

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



October 28, 2020

1. **Living Skies News:** LS Regional Council Gathering 2020; Docket for the Meeting; Gentle Covenanting pressure; Latest webinars from United in Learning, *including congregational finances*; NSHC-New Chaplain; Clusters and Network Update; Entering Advent in a Time of Crisis: Bah Humbug or Hope-Filled Anticipation?; SAVE THE DATE-Living Skies Advent Celebration Concert and How Do We Make Churchy-Stuff go on the Inter-Web?; Updates to the COVID “re-opening” plans library; Ministry Personnel Gatherings;
2. **Wider Church Information:** ICM-10X10 Art Show is back; The United Church supports Mi’kmaq treaty rights; Continued reflections on racism; Stewardship update for November: around the globe and at home; For the Love of Creation; Community of Faith calendar;
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** United in Learning online workshops; Congregational Finances During the Pandemic; Wet'suwet'en Witness; Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble Kitchen Sink open conversation series; There Are No Closets in Tipis; CCS Fridays; SK Peace Conference: Displaced: Upheaval, Hospitality and Justice in the Search for Home; Mapping Our Lives – Exploring a Map of Human Experience; Queen’s House re-opening;
4. **Reminders:** Pastoral Relations Ponderings; UCRD: United Church Bookstore; The Library at St. Andrew’s College; Reminder: be careful with photo copyright!; Reminder about CoF responsibility for knowing health rules; Final reminder: Background on Remit 1 and voting on it; Proposal to the RC: Banning conversion therapy in SK;

1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

Living Skies Regional Council Gathering 2020

The link to the Regional Council Gatherings as well as information about the 2 proposals and the remit were sent to registered delegates and guests Monday afternoon and Tuesday. If you believe you didn’t get these emails, please check **your Junk Email folder**. If you haven’t received them, please contact Bev Diebert at bdiebert@united-church.ca as soon as possible.

Docket for the Regional Council Meeting

The full docket is now posted on the Regional Gathering webpage on the Living Skies Regional Council website. You can get to the Regional Gathering page by going to the [Living Skies Regional Council website](#) and clicking on the Regional Gathering button on the home page or by [clicking here](#).

Gentle Covenanting pressure

The Committee on Community of Faith Support is hoping to celebrate as many covenants as possible at the Regional Council Gathering at the end of the month. As we continue to re-gather in person, it is possible that your community of faith now has the opportunity to review and celebrate a new covenant within a new structure. If you need assistance with background information, please see [here](#). Contact Tracy tmurton@united-church.ca for a sample covenant if that would be helpful. If you did not receive an email on October 27 from Tracy Murton confirming receipt of the covenant from your Community of Faith, please contact her at tmurton@united-church.ca. **Final deadline: Oct. 30.**

Latest webinars from United in Learning, *including congregational finances*

Gatherings for church treasurers, a series on preaching the big questions, and racial justice training: all this and more at United in Learning, the United Church’s continuing education and engagement service. [See the summary here](#).

NSHC – New Chaplain

Northern Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincy is pleased to announce the appointment of Rev. Emily Carr as the half-time chaplain for the three hospitals and Park Ridge Centre in Saskatoon. She will be available from Tuesday to Saturday and there is also emergency on-call chaplains available on Sunday and Monday. Emily brings a range of experience to the position and is looking forward to ministering with those in need. **Please advise** her of anyone from your Pastoral Charge who may require the services of a chaplain in Saskatoon. The contact number for the Chaplain is (306) 227-8707.

If you wish to support the work of the Northern Chaplaincy donations can be sent to: The Treasurer, 1345 East Centre, Saskatoon SK S7J 3A8

Clusters and Networks update (and reminder of \$\$!)

We know more online meetings may be the last thing on your mind. But just in case: If you are considering starting a new Network or Cluster, or if you've already been gathering, please take a moment to make sure that the Regional Council knows you're meeting.

