

# Regional Rambler

## Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



June 10, 2020

1. **Living Skies News:** **Regional check-ins and support meetings (Weds and Tues);** Re-opening your buildings (or not): discernment and planning resources; Media release: SK faith leaders on re-opening public worship; Resources on Black Lives Matter; Pastoral Charge Information; Job opening: Director, Integrated Community Ministries in Saskatoon; LLWL Gathering; Church Office Admin Retreat; A note from the OV re: Annual Declaration; Retiree Chaplains; Worship themes and resources for June; Indigenous Day of Prayer: a history; Remit 1: gender-inclusive language in the Basis of Union; YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT NEWSLETTER; Rendez-Vous Re-Imagined: Faith Gone Wild!; United Church Camps: creating community during a difficult summer; Duty of Care Considerations for Online Youth & Children's Ministry Programs; Resources for Virtual Vacation Bible Schools; Update on the Nominations Process for Commissioners to GC44; Parkland Restorative Justice in PA is seeking a full time Executive Director;
2. **Wider Church Information:** **National Time Sensitive Webinars: on hold till fall;** United in Learning webinars... continue!;
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Eco Commoning; Stewardship Through New Eyes; Denominational Service of Prayer and Reflection: United Against Racism; Sundays in June: Indigenous Heritage Month Series; Webinar: COVID and migrant workers' rights; Advocacy for and with refugees online workshop series; Western Intercultural chai and coffee check-in; Gender diversity and the power of language; Peace vigil for Korea; Living Skies Event Calendar Highlights;
4. **Reminders:** Put your community event on our website; Moderator's letter: "Seize the Moment" for a Universal Basic Income in Canada;

### **1. Living Skies Regional Council News:**

#### **Regional check in and support meetings:**

Wednesday evening meetings: **Topic: Questions and answers for re-opening your churches in Living Skies.**

To assist in your discernment and respond to any questions, additional Zoom gatherings will be offered on **Wednesday June 10 @ 6:30 pm**. Here is the connection information: Meeting link: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/97292579140> ;\*Please use local number when feasible (especially if you have unlimited long distance calling) to save costs for the church. \*1-647-374-4685; Toll-free 1-855-703-8985 Meeting ID: 972 9257 9140 **(Do not post this link on social media or your congregational website, please. Share it by email.)** Please encourage someone from your community of faith to join staff as we discern together, **especially if you were unable to join us last week**. Please note that if you join the call, we will ask you to make sure your Zoom name is correct and to re-name yourself while on the call if not. We will walk you through this, or if you prefer to learn ahead of time, [here's a link](#). Using your correct name helps us know who is actually on the call, and which communities of faith are and are not present.

Tuesday afternoon meetings: **Living Skies Ministry Personnel (only) Check-ins:**

The Regional Council will continue with **Tuesday @ 1:00 pm ministry personnel check-ins** until June 16. <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/93318495166> ;\*Please use local number when feasible (especially if you have unlimited long distance calling) to save costs for the church. \* 1-647-374-4685; Toll-free 1-855-703-8985; Meeting ID: 933 1849 5166 PLEASE NOTE: please arrive on Time The meeting may be locked for security purposes five to ten minutes after the start

### **Re-opening your building (or not): discernment and planning resources**

As we discuss re-opening our buildings to various gatherings and needs, we know that complex discernment and planning that will be necessary before any doors can be opened. Lay leadership and ministry personnel alike need to be part of these conversations. To assist, we've created two new resources: one a [discernment process](#), and the other a blank planning [template](#) for writing your plan. To download these and see a reminder of other resources, [please click here](#).

### **Media release: SK faith leaders on re-opening public worship**

Rev Tricia Gerhard, chair of the Regional Council, writes "Soon after the release of the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan, faith leaders from across Saskatchewan gathered online to discuss the re-opening of places of worship. We drafted a letter asking the Saskatchewan government to work together with faith communities to develop responsible guidelines bringing places of worship within the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan." You can download [the letter to Premier Moe](#) and the very long and diverse [list of signatories](#), and see the [media release here](#). The results of these faith leaders efforts are here: [SK guidelines for places of worship](#).

