

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



January 27, 2021

1. **Living Skies News:** COVID Guidelines - **update**; From the Sask. Desk of the Refugee Advisory Group; World Day of Prayer information session; Lenten Retreats via Zoom – **LAST CHANCE**; UC participates in call against nuclear modular reactors; Ashes and Resurrection: How are COVID days shaping us for Newness?; Saskatchewan Aboriginal Storytelling 2021: A Discussion With Marilyn Poitras; Lenten Resources Available @ St. Andrew's College Library; Subscribe to UCC E-newsletters; United Theological College; Ministry Personnel Gatherings; Reminder: Regional Meetings 2020 evaluations; Advent Concert Fundraiser Results; Living Skies YouTube channel; **FAITH FORMATION:** Creating Conversations: Voices of Youth/Young Adults In UCCan; ZEEBU 2021: Youth Retreat For Gr.7-12; 2021; Faith@Home Packages; Zoom Bible Study; Zoom Gathering for Young Adults; Employment Posting; **AGM info:** Important update: Congregational annual meetings for 2021; A Note from the Committee on Community of Faith Support re: your Annual Report;
2. **Wider Church Information:** National Church: opportunities to serve; Black / African Heritage Month resources for congregations; St. Andrew's College ReJUNEvation 2021; Lent resource now available: Faith on the Move; Training for United Church Conflict Resolution Facilitators; Online worship national map: share, and add your ministry; Up to date 2021 Minutes for Mission: where to find them!;
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Community of Faith calendar; New at United in Learning; Church finances webinar - **tonight**; Intercultural chai/ coffee conversation; Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization; Pancakes and PIE!; CCS Fridays; Deepening Practices of Restorative Solidarity; Blanket Exercise Teaching & Sharing Circles, Winter 2021 Series; Benefit Pension Plan; 2021 Virtual Festival of Homiletics: Registration Now Open; Queen's House re-opening;
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1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

COVID Guidelines – new update

The Provincial government has extended the current restrictions and guidelines related to the pandemic until **at least February 19**. This means that restrictions on numbers (max 30), physical distancing, and masks required continue to be in place. The full list is [here](#). If you have any questions or concerns, contact Tricia Gerhard at lsrcexecutive@gmail.com.

From the Saskatchewan desk of the Refugee Advisory Group - new

Greetings friends in faith, my name is Jim Tenford and I serve St. Andrew's United Church in Moose Jaw. I am Living Skies Regional Council's latest representative to the United Church's Refugee Advisory Group. I've been involved in refugee sponsorship and settlement for several years and believe it to be a truly authentic expression of our Christian faith.

I am however new to this role in the national church so it will take me a while to "get up to speed." I **think a great start would be to gather names of churches and contacts that are currently, or are interested in, refugee sponsorship**. Normally, I'd plan on a meeting at this year's annual meeting but as that is still a while away and maybe not in person, I'll likely plan for a Zoom meeting in the near future where we can meet to introduce ourselves and look at the work being done. Please feel free to [fill out this contact form](#), and I look forward to working with you on this vital work.

God's blessings- Rev. Jim Tenford

World Day of Prayer information session - new

Sask. United Church of Canada Women invite you to a Zoom "informational" meeting for World Day of Prayer on **Monday, February 8 at 7 p.m.** Guest speaker will be the WDP area field rep.: Linda Ervin. You must register for this event by contacting Mary Mohn at d.mohn@sasktel.net or by phone at 306-749-3446. There is no cost. This year's World Day of Prayer Service has been written by women in Vanuatu and a full service program has been prepared by Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC) for our use. It must be ordered through the WICC office at 416-929-5184 or wicc@wicc.org and is available to use as a full church service or as World Day of Prayer service usually held the first Friday in March. The Zoom meeting on Feb. 8 will be available on-line as well as by phone.

A fun event - A paint evening which combines fellowship, prayer and an opportunity to create an acrylic piece honouring our WDP 2021 theme: Build on a Strong Foundation will be happening on Friday, **February 5, 2021 from 7:00 to 9:30 pm.** Visit this website page to learn more and register wicc.org/get-involved/events/

Lenten Retreats via Zoom with Marg Janick-Grayston – LAST CHANCE

A Journey From Lent to Easter: A Roller Coaster Ride of Emotions, Deferred Dreams, and The Breaking of a New Dawn. **LLWL Retreat**: Saturday, Feb. 6 from 9-12 (with optional cohort time over lunch); **Ministry Personnel Retreat**: Thursday, Feb. 11 from 1-4. **Pre-Register by Feb. 2** by contacting Bev Diebert via email at bdiebert@united-church.ca. This event is being sponsored by Living Skies Regional Council who is covering the costs. More details in the [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 21](#) .

