

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



June 24, 2020

1. **Living Skies News:** Gender diversity and the power of language - **tonight**; A Note about Insurance Liability; Regional check-ins and support meetings; A reminder from Tracy to Care for Ministry Personnel and Staff; Last *Rambler* until fall; Staff Summer Holidays; Building re-opening plans from our communities of faith; Pride video from Saskatoon Affirming Ministries; Video Black Clergy Network speaks to racism and resilience; Belonging in the Body video on trans Christians; **REMINDER:** Watch out for email and phone scams; Church Ninja! Care Packages for Children's Ministry; GO Project is coming directly to you!; Update: United Church Camp Programs; Pastoral Charge Information; Retiree Chaplains; Minimum Salaries and Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel 2021; Job opening: Director, ICM in Saskatoon;
2. **Wider Church Information:** **National Time Sensitive Webinars: TONIGHT**; United in Learning webinars... continue!; General Council 44: Postponed until 2022
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Peace vigil for Korea; Eco Commoning; Sundays in June: Indigenous Heritage Month Series; Advocacy for and with refugees online workshop series; Rendez-Vous Re-Imagined: Faith Gone Wild!; New Wine: Western Intercultural gathering online this fall; Living Skies Event Calendar Highlights;
4. **Reminders:** Put your community event on our website; Pastoral Ponderings #16; National United Church Black Lives Matter prayer vigil; Black Lives Matter statement from the Regional Council; Past Issues of the Rambler and Pastoral Relations Ponderings;

1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

Gender diversity and the power of language, Wednesday June 24: 6:00PM in SK (tonight),

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.

A Note about Insurance Liability

Many communities of faith have been asking about insurance liability issues related to building re-opening following the COVID-19 closures. As you are preparing your plans for re-opening the building, you may wish to contact your insurance provider to discern whether there are particular issues related to your policy, especially if you are concerned about rental agreements. The Regional Council staff attempted to contact HUB international for general information but were unsuccessful in obtaining a definitive response.

Regional check in and support meetings:

Wednesday evening meetings have been suspended for the summer. If a significant shift in COVID information emerges, we will host a special gathering. Watch the Living Skies Regional Council Facebook page for notification. This is your opportunity to support one another.

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

The Regional Council will resume facilitated check-ins on **Tuesday, September 8**. In the meantime, you are encouraged to check in with one another over the summer for support and care.

A reminder from Tracy to Care for Ministry Personnel and Staff:

The last 3 months have been incredibly challenging for everyone as our way of participating in each other's lives has shifted dramatically. Your ministry personnel and staff have adapted and modified their work in ways that may not be visible to the community of faith. It is clear that we are in a marathon, not a sprint, and the pace is not sustainable for anyone. Please ensure that these folks have some time away for vacation or continuing education, a time of Sabbath before the pace of the fall resumes.

Last *Regional Rambler* until the fall

As summer has arrived, so has the time for rest and relaxation (summer holidays). The *Regional Rambler* will be suspended until the fall. However, if important items or information arises during this time, it will be distributed in a timely manner. Also, for those on Facebook, keep an eye on the Regional Council Facebook page for any announcements. Have a safe and fun socially-distanced summer.

Staff Summer Holidays

Due to the unusual circumstances and current travel restrictions, some Regional Council staff will not be taking traditional holidays such as away for 3 weeks to visit relatives out of the province or to go camping for a couple of weeks. Please watch for bounce back messages from staff emails for each person's plan. The only confirmed holiday at this time are: Executive Minister, Shannon McCarthy will be unavailable from July 27, to August 21; Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Minister will be unavailable from July 1-17 and August 4-7 and Julie Graham, Transition and Education Minister, will be unavailable from June 29-July 3 and July 27-August 14. Madeleine McLuhan-Myers, Archivist will be working most of the summer. Because her church office space is officially closed, she is best reached by email. The Living Skies Regional Council office will be mostly open through July and August. Bev Diebert is currently planning only day-trips and Fridays off. Emails and phone messages will be checked at least a couple of times a week.

Building re-opening plans from our communities of faith

Here is an ongoing [list of building/ in-person "re-opening" plans](#) sent to the Regional Office by communities of faith in Living Skies Regional Council. If you'd like to add yours to help others, please send it to livingskies@united-church.ca

Pride video from Saskatoon Affirming Ministries

Pride festivals all over the land are online only this year, so people took their contribution to video. Saskatoon Affirming Ministries joined forces with Laura Fohse to create this part of the Pride "march". Have a look at this short video [right here](#).

Video Black Clergy Network speaks to racism and resilience

Members of the Black Clergy Network of the United Church have produced a video [sharing the impact of anti-Black racism](#) on their lives and ministry. Please take some time to absorb and reflect on this.

Belonging in the Body video by transgender Christians: free access for our Regional Council

This video asks transgender Christians to talk about their faith journey, and they do so with insight, grace, and love. It's an excellent and important resource. Three Regional Councils have offered a fee to Generous Space Ministries, the producer, so that your community of faith can access this free of charge. This is part of the [Affirming](#) journey that Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils are currently on. [Please see full details here](#).

REMINDER: Watch out for email and phone scams targeting churches

Some scammers appear to have gotten bored during COVID and have improved their skills of late.

Remember that scammers can use any publicly available information to ask for money or to claim to be from the national church, the Regional office, or the CRA. They can often find your name on your church website.

