

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



April 15, 2020

1. **NEW COVID-19:** Time Sensitive Webinars; *National webinars:* Emergency financial information; Congregational givings; Worship resources; *Regional Updates:* Ongoing Regional check-ins and support meetings; Update from the SSHC; Parklands Restorative Justice; Super Easy Guide to Zoom; Video Resources on trauma and self care; A note about recording and posting Regional Zoom discussions;
2. **Living Skies News:** Pastoral Ponderings #14; MP Re-appointments; Annual Declaration for MP; Voluntary Chaplains; A Call to Action from RAPM; Earth and Camping Sundays; Eco-Commoning project online national events; Affirming Connection event – May 2; Resource: A Trans Christian Faith Perspective; Spiritual Directors;
3. **Wider Church Information:** ReJUNEvation 2020 - **cancelled**;
4. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** CCS: Pastoral care events, April 21 and 28; United in Learning webinars... continue!; Living Skies Event Calendar Highlights;
5. **Reminders:** Financial Name Change; Coronavirus scams and gathering congregants' contact info safely; Cancellation of LS Regional Gathering; Follow up to Easter Appeal; A letter to Ministry Personnel; A Pastoral letter from Rob Reed and Tricia Gerhard; Queen's House - closed;

1. COVID-19

Time-sensitive: Webinars

April 15: Congregational finances during the pandemic, part 3. This continuing Wednesday series keeps us up to date on financial aid that continues to evolve rapidly. Webinars are recorded and can be watched after the fact. Times: 5:00PM in SK. Access this through [United in Learning](#) or the [national church's YouTube channel](#).

April 16: Ministry personnel: Critical incident response strategies During the pandemic, United-in-Learning is offering a weekly series for ministers and church leaders, with just-in-time skills and reflections intended to help us all respond to the unusual situation we find ourselves in. If you have specific requests or suggestions for future topics, please [CLICK HERE](#) to email us! [Here's full information on this weekly series.](#)

United in Learning will continue to offer its regular programming as well. [Click here for info.](#)

National webinar series:

Emergency financial information: new web resources The national church continues to offer us extensive information on emergency finances- no easy task, as the federal government continues to make important and helpful changes to financial aid congregations can access. Here is your new Emergency Finances home page: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/emergency-funding-congregations>

Please review it carefully, as the order in which we do things is important. [Here's an overview of things you'll need to consider.](#)

Congregational giving at a time like this In many ways, the church can now reach out further than before. Our doors may be closed, but funds are still needed. Please see this excellent overview of options for giving regularly and at a distance, and share this in your community of faith newsletter. It covers the steps for PAR, an overview of Canada Helps, and more: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/congregational-finances-and-covid-19>

Worship resources The questions about everything from technology to music licensing continue to fly. Here's your home base for some national resources: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/tools-worship-during-covid-19>

Regional COVID- related updates

Reminder: COVID-related news for the Regions will be posted on our websites as they are available.

Currently a task groups is working on the question of emergency finances. For national resources, such as finances and worship, see the national site. Thank you for your patience with the incredibly fast flow of information.

Ongoing Regional check in and support meetings The Regional Council will continue with Tuesday *ministry personnel check ins* that are Region-specific. Please see your Regional Council's Events calendar or check with your Pastoral Relations Minister.

We will also continue with *lay leadership* Wednesday evening meetings for all three Regions, at: 6:30 PM in SK. Meeting link: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/978525442>

(Do not post this on social media or your congregational website, please. Share it by email.)

These will continue for the foreseeable future. If you have ideas and questions for the lay meetings, please contact Julie Graham, Justice/ Communications minister: jgraham@united-church.ca or through your Regional Council office.

Update from the South Hospital Chaplaincy We've posted an update by chaplain Lorna King [here](#).

Parklands Restorative Justice is a ministry supported in part by members of our Regional Council and our Mission and Service givings. They work out of Prince Albert with prisoners and are [using letters to stay in touch with inmates who are now doubly isolated](#).