United Church participates in call against nuclear modular reactors - new

Recently it was announced that the Saskatchewan government is planning to build small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs). The United Church of Canada has signed on to a public statement, [available here](#), pointing out that SMR development will be too slow and too expensive to accomplish climate goals, even if working models are actually produced. As well, other sources of energy are preferable in job creation, in proven impact on reducing green house gas emissions, and in not creating long-lived radioactive waste.

The United Church of Canada has consistently called for a moratorium of any new developments along the entire nuclear fuel cycle, and for the government to have a national public inquiry into nuclear waste and nuclear power development. The church's Submissions to the National Waste Management Organization in 2004/5 provide specific details for this position.

For more info, contact Saskatchewan's Inter-Church Uranium Committee Educational Co-operative. (ICUCEC) icucec.sk@gmail.com , 306-653-1929 or Rev Vicki Obedkoff, Board Member, ICUCEC, can be contacted for information: minstw@sasktel.net

Ashes and Resurrection: How are COVID days shaping us for Newness? - new

A workshop put on by **United Church Rural Ministry Network (UCRMN)**. Join us on **February 18, 2021** from 12 noon to 2pm (Sask time) for a Zoom Workshop. **Tickets are \$10** to help cover the cost of the workshop.

C.S. Lewis said, "you can't go back and change the beginning but you can start where you are and change the ending". How are our practices in these days - our ways of being church "together while apart" - shaping us for newness? What are we discovering as an answer to the question - why is the church? We'll share practices that nourish and connect us these days and also how they open our hearts to something new.

We'll have time to just be together, sharing our stories. We'll also take time to be encouraged, to take heart in these days with Scriptural themes of annunciation and exile, stars and wilderness.

Register by contacting: www.ucrmn.ca

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Storytelling 2021: A Discussion With Marilyn Poitras – new

Hosted by the STU Library at St. Andrew's College, in partnership with Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples (LSSAP). Thursday, Feb 11, from 1-2PM. For registration information and a poster, [please see here](#).

Lenten Resources Available – Library at St. Andrew’s College - new

Katelyn has compiled a great list of Lenten reflection guides and resources at the library. Did we mention that it’s all free and available to the public? Get your library card now!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYmubDITmf8&list=PL9Q8OxKCEadZsxOpJkl-tug2R-MLlsfJr&index=2>

Subscribe to UCC E-Newsletters – new

The United Church of Canada produces several E-newsletters with regular updates about our denomination’s varied work & ministries. [For more info or to subscribe, click here.](#)

United Theological College - new

On January 1, 2021, United Theological College and Montreal Diocesan Theological College entered into an 18-month exploration of a merged identity as one Anglican–United Church Theological School based in Montreal.

These two institutions, along with Presbyterian College, already share much in terms of joint course offerings and other initiatives in the theological consortium in Montreal known as the Montreal School of Theology. For further information, please see the [announcement from the two schools.](#)

Ministry Personnel Gatherings

Join your colleagues on Tuesday afternoons at 1pm for conversation and support over Zoom. For specific topics and connection information, please check the Regional Council [calendar.](#)

Reminder: Regional Meetings 2020 evaluations

If you registered for the Regional Council’s annual meeting/ gathering, you would have received an evaluation invitation in mid December. Please remember to fill it out! Need the link? It will be in your inbox - or possibly in your spam folder, despite our best efforts.

Advent Concert Fundraiser Results

Our first Living Skies Advent Concert was a wonderful evening of music, story, laughter and community. Over 550 people from throughout the Region attended together, helping to raise approximately \$8,000 for local Ministries & Communities of Faith.