If you get any email asking for money or claiming to be about finances: no matter how convincing it looks, do NOT click on any of the links. Do not ever click on an attached file. Do not reply.

Hover your mouse over the link or email address without clicking, and your system should show you more information. Most of the time the link or email will include a string of letters and numbers and you'll be able to tell that it isn't what it claims to be. If you feel there's a chance the request is legitimate, always call the person who appears to be sending the request or information before you even think of sending money or responding. Do some searches on "phishing" to improve your scam detection skills.

FAITH FORMATION

Church Ninja! Care Packages for Children's Ministry

The concept of **Church Ninja** is basically to create a treasure box of fun activities and items, and then secretly drop it off at the homes of the kids in your congregation. It's pretty straight-forward stuff – just think of a wine/book ninja adapted for church kids.

Have fun with it! Invite members of the congregation to fill the boxes and make the Ninja-deliveries! It's probably best to let the parents/adults know that a package is coming, but try to keep it a secret from the kids!

Details are at the Regional website:

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/church-ninja-care-packages-for-childrens-ministry/>

GO Project is coming directly to you!

Due to physical distancing concerns across the province, GO Project has made the hard decision to run virtual programs instead of in-person camps this year. Despite being online, our programs will still have all of your favourite GO things: community building, mission sites, faith stories, games, spiritual practices, discernment, and long-lasting friendships! Both children and youth camps will meet twice daily for "live" sessions, with optional additional activities in between live sessions. Weekly drop-ins for children & youth who can't commit to a whole program also available! "See" you soon!

Dates, times and rates can be found on: <https://thegoproject.ca/virtual-camp/>

Update: United Church Camp Programs

Plans for adapted summer programming are underway with **Camp Tapawingo** and **Lumsden Beach Camp**. Understandably, all of the details aren't finalised yet, but will be announced as they're available. Watch the camp websites and social media pages for more information!

<https://www.lumsdenbeachcamp.com/parents-and-campers/sessions>

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

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), Tracy Murton (tmurton@united-church.ca) or Julie Graham (jgraham@united-church.ca)

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.

Minimum Salaries and Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel 2021

The updated [minimum guidelines for salary and reimbursements](#) are now available for 2021. As plans continue to evolve for the future for our communities of faith, this is important information to update.

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

2. Wider Church Information:

National Time-sensitive Webinars - tonight

Erik Mathiesen and Clyde Harris are back with another [webinar on Congregational Finances tonight, June 24 at 7:00 pm EDT \(5pm in Sask\)](#). This week they'll talk about the Federal government's \$40K small business loan program. Initially excluded in April, the Canadian Emergency Business Account (CEBA) is now available to churches that meet the other eligibility criteria, notably generating revenue from rentals or the sale of goods and services as reported on their annual charitable return. This webinar will review the details of the program, as they apply to churches, and walk through the steps your church needs to follow to apply for it. [Find out more](#).

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

General Council 44: Postponed until 2022

In light of concerns around COVID-19, the decision has been made to postpone General Council 44, previously slated for July 2021 in Calgary, AB, to 2022. Commissioners came to this decision at a special electronic meeting held on June 20, 2020; [read the full news piece](#). Minutes from this meeting will be posted to the United Church Commons in the coming days, and updates related to this postponement will be posted to the General Council 43 [website](#).

3. Upcoming Learning Opportunities – this week, summer and fall:

Peace vigil for Korea,

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 **Thursday, 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.

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

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

Final session: 2:00 PM in SK: To register, please contact: right.relationships@hillhurstunited.com

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.

Advocacy for and with refugees online workshop series

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is holding their [2020 Spring Consultation online until June 26](#).

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!

Rendez-Vous Re-Imagined: Faith Gone Wild! -- August 11-14, 2020 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!)

New Wine: Western Intercultural Gathering online this fall with Eric Law and Tony Snow
Fridays, September 25th, October 2nd & 9th, 2020.

We can't gather in Calgary as planned, but we can come together online, even bigger than before! Join us for part 2 of last year's cross-Canada gathering of people committed to the United Church's intercultural vision. Rev. Dr. Eric Law and Tony Snow will be our lead resource people. **Cost: FREE**

These will be **three hour sessions**, with presentations, small group discussion, and tools for talking with your ministry or others between sessions. The sessions will begin at 10:00AM in SK. Details and registration to follow. Save the dates! More information will follow soon.

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!

The work of the Pastoral Relations Committee - [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 16](#)

National United Church Black Lives Matter prayer vigil

Sunday June 14 the church was blessed by a national service led by the Black Clergy Network. In the continuing call to affirm and live the reality that Black Lives Matter, this service is a prophetic reminder. [Here's the video link](#). As you can, please watch and pray.

Black Lives Matter statement from the Regional Council

The Regional Council offers a [commitment to Black lives and to the struggle against racism](#). The letter is available here, including a PDF copy for sharing. The letter includes some links for important and more immediate reading, as well as [recommended summer reflection resources](#) and consideration of actions we must take.

Past Issues of the Rambler and Pastoral Ponderings

Past issues with announcements about Re-opening your building (or not); The Annual Declaration deadline (EVEN IF YOU ARE RETIRED) is **June 30th, 2020**; United Church Camps; Duty of Care Considerations for Online Youth & Children's Ministry Programs; Resources for Virtual VBS, volunteer chaplains to support ministry personnel, why your minister may need a break and more are available on Living Skies Regional Council website. They can be found on the Regional News page (under News& Events). Here is the link: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/news-and-events/regional-rambler/>