teens from around the province to have fun, build new friendships, and grow in faith. Curious? Check out these highlights from last year's YouthTREK: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DQa5vEbESHb/>. Regular registration is \$350 (\$100 if you are driving yourself there), and subsidies are available because we don't want anyone to miss it. [Registration is now open here.](#) *Please share with the youth in your life!*

★ Stay up-to-date with news and resources for First Third Ministry! [Click here to sign up for the F3 newsletter.](#)

Upcoming Events and Learning Opportunities

★ The latest learning spaces from [United in Learning](#) are outlined [here](#). There is a wide range of practical and Spirit-ed content on offer for very affordable fees or for free.

★ **Orange Shirt Day/ National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Wednesday 30 September; Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People, Sunday October 4.**

These two very significant days for committing to action for right relations are coming up soon. We will have resources for all ages posted next week. Your local planning and partnerships for and with all ages are the most important contribution.

The **National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation is offering dedicated and free educational programming: [Lunch and Learn series Sept. 21-25](#) 2026** as part of Truth and Reconciliation Week.

★ **Treaty Walk, September 8, Onion Lake Cree Nation to Fort Pitt, 8:30AM til late afternoon (north of Lloydminster).**

Open to all, in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the signing of Treaty Six.

The walk is located not far from the SK/ AB border. It begins at Sakāskohc High School. Our understanding is that there will be support for people who cannot walk the 17 kms to Fort Pitt. Elder Pat Makokis writes, "We will walk (rain or shine) from Onion Lake school to Ft. Pitt. See the poster for the treaty agenda for the week, along with a link to the current treaty films. *Feel free to share the poster with friends, family, other allies* we are all treaty people and this week-long event is commemorating 150 years of treaty six. We must continue to hold the treaties up for everyone to understand, learn and live." Onion Lake Cree Nation is also hosting a series of day-long learning and commitment gatherings up to all Treaty People, with [details posted here](#). Members of the Being Good Relations Network are planning to attend. Please come if you can.

★ **Voices from the Rivers of Abya Yala and Turtle Island: KAIROS Prairies North Regional Gathering, Saturday, September 12, 9:00AM-5:00PM, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Edmonton, and online**

Join KAIROS national and Prairies North in person or online for a public gathering that brings together activists from the rivers of Abya Yala and Turtle Island. Through stories, dialogue and shared learning, partners Kelly Paola Téllez Mantilla and Paola Chindoy will engage with Indigenous and settler participants in and around Edmonton to explore

connections, deepen relationships and strengthen collective action for justice. Participants will take part in two immersive learning experiences: the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, facilitated by Indigenous leaders from Turtle Island, and *Cuerpo Territorio* (Body-Territory) activities led by facilitators from Abya Yala. [Full details are here](#). Please share!

★ **Resources for 2SLGBTQ+ Teens from Living Skies RC Launch Party, September 22, 6:30 MT, online**

You're invited to cover yourself in rainbows and join us for an online launch party of our newly published Resources for 2SLGBTQ+ Teens. This toolkit answers the question "can I be 2SLGBTQ+ and also a Christian?" and includes current research, definitions, supports for mental health, and additional reading for parents and those who support gender and sexually diverse youth. At our party we will share some highlights for the resource and chat about ways that our communities of faith are offering ministry to and with youth as they grow and explore their identity and their faith. Please register below to receive the zoom link! Sept 22, 6:30-7:30 Mountain Time.

Registration link: https://united-church.zoom.us/meeting/register/3e_p4FVERmmbusdSBTcUCw

★ **Mark Your Calendars for the Next National Church Cross Country Check-In**

Join the General Secretary, members of the General Council Executive, and the Moderator for a live conversation with people across the United Church. Listen, ask questions, put faces to names, and share perspectives that can help inform the church's leadership and decision-making.

[Upcoming sessions](#) (French sessions to be announced soon!): **October 20, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. ET; November 25, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. ET.** [Learn more on ChurchX.](#)

Advance notice for your continuing education planning: *Joyful Resistance: Intercultural Worship Arts for Bold Discipleship*, Nov 19-21 2026 at the Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton AB

Join the Western Intercultural Ministries Network in an immersive, intercultural worship-arts conference. This will be hosted by the five Western Regional Councils, and is open to everyone anywhere in the country. We'll explore **joy as a form of resistance** that sustains bold discipleship and justice-oriented ministry. Join in plenary, rotating stations, theological reflection with hands-on musical and arts. We'll combine theological reflection with hands-on musical and artistic practice. **HOLD THE DATE**-more details to come, including cost and full program. [All details will be posted here.](#)

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



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

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