Please remember that the entire *"So That Our Joy May be Complete"* concert is available on the Region's YouTube channel. Feel free to share and watch with friends, family, and anyone else you can think of. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l21vfp2_xac&feature=youtu.be

Living Skies Youtube Channel

Links to Online Worship services, resources, and the wider UCC community. Subscribe and be sure to share your Churchy YouTube Channel too.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQumvdyab1_LIPlluOPgArg/featured?view_as=subscriber

FAITH FORMATION**Creating Conversations: Voices of Youth/Young Adults In UCCan - new**

Creating Conversations will be a series of 10-15 minute videos made by youth/young people to engage in important conversations around **social justice, mental health, and/or the environment.** Each video will be an interview or storytelling style video, that shares a personal experience about a particular topic to inspire further conversation. Get creative & get paid! **First Pitch deadline:** February 15, 2021 For more information see [here](#) .

ZEEBU 2021: Youth Retreat For Gr.7-12 (Hosted By Prairie To Pine Region) - new

Prairie to Pine invites youth from Living Skies and Northern Spirit to join us at the “All Our Relations” event will include Interactive Theme Time, Worship & Music, Games Night, and Home Groups divided by age. **Dates/Times:** Fri, Feb 12, 7-9pm & Sat, Feb 13, 9:30am-noon. Don't wait too long to register. We want to SNAIL mail you a little package to enjoy and use during the retreat ...so the sooner the better, to leave time for it to arrive. The last packages will be mailed February 5th (hoping they may still get to you in time) so be sure to register before then! [Register here](#)

2021 Faith@Home Packages

Innovative 2021 Faith Formation resources from our UCC Friends in Pacific Mountain Region.

<https://www.pmrfirstthirdresources.ca/empowering-faithhome.html#/>

Zoom Bible Study

An opportunity to read, learn and discuss the Bible with other UCCan folks.

Wednesdays from 1-2pm <https://livingskiesrc.ca/event/zoom-bible-study-lectionary/2021-02-03/>

Zoom Gathering For Young Adults (18-35 Yrs)

A safe space for open-minded, faith-based and engaging conversation every Wednesday at 6:30pm

Contact Rev. Laura Fohse for the ZOOM link: Text 306-291-5838, E-mail laura@mcclureunitedchurch.org

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/event/zoom-gathering-for-young-adults-18-35-yrs/2021-01-13/>

Employment Posting: Camp Director, Lumsden Beach Camp

Application due date: February 4, 2021

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/employment-posting-camp-director-lumsden-beach-camp/>

ANNUAL REPORTS AND MEETINGS – take note**Important update: Congregational annual meetings for 2021**

A reminder of a notice sent late last year: The General Council Executive has suspended the requirement to hold congregational annual meetings until June, in light of the pandemic. You can still hold an online meeting as possible, but meetings are not required. [Please click here for details.](#)

Further details about related matters like budgets and annual reports this will be shared later this month.

A Note from the Committee on Community of Faith Support re your Annual Report:

Dear Friends in Faith;

It has been a volatile year for our world and our communities of faith. Many of our Congregations have remained closed for several weeks if not months. Committees have been less than active in many cases due to the disruption. Others have been extremely active in creating safe space and connections in your midst. In light of this and of the suspended requirement for an annual meeting until June 30, 2021, our committee wants to lighten your load. Here are suggested guidelines for the 2020 Annual Report. Please include:

- A letter from the Chair of the governing body with an overview of the life and work of the congregation.
- An overview from the Minister or Supervisor of the Pastoral Charge.
- 2020 financial report
- 2021 budget.

The abbreviated Manual requirements are provided below for your convenience. *Please submit a condensed report by March 31.* Please submit to Tracy Murton by email if possible, or mail to her c/o St. Andrew's College, 1121 College Drive, Saskatoon SK, S7N 0W3.

Thank you for your faithful commitment in such challenging times.

In faith, Sheila Deforest, Bill Pollock and Deborah Smith (Committee on Community of Faith Support)

B.5 Meetings of a Community of Faith That Is a Congregation or Pastoral Charge

B.5.1 Frequency. The congregation or pastoral charge must meet annually. This meeting must be held as early as possible in the calendar year.

B.5.2 Annual Meeting. At the annual meeting, the congregation or pastoral charge is responsible ford) considering and making a decision on the draft annual budget.

B.7.4.8 Reporting. The governing body reports to the pastoral charge at least annually on

- a) the life and work of the pastoral charge; and
- b) the pastoral charge's financial situation, with details of all income, expenses, assets, and liabilities

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. Most of the ministry and resources you see here is supported by our Mission and Service givings.

National church: new opportunities to serve

From conflict resolution facilitators to researchers about Black experiences in the United Church: please [see details here](#), and consider both your own call and others' gifts.