### **Resources on Black Lives Matter**

Your Regional Council leadership and Executive Minister are discussing a response and contribution to the Black Lives Matter movement, and to calls for all our communities, and our church, to directly address anti-Black racism and other faces of racism and colonization. While this work continues, here are three important voices to absorb and share:

[A joint letter from the United, Anglican, and Lutheran churches.](#)

[What I Need from White People](#): A call from Adele Halliday, Team Leader Discipleship & Witness, who is known to many of us through her years of intercultural ministry and visits to our Region.

[An invitation from Rev Paul Walfall](#), who serves Fort Saskatchewan Pastoral Charge in Northern Spirit Regional Council.

In addition, please see this [anti-racism resource list from Parklands Restorative Justice](#), a funded partner of our Regional Council.

### **Pastoral Charge Information**

This summer, Admin Support Staff, Bev Diebert will be attempting to contact all the Communities of Faith to update the Regional Council's contact information. Church mail, Email and phone numbers will be confirmed for the directory, as well contact information for ministry personnel, pastoral charge supervisor and Regional Council lay delegates. Permission will be requested / confirmed to include contact information in the password-protected directory.

Information (name, email and phone numbers) about LLWLs, Sacrament Elders, Board Chair, Treasurer and M&P Committee chairs connected to each Community of Faith will also be sought. This information will be collected for the purpose of updating our records, but will not be included in the directory. If you have any questions, please contact Bev Diebert ([bdiebert@united-church.ca](mailto:bdiebert@united-church.ca)), Tracy Murton ([tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca)) or Julie Graham ([jgraham@united-church.ca](mailto:jgraham@united-church.ca))

### **Job opening: Director, Integrated Community Ministries in Saskatoon**

Integrated Community Ministries is based in Saskatoon and serves people from all over Saskatchewan's treaty territories. They are a ministry of Living Skies Regional Council. They are searching for a full time Director for a two-year term. The deadline at this point is June 30; applications should be sent to Board member Bill Pollock, [scoout@sasktel.net](mailto:scoout@sasktel.net)

[Please see their job posting here](#). Share widely!

### **LLWL gathering**

The Committee on Lay Leadership Support is inviting Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to a Zoom gathering for conversation, support and feedback into the future of the LLWL program in Living Skies Regional Council. If you are a Licensed Lay Worship Leader and you have not received your invitation to participate, please contact Tracy Murton [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca) for details.

## Church Office Administrators Retreat

Due to Covid-19 the Church Office Administrators retreat scheduled for October 19 – 21, 2020, has been rescheduled for October 18-20, 2021. More information will be coming early next year.

## A note from the OV re: Annual Declaration

Greetings Colleagues,

I hope this finds you well as you continue to lead in creative and adaptive ways in your communities and ministries. Although you may be occupied with pressing ministry demands and feeling the fatigue of online life, the month of June is also an important administration month that I want to draw your attention to in case you have missed it. It is time for the **Annual Declaration** in respect to criminal charges.

Formerly you were required to obtain regular police record checks in order to remain in good standing. This is now done as an annual declaration (like an affidavit) where you self-declare that you have been free from criminal charges (or not) over the past year. And yes, this declaration is conveniently done online on the ChurchHub. This is the second year it has been required so you may be well familiar with it already.

I realize the Hub is still intimidating to some and annoying for many others—understandable. However, this really should take fewer than 5 minutes as long as you have access to the Hub already. [Full instructions are available here](#) or can be found on the Living Skies Regional Council website, under Ministry Leadership > Office of Vocation (below the diagram).

The deadline for doing your Annual Declaration (EVEN IF YOU ARE RETIRED) is **June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020**. If you have not done this declaration it may jeopardize your standing and ability to make changes in pastoral relationships. I am happy to assist and see if we can all get up to date.

Thanks for taking this time.