If your Cluster or Network is open to new members (and we hope it is) please make sure you're listed. Please contact your Regional office (at the bottom of this newsletter) or Julie Graham (jgraham@united-church.ca) to make sure we have contact information and a short description. And remember: there is money in the Regional budget to support your work. Maybe you want to offer to pay for event registrations or resources. Maybe you want to submit receipts for a get together lunch over Zoom to support a sense of community. Don't let funding worries get in the way! Questions about this? Contact the office.

Entering Advent in a Time of Crisis: Bah Humbug or Hope-Filled Anticipation?

(Ministry personnel only – Thursday, November 12, 1-4pm; Licensed Lay Worship Leaders only – November 14, 9-12pm via Zoom with Marg Janick-Grayston)

The advent season takes us on a journey towards Christmas, the ultimate symbol of hope, love and giving. For many of us it has become a time for family gatherings, big feasts around the table, and the exchange of gifts and hugs. But, with COVID, and distancing, and tiny bubbles of contact in our midst, we may feel more like Ebenezer Scrooge whose response to Christmas was "Bah Humbug" because it lacked meaning for him. With everything that is going on, it may feel harder for us this year to enter this season with hope-filled anticipation. In our time together we will be checking into our "internal weather forecast" to see how we, and the communities of faith we relate to, are entering the Advent Season. Secondly, we will consider why this season overflows with hope from a historical perspective, and where hope is showing up today. Lastly, we will review some research information on the negative and positive effects of faith in a time of crisis, and brainstorm ways to acknowledge people's struggles, as well as embrace our faith in the most positive of ways to reconnect us with hope. If you would like to register, please contact Bev at bdiebert@united-church.ca

SAVE THE DATE!**Living Skies Advent Celebration Concert**

A wonder-filled virtual evening of music & story for the entire UCC family throughout the Region! Connect with friends! Sing joyfully from your own living room! Share in the Spirit of the Christmas season! Even raise some funds for your local ministry or community of faith! That's a lot of exclamation points! **Sunday, December 13, 2020 at 7pm**
Watch for Ticket Info in the next week or so(!).

Technology in Faith Workshops: "How Do We Make Churchy-Stuff go on the Inter-Web?"

Preparation is underway for a regional library of online-worship resources along with workshops to help support the tech-geeks, the tech-geek-wannabes, and the tech-geek-aphobes throughout the region. Techy stuff can be intimidating, so we want to tailor each workshop to a specific topic and level of tech-confidence. To help with this plan, we need your input:

What are the major questions or needs for your community of faith when it comes to Virtual Church (Worship, Community, Mission, Faith Formation, etc.)?

Please send your responses to Kent at livingskiesyaya@united-church.ca.

Updates to the COVID “re-opening” plans library

Thank you to all communities of faith and ministries who have shared their plans. A small selection representing a range of contexts has been updated here on the [plans page](#).

Ministry Personnel Gatherings

Interest has been raised in having some focussed time during the Ministry Personnel Gatherings (**Tuesdays, at 1:00pm**). So, for the next few weeks, these gatherings will be 90 minutes, beginning with general announcements, small group check-in (10 mins), and a focussed topic. Ministry Personnel are warmly invited to attend any part of the gathering that will be useful. The schedule is as follows: **November 3 – creative options to connect folks off-line**

- November 10 – creative ideas for Christmas
- November 12 – pre-Advent retreat with Marg
- November 17 – creating an online worship component exchange (sermon, prayers, music, children’s time, engaging scripture reading, etc.

Please note there is a new Zoom link that includes a password: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/93146504904?pwd=SVAYLyt1YmUxRktVYnJibVpiR2h4QT09>.

2. Wider Church Information:

Our world seems smaller and more confined since COVID began. May these stories help widen it, and help us see where our prayers and actions from home can support those we may never meet in person, but with whom we are part of the Body of Christ.

ICM - 10x10 Art Show is back!