Black/ African Heritage Month resources for congregations - new

February is Black History (or African Heritage) Month in Canada, a time to honour the contributions and struggles of peoples of African descent. How do you (and your congregation) plan to mark it? The United Church has many [worship resources](#) for each week, including new blog posts, prayers, and a new Black History Month service for 2021.

This year, to accompany the blog posts, we will also be sharing video interviews of the writers, which we hope will enrich your experience.

St. Andrew's College ReJUNEvation 2021- new

St. Andrew's College ReJUNEvation is going virtual for 2021. It will be held June 16 – 18, 2021. Rev. Canon Dr. Scott Sharman will present on the theme, "Now it Springs Forth: Looking for Ecumenical Movement with Fresh Eyes." Sharman, an academic and ordained minister who serves as the national Animator for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in the Anglican Church of Canada, will invite participants to reflect on some of the most interesting and promising new directions for the ecumenical movement as we head further into the 21st century. He will address the "sense of stall and stagnation and 'ecumenical winter' that came to dominate during the '90s and '00s." He will offer a theological, methodological, and spiritual diagnosis as to why that might have happened and offer examples of things that seem to be leading to new life and impetus for a renewed ecumenical movement – an "ecumenical spring" – especially in the Canadian context. ReJUNEvation will also feature online workshops and conversation among participants. We welcome new participants and long-time friends.

For more information, please visit <https://stu.usask.ca/standrews/students/rejunevation.php>. Registration info will be available soon.

Lent resource now available: Faith on the Move

The Lenten devotional, "*Faith on the Move: Daily Reflections on Hope and Change*," is now available from the **United Church Bookstore (UCRD)**. This new book focuses on themes of movement and change, physical and spiritual journeys. In this Lenten devotional, daily reflections by diverse contributors invite us to reflect on and embody God's welcome and love for people who are on the move for a variety of reasons. A study guide for in-person or online groups is included. [United in Learning](#) will also be hosting six webinars throughout Lent to explore the book so you can connect with others walking the Lenten journey. [Order your copies today!](#)

Training for United Church Conflict Resolution Facilitators

The United Church of Canada is seeking applicants to serve as Conflict Resolution Facilitators under its Dispute Resolution Policy: https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_dispute-resolution.pdf. Successful applicants will have a basic familiarity with the theology, polity and procedures of The United Church of Canada; strong pastoral skills; the ability to travel anywhere in Canada (post-pandemic); the ability to facilitate conflict resolution processes remotely via Zoom or similar technology; completed a basic course in alternative dispute resolution approved by the General Council office; and practical experience in mediating/facilitating alternative dispute resolution processes. Additional requirements and information are posted under Jobs and Opportunities on the United Church web site: <https://united-church.ca/opportunities/conflict-resolution-facilitators>.

Applications must be received via email to cgunn@united-church.ca by **February 15, 2021**.

Online worship national map: share, and add your ministry

As more and more communities of faith join in online worship, or refresh your skills and expand your reach, make sure you update your listing and help people find you! [Here's the national map](#). Share it on your website and social media, as many Canadians are looking for supportive spaces in this difficult time. You can add your ministry [through this form](#).

Up to date 2021 Minutes for Mission: where to find them!

There are lots of ways to access Minutes for Mission and all the great videos and photos that go with them. [Have a look here](#).

3. Upcoming Learning Opportunities**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](#).

New at **United in Learning**: have a look at some great new opportunities [here](#).

Church finances webinar, *TONIGHT at 6:00PM* Central

For January 27 we will focus on any loose ends from 2020 including PD27 filing, whether to issue T2200 forms for employees working from home, payroll upgrade to Teampay, assessment processing and of course the latest on federal support programs. [Click here for details and to send in your questions](#).