Rev Dr Karen Medland, Office of Vocation Minister - Northern Spirit, Prairie to Pine, and Living Skies Regions

## Retiree Chaplains

In keeping with our tradition that all disciples of Jesus serve in ministry within the United Church, Living Skies Regional Council recognizes the crucial role that retired ministry personnel continue to play in our life of faith. From serving as pulpit supply to filling committee roles to pastoral charge supervision and beyond, our retired ministry personnel have served and continue to serve God and our communities faithfully. Therefore, the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support are making available Volunteer Retiree Chaplains for support and connection to retired personnel. If you are interested in serving in this role or know someone who might be interested, please contact Tracy Murton [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca).

## Worship themes and resources for June

In June both Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ communities are a focus for the United Church. June 7 is [Pride Sunday](#). June 21 is National Indigenous Day and Indigenous Day of Prayer; find [new resources for this important day here](#).

## Indigenous Day of Prayer: a history

June 21 is a deeply important day for many Indigenous Nations and United Church members. Here's a [short background](#) on the history of this day, now celebrated across the land. Please plan to honour this day in worship and conversation.

## Remit 1: gender-inclusive language in the Basis of Union

In the fall of 2020, delegates to the regional annual meeting will be voting on a remit to make a small but important change to the Basis of Union. Current wording about eligibility for ministry uses “men and women”, and the wording would be changed to “all people”, to reflect a diversity of gender identities. ([Further background is here](#).) The Equity and Diversity Committee of Prairie to Pine Regional Council and various resource people will create some learning opportunities that will be open to all. Have a look in the events section for an invitation to our June 24 webinar!

## YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT NEWSLETTER

The June 2020 Edition can be found at <https://mailchi.mp/cf33b61cb9d5/living-skies-yayac-newsletter-9330658>

**Rendez-Vous Re-Imagined: Faith Gone Wild! -- August 11-14, 2020** [www.uccrendezvous.ca](http://www.uccrendezvous.ca)

[Online registration is now open & free of charge!](#)

Rendez-vous 2020 will be a Rendez-vous unlike any other for youth, young adults, and their leaders.

Through real-time online events, recordings, and DIY workshop kits, we will celebrate **bold faith, brave space** and **brazen grace**. Here's what you can expect:

- Inspiring speakers, powerful worship and singing your favorite songs
- Fun, engaging and interactive workshops and activities
- New friends from across the country and around the world
- Awesome t-shirts (yep, it will be a Rendez-vous to remember!)

### **United Church Camps: creating community during a difficult summer**

As you likely know, our United Church camps are dealing with the hard reality that they will not be able to gather physically to be with the beauty of the land and the water. It's a loss of community, but also a significant challenge for the financial operation of the camps and their staff members. They're responding with creativity and care, as you can see in [this article from a national camping conversation](#).

**How to support our UCC camping ministries:**

1. **Financial donations.**
2. **Hire camp staff for coordination of virtual children's ministries in your church & community this summer.**
3. **Lotsa prayer!**

For more info and other ideas for support, please contact the faithful camp people at each of our camps:

<https://www.lumsdenbeachcamp.com/>

<http://www.camptapawingo.net/>

<https://shagabec.com/>

<https://www.campwoodboia.ca/>

<https://www.campchristopher.ca/>

<https://wellmanlakeucccamp.ca/>

### **Duty of Care Considerations for Online Youth & Children's Ministry Programs**

When it comes to ministry with youth & children using online platforms, there are some unique but essential considerations for Duty of Care. This linked article provides some very insightful and faithful recommendations to review with your faith community leadership.

With a whole bunch of appreciation to our friends in the United Methodist Church (USA):

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/safe-sanctuaries-supporting-a-shift-to-online-youth-ministry-meetings>

### **Resources for Virtual Vacation Bible Schools**

As you're exploring curriculum options for a virtual VBS, Cokesbury Press has created a helpful "Virtual VBS Guide" with practical teaching tips for online leaders. Complete information about the 2020 "*I've Got This! With Jesus*" is available at <https://www.cokesbury.com/virtual-vbs>.

