

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



April 1, 2020

1. **NEW COVID-19:** Staying Informed Reminder; Cancellation of the Regional Gathering; Weekly Leadership Gatherings; Resources for congregational givings; Supports for your new online skills and ministry; Messages in response to COVID-19; Update from Saskatoon ICM; Volunteer Chaplains, Live-Streaming UC Worship services; Coronavirus scams and gathering congregants' contact info safely; Sk Hospital Chaplains;
2. **Living Skies News:** YAYAC Newsletter– April 1, Support to LLWLs; Update on Covenant Writing; MP Re-appointments; Nominations Committee seeking GC #44reps; Gifts and Abilities; Contribution to the Wider Church;
3. **Wider Church Information:** ReJUNEvation 2020; Opportunities to serve the wider church;
4. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Online national and conversations reminder; United in Learning webinars... continue!; Queen's House - **closed**; Leadership Development and Continuing Education - **online**; Living Skies Event Calendar Highlights;
5. **Reminders:** Financial Name Change; 2020; Pastoral Relations Ponderings #13a; STU Convocation; Annual Reports;

1. COVID-19

Staying Informed Reminder: We know checking yet another website is a pain... let alone checking at least three. But this is your other Trinity for now:

Saskatchewan Government COVID-19 website: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus>

The national church's COVID-19 page: <https://www.united-church.ca/covid-19>

Regional Council COVID-19 page: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/covid-19-coronavirus-news/>

See the Regional COVID-19 page for: intro and links about Zoom; a scam warning and best practices for requesting congregants' contact information; and ongoing support gatherings (details below.)

All three (and more) are needed to keep you up to date. Try to identify some lay leaders in your community who can take turns tracking these sites and sharing updates with your community of faith.

Cancellation of the Annual Gathering

Please see the letter from Rob Reed, Convenor of the Regional Gathering and Tricia Gerhard, Chair of the Regional Council Executive with an [update on the Annual Gathering](#).

Weekly Leaders' gatherings:

April 1 - double header (for all you who miss your sports...):

Congregational finances national webinar, followed by a tri-region check in with the United Church's General Secretary, Nora Sanders. **Details:**

1) Congregational Finances During the Pandemic: Wednesday April 1 (and Wednesday April 8).

Time: 5:00PM in Saskatchewan The United Church's financial officer, Erik Mathiesen, will share important updates for our communities of faith and community ministries as the federal government continues to update its financial support packages. [Full overview here](#); to join the webinar, go to the General Council's YouTube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/unitedchurchofcanada>

Immediately followed by:

2) Three-Region support gathering with General Secretary Nora Sanders.

Come and meet the General Secretary Wednesday April 1; she will bring us some updates from the wider church in this difficult time, and we'll share in conversation. **Details:** 6:30 PM in Saskatchewan.

<https://united-church.zoom.us/j/978525442> Meeting ID: 978 525 442. Toll free: 1-855-703-8985

The lay leaders' gathering for April 8 is cancelled. It's Holy Week, so we'll give ourselves a break from screen time and join in prayer and reflection however we can. Wednesday lay leader and pastoral charge supervisor gatherings will resume April 15: 6:30 PM in Saskatchewan

Ministry personnel meetings: All weekly Tuesday meetings are on the regional calendar.

Resources for congregational givings:

We're expecting major updates to national resources focused on giving. For now, **have a look at this handy summary from the national church**, including a good intro to Canada Helps and some important, specific instructions for signing up for PAR. Links: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GenerosityUnprecedentedTimes-UCPhilanthropy-Mar28-2020.pdf>

Supports for your new online skills and ministry

From Zoom to online worship, we're all climbing a steep learning mountain. To all taking risks and trying new things: thank you for your creativity and good energy! We are all benefitting. **Some resources:**

- 1) [United in Learning](#) will remain our go-to for national webinars on specific topics, skills, and updates.
- 2) LeaderShift in Pacific Mountain Regional Council covers everything from Zoom to quick worship streaming set-ups. Check it out: <https://www.leadershiftpm.ca/thelatest/online-engagement-sessions-added>
- 3) The latest [E-ssentials newsletter](#) from the national church has a good overview of current resources.
- 4) **And for worship leaders, Thursday April 2:** Free national webinar! **Tips on making the most of worship online during the pandemic.** 1:30 in Saskatchewan. [Full details here.](#)
- 5) **You are invited to a Zoom Workshop for Church Meetings.** Welcome! Join staff from the Centre for Christian Studies Tuesday April 7th at 11am Central as they share their tips and tricks for working on Zoom. With its distance education model and a dispersed staff team, CCS uses Zoom for staff meetings, student check-ins, field orientations, governance meetings and learning circles. We've learned lots over the last few years about how to effectively worship, work and learn together. Please register in advance (no fee, donations gratefully accepted), and join us to imagine church differently. Register in advance for this meeting:

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/uJUqcemupzkiY27Zxkr-JGf7hHQ_WQcXPA

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Messages in response to COVID-19:

The church's **National Indigenous Elders' Council** has important words and blessings for us in this difficult time. Please consider how you can use the [prayer](#) they offer, and share their [We Are All Relatives letter](#).

