

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



February 10, 2021

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1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

Letter from your Living Skies Regional Council Executive on our Charter rights - new

Some faith communities across Saskatchewan and Canada continue to suggest that COVID related distancing rules and building restrictions violate our human rights. This may be an emerging or continuing struggle within your ministerial or elsewhere. Please read and share the [Executive's response to this](#).

Your online annual meeting and voting – new

[Here are some thoughts](#) from Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy on not so secret ballots and your community of faith's online annual meeting. Read the article for some further excellent resources from other Regional Councils.

Resources for congregational annual meetings online – new

Lots of you are going ahead with congregational meetings online, and have many good questions about voting. Here's a good resource from some of our kin in Ontario that outlines the various options. (Hint: there's really no such thing as a completely secret ballot for everyone.) [Click here](#) to have a look at their meetings resources. See this newsletter for a [February 12 workshop](#) on the same topic, by the Centre for Christian Studies.

Invitation: Write letters of encouragement to inmates - new

This is an invitation from one of our justice and community partners, Parkland Restorative Justice in Prince Albert. [Read more about their excellent work here](#). Director Kerry Reimer invites our participation in writing letters to inmates at Saskatchewan Penitentiary. He asks that we "Please email letters to myself, director@parklandrj.com and I will address the letter and mail it to one of the inmates in our program who has voluntarily signed up for our prison visitation program." [Read more here](#).

Stewardship Animator, Western Canada (6 month full time term) Philanthropy Unit - new

The Philanthropy Unit of The United Church of Canada is seeking an individual to fill the role of Stewardship Animator, Western Canada, on a full-time basis (35 hours/week) for a 6-month term serving Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. This lucky person will be working with the people of our Regional Council. **But: the deadline for the posting is 16 February, so please put the word out as quickly as possible.** [Full details are here](#).

This Week:**Saskatchewan Aboriginal Storytelling 2021: A Discussion With Marilyn Poitras**

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](#).

CCS Fridays

Annual meetings online workshop, **Friday February 12, noon-1:00PM**, by the Centre for Christian Studies. Join us for an information-sharing and discussion session on best practices for holding a church annual meeting online using a platform like Zoom. [Details and registration are here](#).

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>

Affirming celebration February 14 for Knox-Metropolitan United Church in Regina! – new

All welcome to a celebration online of becoming an Affirming Ministry for Knox-Metropolitan United Church on **Sunday February 14, 2021 at 10:30AM**. Congratulations to Knox-Met as they celebrate this significant move towards being a safer sacred space!

Online via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KnoxMetRegina>

Later viewing at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/knoxMetRegina>

Please send a note of congratulations to the people of Knox- Metropolitan here: info@knoxmetregina.org

Pancakes and PIE! 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 March 14) and what's cooking there. Facebook event: <https://fb.me/e/1ufTk8gqF>

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

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

Certificate in Ministry of Supervision - new

Training for Ministry of Supervision is an intensive being offered in February 2021 in order to equip people to be credentialed as supervisors for Supervised Ministry Experience students within the United Church of Canada and within other denominations. The Certificate in Ministry of Supervision provides participants with the information and skills to mentor individuals preparing for ministry by equipping them for supervision including pastoral practices, leadership, reflection, feedback and spiritual guidance. It is designed for clergy and lay individuals.

Instructors: Rev. Brenda Fawkes and Rev. Dr. Andrew Richardson, Office of Vocation Ministers in Pacific and Atlantic Regions. This online course is available to participants from any region of Canada or beyond with an interest in credentialing for supervision.

Ministry of Supervision is offered in partnership with the Vancouver School of Theology and is an online (zoom) format using Canvas for student and instructor interaction and resources.

Dates: **February 22nd – February 26 Inclusive** 2021; **Class times:** 9:00am-12:00pm (Pacific); 10:00am-1:00pm (Mountain); 11:00am-2:00pm (Central) 12:00pm-3:00pm (Eastern) 1:00pm-4:00pm (Atlantic) 1:30-4:30 (Newfoundland)

Course Fee: \$211.50; **PREREQUISITES:** A minimum of five years of experience in congregational ministry leadership. Register at: <https://vst.edu/courses/certificate-in-ministry-of-supervision/>

Affirming get together for Living Skies - new

Calling all ministries and people who are LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit-affirming, or 2SLGBTQIA yourselves.

Living Skies is holding a check in and encouragement time on **Wednesday February 24 from 7:00PM-9:00PM**. You don't need to be officially Affirming to come. All welcome.

We know COVID is making Affirming work harder, even as it also makes life harder for trans, non binary, queer, Two Spirit and questioning people- especially youth and elders. Come out, and give / receive some good energy and support. Register here and you'll be sent the Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/36EWgNI>

Practically Prophetic: Tools & Tips for our Ministry Together - new

Practically Prophetic is a new way of doing Com-Ed (Community Education) with everyone in Living Skies: speakers, presentations, and panel discussions related to just about anything & everything in the vibrant faith-life of the church.