Additionally, Illustrated Ministry will be releasing "*Compassion Camp*" as a virtual/at-home VBS resource in early June. You can check it out at <https://www.illustratedministry.com/vbs>.

Updates and other resource recommendations will be posted on the Living Skies Facebook group and at <https://livingskiesrc.ca/resources/faith-formation/>

### **Update on the Nominations Process for Commissioners to GC44**

The Nominations Committee had previously been accepting applications for folks interested in serving as Commissioners to the 44th General Council, planned for July 2021 in Calgary. We arrived at our deadline, and are needing to seek further applications, in order to present a full slate of Commissioners and Alternates. In the meantime, however, we are dealing with the realities and uncertainties of this pandemic, including how it relates to large gatherings and to travel plans.

The General Council Executive has called a special meeting of the Commissioners of the 43rd General Council to consider a recommendation to postpone the meeting of the 44th General Council to July of 2022. That special meeting is scheduled for June 20th. Our Nominations Committee has decided, then, to pause our application process until after the GC43 meeting has taken place. Once that meeting has occurred and decisions have been made, we will let you know how the application process for

Commissioners will continue to unfold. We will be holding on to the applications we have already received, and will update everyone as soon as we have further information.

If you have questions about this process, you are welcome to contact us: [lsrcnominations@gmail.com](mailto:lsrcnominations@gmail.com)

### **Parkland Restorative Justice in Prince Albert is seeking a full time Executive Director**

**Please help spread the word.** For the job description and more info on the organization please visit [parklandrestorativejustice.com](http://parklandrestorativejustice.com) or contact Board Chair, Jacquelyn Janzen at [jacqjanzen@hotmail.com](mailto:jacqjanzen@hotmail.com).

**Closing date: July 1, 2020.** Parkland Restorative Justice is a ministry partner of the United Church, and facilitates the P2P prison visitation program and Circles of Support and Accountability.

## **2. Wider Church Information:**

### **National Time-sensitive Webinars**

Wednesday's now-famous **congregational finances during the pandemic** is on hold until more **updates become necessary**. All you hard working treasurers: please take a break!

**Thursday's Congregational programming** is also on hold until the fall. Recordings of these webinars and more are still available on their website. If there is enough interest, we'll pick these up in the Fall. 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.](#)

## **3. Upcoming Learning Opportunities:**

Black Lives Matter; Indigenous United Church; migrant workers and COVID; intercultural check in; inclusive gender language; vigil for peace in Korea; eco-commoning. **Before a little summer rest begins, check out the amazing range of online gatherings here:**

**Eco Commoning: June 11, 18 and 25,** 90 minute forums and discussion on ecological justice in your community of faith. [Full details are here.](#)

### **Stewardship Through New Eyes: Online workshop**

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese invites us to register for a free series of ecumenical webinars on stewardship, Thursdays at 3pm (Saskatchewan time).

**June 11** - "Legacy giving" with Kurtis Krug, professional financial advisor

All are welcome for one or all webinars. Free of charge. Registration required: <https://bit.ly/3fwRjta>

For further information, contact: Archdeacon Cheryl Toth at [stewardship@sasktel.net](mailto:stewardship@sasktel.net) This series is organized by the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle, the Saskatchewan Synod of the ELCIC, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina.

### **Denominational Service of Prayer and Reflection: United Against Racism - Black Lives Matter to The United Church of Canada **Sunday June 14: 5:00PM in AB and SK.****

The Black Clergy Network of The United Church of Canada invites the whole church to join for a time of worship, prayer and reflection in the face of the issues of anti-Black racism in our country and in the church. In worship we will lament, we will hope and we will be reminded of the need to act against racism. Our worship will seek to shine light in and on the darkness of racism. Join us on:

[www.youtube.com/unitedchurchofcanada](http://www.youtube.com/unitedchurchofcanada)

### **Sundays in June: Indigenous Heritage Month Series: Foundations of the Indigenous United Church**

Every Sunday in June at 2:00 PM in SK: come explore the foundations of the Indigenous Church in The United Church of Canada. These sessions are open to everyone to come and learn. For additional information or to register, please contact: [right.relations@hillhurstunited.com](mailto:right.relations@hillhurstunited.com)

Sessions:

**June 14 - Formation:** Indigeneity in Christian Formation with the Very Reverend Stan McKay

June 21 - **Indigenous People's Day/Mission:** The Indigenous Church, Mission and Call with Rev. John Snow Jr.