Moderator's message on children and youth ministry: a video and message from Moderator Rt Rev Richard Bott on offering this ministry at this time. <https://www.united-church.ca/news/ministry-children-and-youth>

Hope, Gratitude, and Solidarity interfaith message: With the help of the **Canadian Council of Churches**, leaders from many faith traditions have joined to offer a [reflection and spiritual message to all Canadians](#).

Update from Saskatoon Integrated Community Ministries

Integrated Community Ministries (ICM) serves Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods, many of which are economically poor and rich in diversity, stories and strength. They offer us this [update on COVID and their programs](#) in the neighbourhoods they serve. Next week we hope to have a similar update from Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry.

Volunteer Chaplains

During this time of anxiety and alternative ways of being church, the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support is creating a Volunteer Chaplain team to connect with Ministry Personnel. The hope is to gather folks from around the Regional Council (a total of 6) who would be willing to contact ministry personnel in their area for support and to hold them in prayer. The Committee would gather with the Chaplain team to offer support and resources as needed. If this sounds like something you would be interested in doing, or if you know of someone who might have the skills, gifts and time for this, please let Tracy Murton (tmurton@united-church.ca) know.

Live-Streaming United Church Worship Services: Please add yours and enjoy others'

As our communities of faith close down worship services and buildings, the national EDGE Network set up this handy resource for us. Numerous United Church communities of faith are live-streaming Sunday worship services during the COVID-19 pandemic. See this interactive worship map for links to some of them and PLEASE ADD the link to your own worship livestream if you have established one: Remember to use the [national listing of online worship](#), and to [add your own](#).

Coronavirus scams and gathering congregants' contact info safely

Many communities of faith are gathering data from members and adherents to facilitate connections for worship, pastoral care, stewardship requests or governance matters. Please think through your approach carefully, because (predictably) coronavirus scammers are also hard at work. [Click here for recommendations on doing this safely.](#)

SK hospital chaplains

Deep thanks to chaplains **Lorna King** (Regina- South Chaplaincy) and **Cathy Coates** (Saskatoon- North Chaplaincy) for their vital ministry, not only to the United Church and its members, but to the wider community. **Cathy can be reached at 306-227-8707. Patients and their families can contact Lorna or request staff to contact me at 1-306-551-7755.**

2. Living Skies Regional Council News:

[The YAYAC Newsletter – April 1](#) News for the Youth and Young Adult Community

Support to LLWLs

The Committee on Lay Leadership Support recognizes the unique impact of the cessation of public worship on Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and would like to offer an opportunity for support during this time. On **Thursday, April 9, at 7pm**, join the Committee for a Maundy Thursday service and check-in via Zoom. Contact Tracy Murton tmurton@united-church.ca for connection details.

Update on Covenant Writing

Tracy Murton (Pastoral Relations Minister) has received many questions regarding the writing of the Covenants between communities of faith and the Regional Council, especially during this time when gatherings have been cancelled. Yes, every community of faith should be engaging this process, and no, it is not complicated. Many communities of faith have found this an opportunity to inspire hope and vision of the way that the mission of the church will continue into the future in spite of the pandemic. A description of the mission and ministry of the community of faith, and a description of the governance model being used is all that is required. It does not need to be approved by the community of faith, although it should be approved by the official board (or equivalent). Contact her for background material or a sample covenant: tmurton@united-church.ca. She promises it is an easier process than you think. Our goal continues to be to receive them by **April 30, 2020** so that they may be reviewed by the member of the Committee on Community of Faith support who has been reading your annual report. These covenants will be celebrated together at the next Regional Council Gathering, whenever it may be. This is a way to acknowledge the new relationship between the Regional Council and communities of faith in the structural change.

Ministry Personnel Re-Appointments

If the end date for the pastoral relationship with your ministry personnel is June 30, 2020, please see the description in the [Pastoral Relations Ponderings](#) for information regarding the process for renewal.

Nominations Committee: seeking names for our Region's General Council Commissioners – July 2021

Are you interested in being a Commissioner to General Council 44? Do you know someone who might be?

