

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



April 8, 2020

1. **NEW COVID-19:** A letter to Ministry Personnel; Time Sensitive Webinars; Moderator's Easter Service; Follow up to Easter Appeal; *National:* Finances; Worship resources; Congregational givings; Givings to M&S; *Regional:* Ongoing Regional check-ins and support meetings; Super Easy Guide to Zoom; CCS - Crisis Pastoral Care; Video Resources on trauma and self care; A note about recording and posting Regional Zoom discussions;
2. **Living Skies News:** A Pastoral letter from Rob Reed and Tricia Gerhard; Support to LLWLs; MP Re-appointments; Nominations Committee seeking GC #44reps; Affirming Connection event – May 2; A Call to Action from RAPM;
3. **Wider Church Information:** ReJUNEvation 2020 - **cancelled**; 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; STU Convocation - **postponed**; Coronavirus scams and gathering congregants' contact info safely; YAYAC Newsletter– April 1; Cancellation of LS Regional Gathering

1. COVID-19

The latest COVID updates are grouped by topic. They are being shared now to keep things up to date, but we hope that you'll save this until after Easter and take a break as much as possible. **The only time-sensitive information here is:** Financial webinar; worship and pastoral care webinar; National Easter service with communion. Please see below for information on these.

We're all tired, anxious, and hyper vigilant. Some of us are bearing burdens of injustice: not enough money, not enough healthy food, being stuck in an unsupportive or unsafe space. We're absorbing new information and skills at a frantic pace. This Holy Week, may we somehow find space to disconnect from the overload and reconnect with ourselves, our God, our kin Jesus, and the slowly awakening Spirit in the Earth. May others help us find the supports and resources we need.

We will re-send some of the information below after Easter too.

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

Time-sensitive: Webinars

April 8: Congregational finances during the pandemic, part 3 The picture is getting clearer on how the various COVID-19 support programs will work. This week (April 8, 2020) will cover: what you need to do to initiate automatic processing of the 10% subsidy; getting digital - what digital services you will need to sign up for and how; Federal Subsidy and loan program news - application process, dates etc; layoffs if necessary but not necessarily layoffs. **Please check your local times:** <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/316-congregational-finances-during-the-pandemic>

April 9: Congregational worship and pastoral care supports A free national webinar. Please click here for details: <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/319-congregational-programming-during-the-pandemic>.

Moderator's Easter Sunday Livestream Worship Service Join us on Easter Sunday for a special livestream Holy Communion service with Moderator Richard Bott at 1:00PM in and SK, Bruce Harding and other musicians will be leading us in worship through music, and the Rev. Michael Blair will offer a reflection on scripture. You are encouraged to participate while you view, using your own communion elements. Everyone is invited to bring some kind of bread (cracker, cookie, muffin, tortilla, bannock, etc.) and some water, wine, or juice, to share in communion. This Easter livestream worship service will be broadcast on: **Zoom:** <https://zoom.us/j/430370956> (maximum capacity 500 people) and The United Church of Canada **YouTube** channel: <https://www.youtube.com/unitedchurchofcanada>

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](#).

National COVID updates

Finances: we expect much more detailed information on accessing aid to be released shortly after Easter. Both the national church and your Regional Council are taking the time to ensure that information on accessing finances, and avoiding layoffs if at all possible, is as up to date and accurate as possible. In a rapidly changing and stressful context, care and time are needed to ensure accuracy. Your patience at this very stressful time is deeply appreciated.

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>

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. [Easter season bulletin insert](#)

COVID-19 and communities that are both strong and marginalized "The church has left the building because the church has been deployed" is one meme that's making the rounds. And it's true. There is much we can offer our communities and global partners during this very difficult time. In particular, people who have inadequate food or poor or no access to safe shelter, and the imprisoned and their loved ones, are facing extreme hardship. Our advocacy, offers of support, and (if we can afford it) our funds are crucial. Our givings to Mission and Service help these ministries keep their figurative doors open and live out Christ's teachings. **Two examples:** Parkland Restorative Justice in Prince Albert, SK works with prisoners and is [using letters to stay in touch with inmates who are now doubly isolated](#). In Victoria, Our Place continues its care and outreach despite its building being shut down. <https://www.united-church.ca/stories/street-involved-people-are-especially-vulnerable>

Regional COVID- related updates

Reminder: COVID-related news for the Regions will be posted on our websites. 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 After Easter we will continue with Tuesday ministry personnel check ins that are Region-specific. We will also continue with lay leadership Wednesday evening meetings for all three Regions. Please check your Regional Council calendar for your local time. 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.

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](#).

Crisis Pastoral Care Join the Centre for Christian Studies on **Tuesday April 14th at 11am Central** for a conversation about Crisis Pastoral Care. How do we offer pastoral care in the midst of a pandemic? This is the first of a series of three pastoral care workshops. **Please register in advance** (no fee, donations gratefully accepted) and join us to imagine church differently. Register at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwvcuyrqzotecPk692Yk3C31fASzTEEWQ> After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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)

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

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.

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.

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.**

Affirming Connections event 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. Please hold **Saturday May 2** for now; many details to come as resource people and timing shift a little. Details will be posted at:

<https://affirmingconnections.com/>

A Call to Action from the Regina Anti-Poverty (RAPM) Ministry During this Time of Pandemic RAPM is asking us to speak out about the added impact of legislated poverty during a pandemic that has shut down many of the supports for the most vulnerable. **Please: contact the provincial government and ask for an immediate increase in social assistance rates.** [Click here for full details](#), including background and

some information on RAPM. Thank you for using your care and voice to answer this call with a short, direct message to our provincial government. Please share this action widely.

3. Wider Church Information:

St. Andrew's College ReJUNEvation 2020 – cancelled 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 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.

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.

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.](#)

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

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](#).