Super Easy Guide to Zoom This is a gift via Shining Waters Regional Council and web meetings specialist Amy Lenzo. It will appeal to all you visual learners. [Download the PDF here](#).

Video resources on trauma and self care Rev Diane Strickland specializes in helping us survive and recover from community and personal trauma and has been involved in crisis care and recovery in High River and Fort McMurray, AB. She offers an [overview on supporting one another](#) here, and these videos offer further "pandemic practicums". Please share- and thank you, Diane.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUIX9OaerzI&t=34s>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/KlrJZE2I9aQ>

A note about recording and posting Regional Zoom discussions While we have been recording the lay leaders' gatherings Wednesday night, we're going to stop, and we won't be posting any of the previous ones. It's too much of a privacy concern. These gatherings are about community and questions; they're not presentations. If you'd like to learn about a specific topic, please check the excellent resources at United in Learning. And of course, our regular Wednesday evening three-Region meetings are the place to be. Check your Region's website calendar for the details.

2. Living Skies Regional Council News: (NOT about COVID)

The work of the Pastoral Relations Committee - [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 14](#)

Ministry Personnel Re-appointments – if the pastoral relationship with your ministry personnel is due for renewal in June, it must be completed via ChurchHub this year. This requires that both ministry personnel and communities of faith have active ChurchHub accounts. If you have questions regarding your ChurchHub account, please contact Tracy Murton (tmurton@united-church.ca). If there are no changes to the terms of the appointment, the reappointment requires approval from the governing body only, so see the information on the Regional Council website about guidelines for those meetings during these times. Prior to the meeting of the governing body, click "send draft email" which will send a draft copy of the form to the Regional Council for review.

Annual Declaration for Ministry Personnel From April 1 to June 30, ministry personnel (including candidates in Supervised Ministry Education appointments or other appointments) will be able to submit their annual declaration on criminal charges form on ChurchHub. This form needs to be filled out no later than June 30, 2020 to remain compliant, including being eligible for calls or appointments and for licenses for sacraments and marriages.

To fill out the annual declaration, log in to [ChurchHub](#) and “My Ministry Page.” Look to the right for the “My Professional Requirements” box and then select the “Annual Declaration 2020” link. If you completed your annual declaration anytime from January to March 2020, then you actually were completing your 2019 annual declaration. You will need to log into ChurchHub and complete your annual declaration for 2020.

Please contact the [Office of Vocation](#) if you have any questions.

Voluntary Chaplains The Committee on Ministry Personnel Support has gathered together a group of 5 people who have offered to serve as Voluntary Chaplains for ministry personnel in Living Skies Regional Council. The recognition of the ongoing isolation and the unique challenges to ministry during this pandemic has created a call to ensure ministry personnel have the support and resources that might be needed for health, joy and excellence in the practice of ministry. The list of ministry personnel has been divided regionally amongst the chaplains who will endeavour to contact each individual by telephone or email. While each minister has been “assigned” a chaplain to make the initial contact, all of the chaplains are available during this time for conversation and support. The Committee wishes to express its deep gratitude and appreciation to Cathy Coates, Joan Rennie-Laing, Deborah Smith, Jackie Van’t Voort, and Heather Wyatt for their willingness to serve in this way.

Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry action invitation to us Ok, we cheated a bit. To some extent, this is about COVID. And to a large extent, it’s not. People living in poverty will be disproportionately affected by this pandemic, because they were being badly affected by “normal” circumstances before. Assistance rates don’t cover the basics, as you’ll see in this action. You’re invited to look at the numbers, and reflect on your own situation. Then you’re invited to remind our provincial government that the needs of the most vulnerable must shape its decisions. Please prayerfully consider sending a short message to the government. [Full details are all here, and please share widely.](#) We may be self-distancing, but our care and our voices need not be in quarantine.

Earth and Camping Sundays, April 19 and 26 As the weather warms, even with social distancing in place we can enjoy community with all our relatives: the new green plants, the returning birds, the ice receding from the water. We know that the pandemic has resulted in a lighter human footprint on the earth, for now, and challenges us to live differently into a new “normal”.