Here is an [information letter with details](#) about the nominations process. [Use our new Nominations form](#) to express your interest to the Nominations Committee. **Application deadline is April 15th, 2020.**

Gifts and Abilities

The Nominations Committee of the Living Skies Regional Council has a new email address! lsrcnominations@gmail.com If you have questions, or would like to offer yourself for a vacant position, you are welcome to contact the committee there! Carolyn Conarroe & Susan Reed, Co-Chairs

Contribution to the Wider Church

In the new structure, every time a community of faith makes any kind of change in their pastoral relationship, a Regional Council Liaison is required to assist in the process. Similarly, every community of faith without a called or appointed minister is required to be served by a Pastoral Charge Supervisor. Both of these roles need to be filled by a member of the Regional Council – an active minister, a retired minister, or a lay representative from a community of faith. As the number of people retiring and communities of faith undergoing changes increase, the demand for folks to take on these roles also increases. If you are currently serving on a committee/ commission of the Regional Council or the Denominational Council, we thank you for that contribution. *If you are not*, please consider how your gifts and skills might best be used for the wider church.

3. Wider Church Information:

St. Andrew's College ReJUNEvation

Registration is now open for ReJUNEvation 2020 scheduled for June 17-19, 2020, at St. Andrew's College.

Rev. Canon Dr. Scott Sharman will lead discussion on the theme, "Now it Springs Forth: Looking for Ecumenical Movement with Fresh Eyes." Sharman, an academic and ordained minister who serves as the national Animator for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in the Anglican Church of Canada, will invite participants to reflect on some of the most interesting and promising new directions for the ecumenical movement as we head further into the 21st century. He will address the "sense of stall and stagnation and 'ecumenical winter' that came to dominate during the '90s and '00s." He will offer a theological, methodological, and spiritual diagnosis as to why that might have happened and offer examples of things that seem to be leading to new life and impetus for a renewed ecumenical movement – an "ecumenical spring" – especially in the Canadian context.

For more information, please visit <https://stu.usask.ca/standrews/students/rejunevation.php>.

Opportunities to serve the wider church

There are some great opportunities for young adults in particular to connect with global partners [available here](#), and important openings in governance. Please share this widely.

4. Upcoming Learning Opportunities:

Online national and conversations reminder

United in Learning and other partner groups have lots of affordable or free webinars on offer... meaning you don't need to travel to yet another meeting. [Click here for the latest.](#)

United in Learning webinars... continue! At least some things can carry on as planned and give us a space to connect. [Please click here for opportunities.](#)

Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre

Queen's House has closed their doors for meetings and gatherings during the COVID-19 situation. Please watch upcoming Ramblers for their programming when they re-open.

Leadership Development and Continuing Education

For lay people and clergy who want to learn, explore, and wrestle, the *Centre for Christian Studies* is offering two one-week learning circles: [Oppression and Resistance](#) (Apr 15-21) and [Ages and Stages](#) (April 23-29) **will both be offered online**. Click on the name of the circle to find out more. If you have questions call 204-783-4490 or e-mail info@ccsonline.ca

Events in Living Skies: highlights - All of these are posted on the Living Skies [Events calendar](#).

April 24: Women's retreat for the whole Region, Calvary United, Prince Albert - **cancelled**

May 19-21: Regional Affirming Retreat, at Queen's House of Retreats, Saskatoon. All who support a deep welcome to LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people are welcome. Worship, community, coffee, music, listening, strategizing, and support.

May 21-23: Regional Gathering (Humboldt) – **cancelled**

May 24: Service of Praise and Celebration (Humboldt) - **cancelled**

5. Reminders:

Financial Name Change

The official name has now been changed on the bank account. Cheques should now be made out to "*Living Skies Regional Council*". Please pass this to anyone who may send a cheque to the Regional Council office.

The work of the Pastoral Relations Committee - [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 13a](#)

Saskatoon Theological Union Convocation - **postponed**

The Saskatoon Theological Union Convocation set to take place on Friday, May 8, 2020, has been postponed until the fall. We will let you know when the new date has been finalized.

Annual Reports

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Annual meeting season. The time to celebrate all that has been offered within and around your community of faith. A few things to keep in mind:

- A copy of your annual report should go to Tracy Murton c/o St. Andrew's College 1121 College Drive Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W3 or by email tmurton@united-church.ca. The Committee on Community of Faith Support will be reviewing these in the coming months using the template, attached for your information. [Annual Report Checklist](#)
- The name of the person that has been elected as the representative to the Regional Council should be sent to Bev Diebert bdiebert@united-church.ca. We are hoping to send communications regarding the Regional Gathering in Humboldt directly to them.