Intercultural chai/ coffee conversation on practical ideas for being an intercultural church - *new*

Tuesday February 2, 1:00PM. Theme: **Who do we want to be as we re-open our communities?** Hosted by the Western Intercultural Ministries Network. Facebook event: <https://fb.me/e/J8uf46JZ> or see our [Regional website calendar](#) under Events/ Regional. Please contact jgraham@united-church.ca for the link, or sign up for our occasional intercultural updates here: <https://form.jotform.com/200548035291248>

Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization – new Thursdays, Feb 4-25, 1:30- 3:30pm (Central) Join with Indigenous and settler resource people to challenge and change our reading of the Bible. [Full details are here](#).**Pancakes and PIE! – new** Tuesday February 16 at 6:00PM,

Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble asks us to join them in the kitchen for a Virtual Pancake Supper on Zoom, with entertainment and a friendly cook-off in two home kitchens! We'll also get to talk about [P.I.E. Day 2021](#) (Sunday March14) and what's cooking there. Facebook event: <https://fb.me/e/1ufTk8gqF>

CCS Fridays - new

A chance to join the Centre for Christian Studies virtually for an hour to explore timely topics of theology, life, and faith. It is open to laypeople and clergy.

On February 12 from 12:00 to 1:00 CST we will look at [Zoom Tips for Annual Meetings](#). We will review the basics of how to use Zoom, go over the nitty gritty of hosting a virtual annual meeting, and have a chance to share tips and favourite features.

The workshop is free [but you must register in advance](#) by clicking on the workshop name and filling in the form. If you have questions, e-mail info@ccsonline.ca

Deepening Practices of Restorative Solidarity, February 12-15, 2021, Live on Zoom from unceded Chumash territory, in the Ventura River Watershed, California.

The Bartimaeus Institute has lots of ecumenical Canadian connections, including resource people Harry and Germaine Lafond, of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and the Metis Nation, respectively. Considering creating the usual Canadian delegation online this year, and deepen engagement with decolonizing discipleship. <https://www.bcm-net.org/study/bki2021>

Blanket Exercise Teaching & Sharing Circles, Winter 2021 Series

Topics offered in the Winter 2021 public sessions (\$25 registration fee per session) include: the Impact of Residential Schools, We Are All Treaty People, the Doctrine of Discovery, Métis Teachings, Shannen's Dream & Jordan's Principle, Social Injustice in the Court System, the 60s Scoop, Child Welfare & Practice Standards, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, and the power of Growing Healing Gardens. Each topic can also be booked as a private group session by contacting cumana@kairoscanada.org

Visit <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/kbe-virtual-teaching-sharing-circle/> for the full schedule and to register.

Benefit Pension Plan - new

The United Church of Canada provides a Defined Benefit Pension Plan for all employees who work more than 14 hours a week. On **March 9**, join us for this 90 minute program to learn about how the plan works, what it costs, what it provides, and how you can customize it to meet your needs. For details see: <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/118-pension-information-seminar>

2021 Virtual Festival of Homiletics: Registration Now Open - new

The COVID pandemic has made life harder for just about everyone. To uphold the health and safety of our communities, the Festival of Homiletics will be hosted virtually again in 2021. [Registration is now open](#) for the virtual Festival of Homiletics, May 17–21, 2021. We're excited about the [superb thinkers and teachers](#) who will present on this year's theme, "Preaching for the Future Church".

Queen's House re-opening

Queen's House has re-opened their doors to groups who have arranged to use our facility – and 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 they 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:

Unsubscribe at your Peril

Hopefully, you are finding the *Rambler* helpful in reporting to your congregations what is going on within Living Skies RC. At the bottom of each Rambler and E-share, there is an *unsubscribe from this list* and *update your preferences* link. Please be aware that if you unsubscribe, the Regional Council office can NOT re-subscribe you to the list again using the same email address.

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 21](#)

Please review this document for important updates regarding policy changes, volunteer opportunities, requirements for retired ministers, sabbaticals, and more from the Pastoral Relations Commission and the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support, Community of Faith Support, and Lay Leadership

Canadahelps.Org For Online Donations To UCC Communities Of Faith

As we adapt to more online ministry, do you have a "Donate Now" element to facilitate charitable giving on your Community of Faith website or social media?

CanadaHelps.org information is available below: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CanadaHelps-What-Every-United-Church-Needs-to-Know-Mar-2020.pdf>

Letters of support to Korean minister disciplined for same sex blessing

In August 2019, Rev Lee Dong-hwan of the Korean Methodist Church accepted an invitation to bless the crowd at the Incheon Queer Festival. As a result of this support, in October of 2020 he was stripped of his ability to practice as a minister in the Korean Methodist Church for two years. Members of the Korean Ministers' Network of the United Church have offered a public solidarity letter, as have some United Church ministries. [Please click here](#) for a copy of the Network letter, further information, and a gracious thank you video from Rev Lee speaking to his decision and commitment.