In March, ICM launched the 11th season of the 10x10 art project. It draws together artists from many diverse backgrounds, who live in, work in and support Saskatoon’s Core neighborhoods. The show brings together experienced artists and new ones; indigenous, metis and new immigrants; artists with jobs and those who struggle. Together their art is their voice- a glimpse into their diverse journeys. COVID forced us to think of new ways to complete the show. Instead of an in-person show, bidding will take place online Nov. 2nd-19th. ***The bidding site will go live Nov. 2nd at 7am showing the art and comments from the artists.*** www.icmsaskatoon.webstore.com **Check the 10 x 10 Art Celebration Facebook page for regular Updates!!**

The United Church supports Mi’kmaq treaty rights

Being the church together means living into the [1986 Apology to Indigenous peoples](#) together, and committing to understanding what it means to be Treaty People today.

Tensions remain very high in Mi’kmaq territory/ Nova Scotia, as the Sipekne’katik First Nation exercises its treaty rights to fish lobster over sometimes violent protest from non-Indigenous fishers. Regional Council 15 is asking for prayers from across the church and helped organize an interfaith leaders’ delegation to the area in late October. The national church shares [the prayer and an update here](#).

Moderator Richard Bott and Indigenous Ministries Executive Minister Murray Pruden have responded with a [letter to the church](#) that says, in part, that “As a church that has repudiated colonial doctrines and committed itself to Indigenous rights, to the ongoing work of building right relations, and to opposing racism in all of its forms, we cannot remain silent.” ([Également disponible en français.](#))

Continued reflections on racism

As part of the United Church’s striving to be anti-racist, Rev Paul Walfall [offers us a reflection on “social holiness”](#), our collective commitment as a church and Canadians to truly acknowledge the impact of racism. “It needs to be stated again, that when people say that there is systemic racism in Canada it is not a moral judgement against anyone. It is not to suggest that people are not good and caring. It is, however, to soberly acknowledge that, systemically, a Black or an Indigenous person is more likely to be at a disadvantage when dealing with the institutions and policies in our nation.”

Stewardship update for November: around the globe and at home

God’s Mission, Our Gifts offers the latest stewardship news and resources here. This month, stories include gratitude from [Beirut, Lebanon](#) for our gifts; the ongoing struggle for peace within and

between some Asian nations; ideas for thank you letters at a time when people may struggle to give; a reminder of other resources, including offering prayers for November that are [here](#). Read the [whole \(short!\) newsletter](#) here.

For the Love of Creation

This group of over 30 churches and faith based organizations in Canada is hosting a Fall Forum every Monday evening from 7:30 to 8:30pm. EST this November on Zoom. Join us to learn more about our collective work for climate justice, engage with guest speakers, and take action for climate justice together online. Simultaneous translation will be available.

Join us for one or more of the following sessions:

Nov 2nd: Communicating Climate Change

Nov 9th: Advocating for Climate Justice

Nov 16th: Grieving, Healing, and Connecting with Creation (English Only)

Nov 23rd: Creation Care: A Letter of the Faithful

Nov 30th: Climate Action Now!

To Register: <http://bit.ly/flcforum2020> or if you have questions - Email flc.pac@gmail.com

Community of Faith Calendar

Reminder: our Community of Faith events calendar is open 24/7 for online events! As long as the public is invited, you can post it. From workshops to worship, go for it. Here's the handy form:

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/community-of-faith-events/>

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

United in Learning online workshops

In the midst of COVID, it's perhaps a relief to actually focus on something else. United in Learning is here to help us with that. From racial justice workshops to discerning calls to ministry, preaching to respecting boundaries, this fall's line up has it all. [Please have a look](#).

Congregational Finances During the Pandemic

Wednesday October 28, 2020. 5:00PM SK

Whether you're working on 2020 financial forecasts or a 2021 budget, all treasurers face more moving parts than ever before. Earlier this month, the federal government announced major subsidy program extensions which will likely impact both your current year forecast and any 2021 budgeting. [Find out more and register here](#).