We kick off with great session(s) on **Grief, Depression, and Anxiety**. It's timely, important information for all of us in the church, particularly in light of the mental health realities of COVID. Our presenter is Ruth Mireau, a retired social worker, counselor and long-time UCC member specialising in grief & loss.

Dates: **Thursday, February 25th & Thursday, March 4th**

More info & Registration: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/event/practically-prophetic-grief-depression-anxiety-2/2021-02-25/> **Download:** [Practically Prophetic Poster/Info Sheet](#)

Would you like your building to be more comfortable AND have lower utility bills? – new

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society and Affinity Credit Union have joined forces to help non-profit organizations and small businesses learn how to operate their buildings more efficiently. Now on-line.

Two, three-hour sessions. Choose the dates that work for you.

Lighting & Electrical Equipment, and Water: March 5 or 26, 9am – noon, CST

Heating, Ventilation, and Cooling: May 7 or 28, 9am – noon, CST

To register: <http://bit.ly/SES-BOT>

Benefit Pension Plan seminar

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>

Save the date! Online Lenten Retreat for Ministry Personnel - new

The Living Skies Committee on Ministry Personnel Support is hosting an online Lenten Retreat for Ministry Personnel, in collaboration with St. Andrew's College. Leadership will be provided by Diane Strickland, faculty members from the College, and members of the Committee. **March 16-17, 9:30-11:30/ 1:00-3:00.** Cost will be \$25 for the two days, and will include discounted access to resources from Diane and a worship service for use on March 21. Registration details will be available in the coming weeks.

From the Saskatchewan desk of the Refugee Advisory Group

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

FAITH FORMATION

Creating Conversations: Voices of Youth/Young Adults in UCCan

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](#) .

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

COVID Guidelines

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.

Lenten Resources Available at St. Andrew's College Library

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>

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](#).

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: 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

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.

Lent resource now available: Faith on the Move

The Lenten devotional, *"Faith on the Move: Daily Reflections on Hope and Change,"* is 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!](#)

Affirming PIE Day 2021 and video launch, Sunday March 14 – new

PIE= Public+Intentional+Explicit: the standard for creating a safer sacred space for LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people. For 2021 and its many online events, [Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble](#) and Calgary's [Affirming Connections](#) ask: What ingredients or recipe make up your PIE and your radical hospitality? Have a look at the materials to help you animate PIE, including [a new worship service](#). Check out [online events](#), and add your own. Your gathering or worship doesn't have to be complicated.... It doesn't even have to include pie (any dessert or savoury treat is welcome). But do make it PIE. And, if you want your PIE hot, check out the forthcoming short video on a topic that is overly close to many LGBTQIA+ people: [What the Hell?](#)

Training for United Church Conflict Resolution Facilitators – LAST CHANCE

The United Church of Canada is seeking applicants to serve as Conflict Resolution Facilitators under its Dispute Resolution Policy. 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**.

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](#).

Moosehide Campaign against violence - new

Thursday, February 11 from sun up to sun down. Ceremony, fasting, and action commitments online across Turtle Island. [Click here](#) for the schedule and registration.

Introduction to Indigenous Lands and Issues in Canada, February 20 – June 19 - new

Host Adrian Jacobs, Sandy Saulteaux Centre Keeper of the Circle, and Indigenous elders from across Canada invite you to explore the cultural and historic foundations to today's headlines. Join us for a series of online conversations in response to the Indigenous education mandates from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Final Report. [Registration info here.](#)

Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization, Thursdays, Feb. 4-25, 1:30- 3:30 PM (CST)

Join with Indigenous and settler resource people to challenge and change our reading of the Bible. [Full details are here.](#)

Pancakes and PIE! 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 Mar 14) and what's cooking there. Facebook event: <https://fb.me/e/1ufTk8ggf>

Faithful Climate Conversations - new

We need to talk -- all of us -- about climate. What better place to open up this vital conversation than within our own circles of faith? "*For the Love of Creation*" invites faith communities across Canada to come together to reflect, listen, share, and advocate for climate justice.

Tuesday, February 23rd, 7 to 9 p.m. via Zoom Register at <https://bit.ly/370ekSr>

Here in Saskatchewan, the listening part will be crucial, and for that, FLC offers three discussion guides for small groups. Join us to explore the first guide, "Creation, Climate and You," and get ready to use these guides in your own community. Our evening together will follow the guide's agenda, including breakout rooms for the discussion portions so we can experience the small-group format. We'll conclude with a sharing time where you can exchange ideas and inspiration to help you launch your own "Faithful Climate Conversations."

Presented by KAIROS Regina. For further info, contact Laura Stewart at arcolaura@gmail.com

Affirming get-together for Living Skies, Wednesday, February 24, 7:00-9:00PM on Zoom.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/36EWgNI> and see [more details here](#) (feel free to save and share the image).

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.

2021 Virtual Festival of Homiletics: Registration Open

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".

St. Andrew's College ReJUNEvation 2021

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.

Queen’s House re-opening

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:

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>

United Church participates in call against nuclear modular reactors

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

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](#).

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