We also know that camping programs everywhere are in jeopardy this summer, and that our camps need support. We give thanks for the volunteers and staff who keep our camps going, and for the many campers and families who will one day return to our beautiful outdoor ministries.

Please consider how your online worship and your giving might lend some support to the Earth, and to the outdoor ministries that help all generations be in touch with the Earth. Have a look at liturgy options for: [Earth \(or Environmental\) Sunday, April 19](#) [Camping Sunday, April 26](#)

Eco-Commoning project online national events, April 24, May 21 Join us online to think creatively about commoning, social innovation and social enterprise in communities of faith. Take part in an interactive key-note presentation from Rev Dr Ted Reeve and The Very Rev Bill Phipps on how the social/economic theory of “commoning” applies to spirituality and communities of faith; engage with local stories and take-part in conversation-style action planning and reflection through the World Cafe model. Prairie resource people who are part of local “eco-commoning” will join us. [Full details are available here.](#)

Affirming Connections online day May 2 Life does go on! And Alberta's Affirming Connections invites us to continue our LGBTQIA2S+ journey all the more in the midst of this pandemic. They've opened this all day event to Affirming leaders and seekers everywhere. For full details please see your Regional calendar and the [registration and agenda link here](#).

Resource: A Trans Christian Faith Perspective Some time in the fall, delegates to Regional Council gatherings/ annual meetings will be voting on Remit 1, which proposes renewed, gender inclusive wording Basis of Union wording about who can become a minister in our church. If you'd like to talk further about this important change, and explore how to have good intro conversations about trans and non binary identities, please contact Julie Graham, Justice and Communications staff, jgraham@united-church.ca

Watch this recorded 90-minute webinar where five trans and non-binary people share a little of their personal stories, and how their Christian faith has made a difference along the way. Hear about how they understand their gender identity, why language is important, and why the church has been an important part of their lives. [Click HERE](#) to access the recording as well as to find *Resources for Going Deeper*.

Spiritual Directors The Committee on Ministry Personnel Support is putting together a list of Spiritual Directors within our Regional Council who would be available to offer spiritual direction for people within the region. The list would be available on our website for people who are looking to engage with a Spiritual Director in the region.

If you are would be willing to be on the list please contact Bev Diebert (bdiebert@united-church.ca) to give your consent and your contact information.

3. Wider Church Information:

St. Andrew's College ReJUNEvation 2020 – cancelled For more information, please visit <https://stu.usask.ca/standrews/students/rejunevation.php>

4. Upcoming Learning Opportunities:

Centre for Christian Studies: Pastoral care events, April 21 and 28,

April 21, 2020 11:00 AM Central Daylight Time: Join the Centre for Christian Studies for a Pastoral Care workshop about using the **Spiral Reflection Model as a framework for pastoral conversations**, decision making, and personal reflection.

Please register in advance for this meeting (no fee, donations gratefully accepted), and join us to imagine church differently: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/uJlIduvqzgpfSjDjkl7L8z5VbkBUroqJg>

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

April 28, 11:00AM in MB and NW Ontario: Join the Centre for Christian Studies for conversation about using a **Trauma Informed Approach to Pastoral Care** in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Register in advance: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUvdu2rrD0rHdJDnxvb7IZ_x2DuH53MnG7w

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

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](#).

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 2: Affirming Connections event <https://affirmingconnections.com/>

May 19-21: Regional Affirming Retreat, at Queen's House of Retreats, Saskatoon - **cancelled**

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.

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.](#)

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.](#)

Follow up to Easter Appeal A recent Easter letter sent to people who have previously given gifts to Mission & Service was written in early January and mailed before we knew how COVID-19 would affect everyone's lives. Apologies, and thank you for [taking the time to watch this message.](#)

[A letter to the Ministry Personnel with in our Region from Rev. Adam Hanley,](#) Program Coordinator, Ministry Personnel Vitality, Office of Vocation

[A Pastoral Letter](#) from Rob Reed, the Convenor of the Regional Gathering and Tricia Gerhard, the Chair of the Living Skies Regional Council Executive.

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.