June 28 - **Vision:** The Caretakers Report and the Future Indigenous Church with Adrian Jacobs, Keeper of the Circle, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre.

*Many thanks to these elders and knowledge keepers, and to the Right Relations Circle at Hillhurst United Church in Calgary, for offering us the space to learn together.*

#### **Webinar: COVID and migrant workers' rights, 16 June**

The first week in June, we heard of two seasonal agricultural workers' COVID deaths in Ontario. These men who help grow our food died alone, without their families. How is COVID-19 impacting foreign migrant workers in Canada? KAIROS' Migrant Justice Coordinator, Connie Sorio, presents updates from some of Canada's leading migrant justice advocates in a series of webinars.

Join us for the next update on **Tuesday, June 16, 2020**, from 1:00-2:00PM in SK, More info, and to register: [click here](#).

#### **Advocacy for and with refugees online workshop series**

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is holding their 2020 Spring Consultation online until **June 26, 2020**. CCR is a long time United Church partner and a well-respected education and advocacy group for the rights of people seeking refuge and their supporters. Participate in the Virtual Spring Consultation to explore current issues affecting refugee protection and newcomer settlement, featuring perspectives from all Canadian provinces and experts in diverse fields. All are welcome! <https://ccrweb.ca/en/2020-spring-consultation>

#### **Western Intercultural chai and coffee check in, June 23**

Join the Western Intercultural Network with your tea, chai, coffee (or water) in hand. We'll talk about how we're all doing, and discuss the racism COVID is bringing to light as well as strategies for confronting it.

We'll also share updates on our fall gathering, now moving online for September and October. Time:

June 23, 2020 **12:30 PM in Saskatchewan** Link (do not post this on social media- use email only please):

<https://united-church.zoom.us/j/97973729801>

#### **Gender diversity and the power of language, Wednesday June 24: 6:00PM in SK,**

What is gender inclusive language and how does it have the power to embrace or exclude non-binary, Two Spirit, trans, and gender queer people? Join us for a practical discussion about evolving language and personal perspectives on its importance. All welcome. This time together is especially recommended for Regional Council delegates who will be voting on Remit 1 this fall. [The Zoom link is here](#). Please see the Regional calendar listing for full details.

#### **Peace vigil for Korea, Thursday June 25**

Join us for an [online prayer vigil](#) for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula, marking the 70th Anniversary of the start of the Korean War on June 25, 2020 at 6:00PM in SK. This special event links the United Church with the [World Council of Churches' \(WCC\)](#) global prayer campaign, A Light of Peace, inspired by United Church partners in Korea. The campaign invites people of faith around the world to pray and act for peace on the Korean Peninsula and for a world free from war and nuclear weapons.

#### **Events in Living Skies: highlights - [Events calendar](#)**

### **4. Reminders:**

#### **Reminder: Put your community event on our website!**

You can still promote your local event through our website. Regular worship should be registered with the national church's map and listings, but everything from bible study to a workshop to drive up pie or bannock fundraisers can be shared on our Communities of Faith events calendar through our [community form](#). The event needs to be a United Church event open to the public. Give it a try!

#### **Moderator's letter: "Seize the Moment" for a Universal Basic Income in Canada**

Moderator Richard Bott is calling on the Canadian government to "seize the moment" offered by COVID-19 pandemic relief programs and move forward with developing and implementing a Universal Basic Income (UBI) program. A UBI program would help provide an adequate living level for everyone and address the persistent inequities within our country. Here's the [article](#), the [Moderator's full letter](#), and a related [action invitation for congregations](#) from Westworth United Church in Winnipeg.