

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



June 3, 2020

1. **Living Skies News:** **Regional check-ins and support meetings (Weds and Tues);** Opening our buildings: discernment and planning resources; Media release: SK faith leaders on re-opening public worship; A note from the OV re: Annual Declaration; United Church Camps: creating community during a difficult summer; YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT NEWSLETTER; Duty of Care Considerations for Online Youth & Children's Ministry Programs; Resources for Virtual Vacation Bible Schools; Retiree Chaplains; Update on the Nominations Process for Commissioners to GC44; Worship themes and resources for June; Indigenous Day of Prayer: a history; Remit 1: gender-inclusive language in the Basis of Union;
2. **Wider Church Information:** **National Time Sensitive Webinars: June 3 and June 4;** United in Learning webinars... continue!
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Eco Commoning; Sundays in June: Indigenous Heritage Month Series; Stewardship Through New Eyes; 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; Voices for restorative justice resource; "Re-opening" discernment and practices resource & Message from the Regional Council: "re-opening"; **Helpful Pandemic Resources:** Financial Decisions during Pandemic; Governance During the Pandemic; Congregational givings; Video Resources on trauma and self care; Worship resources; National COVID Updates;

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 3 and 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 be asking 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. June 9 will be a Take 2 with Diane Strickland discussing the Theology of Trauma. <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

Opening our buildings: Discernment and planning resources

As we begin to discuss 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, here are two new resources: A [discernment process](#) (use as much or as little as you need) (pdf format) and a [template for writing your plan](#) (Word document). For these links and all church and SK health links, [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](#).

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 30th, 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 for Northern Spirit, Prairie to Pine, and Living Skies Regions

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://wellmanlakeuccamp.ca/>

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT NEWSLETTER

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

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/>

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.

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

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](#) (as well as Union Sunday- the best of liturgical luck with mixing these two themes.) June 21 is National Indigenous Day and the 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.

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 June 24 webinar!

2. Wider Church Information:

National Time-sensitive Webinars

June 3: Congregational finances during the pandemic. 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!

June 4: Congregational programming: More on opening our buildings

This is an ask-us-anything format, so bring your questions and we’ll try and get as many answered as possible. This will be the last in the series for clergy for now, and 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:

Indigenous United Church; intercultural check in; inclusive gender language; vigil for peace in Korea; eco-communing. **Before a little summer rest begins, check out the amazing range of online gatherings here:**

Eco Communing: June 11, 18 and 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

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

Sessions:

June 7 - Foundations: Indigenous Women's Spirituality with Rev. Bernice Saulteaux

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.

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 4 - "Relational giving" with Susan Graham Walker and others

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 This series is organized by the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle, the Saskatchewan Synod of the ELCIC, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina.

Advocacy for and with refugees online workshop series

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is holding their 2020 Spring Consultation online from **May 19 - 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.

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.

Voices for restorative justice resource

Our Mission and Service givings support a number of SK ministries and groups that support those in prison and leaving prison. [Parkland Restorative Justice](#) and the [Micah Mission](#) joined the Mennonite Central Committee SK to talk about hard questions related to support for prisoners in this time, and the hope held out for survivors and perpetrators by restorative justice and relationship. See this free webinar here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13R1PsjVJs0dVnMMCQUB40yA1hXQn09o/view>

Parkland also welcomes those who want to write to, and receive letters from, those currently in prison.

[Please see full information here.](#)

“Re-opening” discernment and practices resource

From the national church: An important [three-part resource](#) on "re-opening" discernment and practices.

Thank you to the many people involved in thinking carefully about the many practical, spiritual, and ethical complexities of these decisions. As always, we are expected to keep ourselves up to date on provincial, territorial, and local health authority updates and restrictions when making decisions. Please also see [Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy's letter on](#) this important conversation.

Please share widely and use the link only. It's expected that information at this link will continue to be updated and added to, and the date on the page will change to reflect this. The link itself will remain the same. The “re-opening” link again: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/reopening-churches-during-covid-19>

Message from the Regional Council: “re-opening”

Our Regional Council's leadership offers a [letter of support, caution, and reminder](#) as Saskatchewan begins to re-open some parts of public life. Please share widely.

Helpful Pandemic Resources:

National COVID updates

[Stay up to date](#) with the latest tools, news, and resources related to faith communities and COVID-19. You can find information on:

- [Worship during COVID-19](#)
- [Emergency Funding for Congregations](#)
- [Governance during the Pandemic](#)
- [Stewardship, Finances, and COVID-19](#)
- [Mission & Service stories during the Pandemic](#)

Staff from Living Skies Regional Council have put together a document titled **Financial Decisions during Pandemic**. [To see the document, click here](#).

Governance during the pandemic - Several important updates/clarifications from General Council Exec: [a governance overview is here](#), and a [specific resource is here](#). Also a [temporary amendment to some key pastoral relations policies](#).

Congregational giving at a time like this an overview of options for giving regularly and at a distance: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/congregational-finances-and-covid-19>

Video resources on trauma and self care Rev. Diane Strickland 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/KIrJZE2I9aQ>

Worship resources questions about everything from technology to music licensing continue to fly. <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/tools-worship-during-covid-19>