Wet'suwet'en Witness: Making the justice connections with Northern Ontario — Indigenous land rights, Indigenous women and the Environment

For all of us who feel called to live with respect in Creation.

October 28, 7:00 pm Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls

Speaker: Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Liaison Unit

Manager, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Visit <https://solidarity-team-northbay.weebly.com/> to register or email if you have questions: solidarityteamnorthbay@gmail.com

Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble Kitchen Sink open conversation series

Next: November 3 and continuing every second Tuesday. 4:30-6:00pm 5:30 to 7:00 pm (Central),

[Full information on the series is here](#). A variety of conversation topics are offered, all of them a part of becoming and staying LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit-affirming in our church.

There Are No Closets in Tipis: conversation with Jack Saddleback Thursday November 5 2020, 6:30 in SK

Riveting, captivating, real, insightful, grounded, illuminated are just a few words to describe Jack Saddleback's presentation of his life as a Cree Two-Spirit Champion. Many people across the Prairies have experienced Jack's leadership in community and province-wide settings. This event live streams here: <https://youtu.be/Wu2RvFjgcoU> (A collaboration between The United Church of Canada's Indigenous Ministries and Justice Circle, Pacific Mountain Regional Council's Pollinate Ministries and LeaderShift, and the Shining Waters Regional Council.)

CCS Fridays

Join the Centre for Christian Studies for CCS Fridays—online conversations to help us all to respond faithfully to emerging issues in local contexts. These workshops are open to anyone who might be interested. Each session will be on a Friday from 12:00 to 1:00 CT and in the form of a Zoom workshop. There will be a presentation that will be recorded for future viewing, plus opportunities to engage with the ideas in small groups.

Coming up: Join the Centre for Christian Studies for conversation about “Queer Biblical Interpretation: seeing Scripture with new eyes”. When: **November 6, 2020** 12:00 noon Central ST(US and Canada)

Saskatchewan Peace Conference: *Displaced: Upheaval, Hospitality, and Justice in the Search for Home* November 7, 10:00am to 4:30pm CST

Sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee SK and open to all, this free day long online conference will explore the realities of refugees, internally displaced persons, and Indigenous peoples around the world and locally. [More details and registration here.](#)

Mapping Our Lives – Exploring a Map of Human Experience – *A Free Flow Wellness Retreat to be held at First United Church, (223 Third Ave. NE) Swift Current, SK S9H 2G6* **Registration Deadline: Oct. 30th/20** **Thursday, Nov. 5 (5:30pm supper) – Saturday, Nov. 7, 2020 (12:30pm)**

In this retreat we will be exploring a typical looking map that substitutes the names of cities, rivers and seas for concepts, feelings and everyday human experiences. We will find beautiful regions and desolate ones. Through an exploration of this map, and creative processes to fire the imagination, we will be invited to discover where we are in life presently, where we want to go, and map out our route for getting there. Come and join us for this unique adventure as we explore a map of human experience that has something for everyone. **Leadership:** Marg Janick-Grayston; Expressive Arts, Reiki and Quantum Touch practitioner, Spiritual Mentor, Retreat Leader, and Business Owner of Free Flow Wellness **Number of Participants:** 5 – 12; **To Register:** Send a \$75 cheque along with any necessary dietary needs to: *First United Church* (address above). (Includes Thursday supper, and Friday lunch and supper, as well as materials) (Accommodation, breakfasts, and Saturday lunch are the responsibility of each participant) **Facilitation Donation:** Suggested Range \$110-\$150 (Paid directly to Marg Janick-Grayston during the retreat. This amount is over and above the Registration fee listed above). **Cancelation Policy:** Full refund up until Oct. 30th or if leadership cancels the event. For more info, see <https://www.freeflowwellness.ca/retreats> or Email Linda Stumpf at lgstumpf1@hotmail.com or call her at 306-629-3948.

Queen’s House re-opening

Queen’s House has re-opened our doors to groups who have arranged to use our facility – we would love to see you. For individual retreats or dropping by the centre for personal prayer, please call us to inquire about what can be arranged. Our programming formats have significantly changed – while we will be offering occasional programs in-person at the retreat centre, following all safety protocols, much of our programming will be offered through Zoom. To see Queen’s House programming, please see their [Our Programs page](#).

4. Reminders:

The work of the Pastoral Relations commission - [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 18](#).

FAITH FORMATION RESOURCES:

UCRD: United Church Bookstore

Have you been to the **United Church Bookstore** lately? Lots 'n' lots of denominational materials, inspirational resources, powerful stories and a bunch of other living-faith-stuff that you didn't even know existed! <https://ucrdstore.ca/> Or follow them on Instagram at: https://www.instagram.com/faith_in_our_books/

The Library at St. Andrew's College

Betcha didn't know that...

- 1) It's the LARGEST theological library in Western Canada!
- 2) It's OPEN TO THE PUBLIC and anyone can become a patron. FREE of charge!
- 3) You can request materials ONLINE and Library staff will mail them directly to you with FREE return postage included.
- 4) It has a huge collection of resources for CHILDREN'S MINISTRY, YOUTH MINISTRY, FAITH FORMATION, SOCIAL JUSTICE, SPIRITUAL PRACTICES, and MORE!
- 5) Katelyn is sitting at her desk waiting to hear from you RIGHT NOW!

Phone: 306-966-8983 ; E-mail: help.stulibrary@usask.ca ; Website: www.stu.usask.ca/library

Reminder: be careful with photo copyright! Here are some tips

Photos are vital to our websites, social media, worship PowerPoints and much more. They add a lot to our online ministry and in-person PowerPoints. And they're sometimes a little too easy to take and share. So please beware, and follow good copyright practices. [Click here for some further information](#), resources, and ideas for copyright-free or fair use photos.

Reminder about Community of Faith responsibility for knowing health rules

Recently a non-United Church outreach ministry in Prince Albert SK was fined \$14,000 for violating COVID-related health rules. As of October 13, [25 related COVID cases have been identified](#). The church claimed to be unaware of the rules related to mask-wearing, singing, and more.

We want to remind Communities of Faith that it is your responsibility to be aware of all relevant provincial guidelines, and to continue to assess your local situation regarding the risks of in-person worship and other church gatherings.

In particular, the Regional Council strongly recommends that any Communities of Faith that are gathering for in-person worship ensure that you **DO NOT SING!** Singing remains one of the most high risk activities.

Please go to our website's [COVID 19 section](#) for more information and resources to help your board/council make decisions about worship guidelines, including the [September letter from Regional Council chair Rev Tricia Gerhard](#), and [planning resources](#) to help you discern your decisions in keeping with current health regulations.

We want to remind you that this is not a time to push the guidelines, which are actually minimum requirements. Out of care and love for your members and your community, we all need to do better than the minimum. *Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, Living Skies Regional Council.*

Final reminder: Background on Remit 1 and voting on it.

Remit 1 proposes a simple but very important gender-inclusive change to the language describing who is eligible to be a minister. [Please find here a short resource](#) to help voting delegates and the wider church understand how the Remit works; what the proposed change is; why it makes a difference; and further resources. Please note that the wording of the Remit cannot be edited or changed in any way. Living Skies Regional Council delegates will vote on the Remit on November 4.

Proposal to the Regional Council: Banning conversion therapy in Saskatchewan

At part 1 of our Regional annual meeting next Wednesday, we'll look at a proposal from Grosvenor Park United Church [seeking the Region's support in banning so-called conversion therapy](#). Please see the proposal here. All are welcome to both parts of the meeting; on Wednesday October 28 all delegates and visitors will discuss the proposal, and on Wednesday November 4 delegates will vote on it.