

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



March 10, 2021

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1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

Together in Remembrance, Together in Hope

A virtual vigil marking one year of COVID in Saskatchewan on **Thursday, March 11 at 7:00pm**. Register for ZOOM event or watch live on You Tube. For more information and to register, visit www.covidvigil.ca. *Bring a candle! Together, we will shine our light in the darkness.* All are welcome!!

Opportunities to serve the wider church in Living Skies now up! - new

Your Nominations committee has been hard at work on two crucial invitations that need your discernment and your assistance with sharing widely. You can nominate yourself or (with their permission) other people who you feel would offer their gifts and skills to a particular opportunity.

Currently there are a number of **openings within Living Skies Regional Council**, representing a wide range of tasks, skills, and interests. [Click here for all the details](#). There is also a call for **General Council 44 Commissioners**: [click here for details on this role](#).

A message was sent to the newsletter list on Friday March 5. [Click here to read it](#). All Nominations news, and relevant form links, can be found at all hours of the day and night [right here](#). As always: please share widely! Questions? Ideas? Please contact convener Susan Reed at lsrcnominations@gmail.com or phone Susan through the Living Skies office: 306-704-0181.

A friendly reminder from your Office of Vocation Minister, Karen Medland - new

It's almost time to complete your annual declaration on ChurchHub. This is a requirement for all active ministry personnel. You **do not** need to get a new police records check if you have not had any new criminal charges against you in the past year.

Google chrome or explorer are the best browsers to use, please **do not** use safari. To complete your form log into your personal page at www.churchub.ca. If you experience any problems please contact ministry@united-church.ca for assistance. If you have any questions about the annual declaration please contact me at kmedland@united-church.ca

Update: COVID Guidelines – new

Effective **March 19**, the restrictions on the number of people eligible to attend worship will shift to 30% capacity, to a maximum of 150. A summary of the implications of this change for communities of faith and the full provincial guidelines may be found [at this link](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tricia Gerhard at lsrcexecutive@gmail.com or Tracy Murton at tmurton@united-church.ca.

Church leaders and the SK vaccination program

As leaders in our churches, and in our communities, we have a role in making sure that the people we minister to and with have helpful, concise and trustworthy information regarding the vaccine and its roll out. The Faith Leaders Working Group requested that the Business Response Team provide some basic, clear information that we can share with our congregations. Please [see and share this letter from the executive](#), which also links to important resources.

New Ecumenical Chaplain at the University of Saskatchewan - new

Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Saskatchewan, a co-operative ministry of the Anglican, Presbyterian and United Churches, is pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. George Hind as our chaplain for the coming months. Rev. George has been serving as chaplain based at the Lutheran Campus Centre since August 2017, and after consultation with the Lutheran Synod of Saskatchewan, has agreed to take on this new shared role, serving also as our Ecumenical Chaplain on campus. We are happy to be part of ensuring this half-time position in ministry to students, staff and faculty at the University.

If members of your congregation are part of the university community, and would appreciate time with our chaplain, please encourage them to contact Rev. George by phone at 306-380-2158 or by email at luthchap@usask.ca. You may also want to check out his ongoing work as chaplain through these pandemic times on the website: <https://www.lutherancampusministry.sk.ca>

Update: Practically Prophetic: Tools & Tips for our Ministry Together

"Practically Prophetic" is a new webinar series focused on tools and tips for our UCC ministry together. Think of it as Com-Ed (Community Education) for all: speakers, presentations, and panel discussions related to just about anything and everything in the vibrant faith-life of the church. We're excited that Practically Prophetic is a pretty cool collaboration of [Living Skies Region](#) Faith Formation, [St. Andrew's College](#), and the [Centre for Christian Studies](#).

GRIEF, DEPRESSION & ANXIETY – Monday, March 15 at 7pm

Our second evening webinar with social worker and counselor **Ruth Mireau** deals with Anxiety, Suicide & Self-Harm, and practical care for ourselves and others with mood disorders. Please note that video recordings of both webinar sessions will be available at the Living Skies Region YouTube Channel.

More info: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/event/practically-prophetic-grief-depression-anxiety-2/2021-03-15/>

Registration: <https://form.jotform.com/210376040663247>

ONLINE WORSHIP – A PANEL DISCUSSION of TECHIE WISDOM - Wednesday, April 14, 7pm - NEW

Join us for a hosted panel discussion of Online Worship in our congregations. Our tech gurus bring a wealth of insight & experience, and will share some of their favourite technical tips, tricks, gadgets & software. Perhaps even more importantly, we'll also talk about the faith opportunities that online worship and community may hold for our own congregations and the United Church of Canada.

More info: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/event/practically-prophetic-online-worship/>

Registration: <https://form.jotform.com/210574707062250>

Download Poster: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PP-Online-Worship-Info-Sheet-Apr-14-21.pdf>

Update: Care for the Pastoral, Prophetic, and Priestly Self in a Pandemic

The Committee on Ministry Personnel Support from Living Skies Regional Council, in collaboration with St. Andrew's College, is hosting an online **Ministry Personnel Retreat March 16-17** with leadership from Diane Strickland (compassion fatigue specialist and traumatologist) and faculty from St Andrew's College. Details for the event, including a draft schedule, workshop descriptions and the registration form, may be found [at this link](#). Cost for the event is \$25 and includes access to resources. For a video introduction to Diane's work, [click this link](#). **Lay leaders:** as a way to support participation of ministry personnel and offer a sabbath as they enter into Holy Week, the Committee has also prepared a worship service for March 21. Details for the worship service, including liturgy, reflection and PowerPoint slides, may be found [at this link](#). If you have any questions, contact Tracy Murton at tmurton@united-church.ca.

Invitation to an ecumenical intercultural event planning group – new

Roman Catholic and Anglican siblings are inviting Living Skies to a series focusing on intercultural ministry and thriving congregations. More details will come soon, and in the meantime: they would really appreciate a couple of United Church representative on this ecumenical planning team. Please get in touch with Nick Jesson at njesson@archregina.sk.ca or Cheryl Toth at stewardship@sasktel.net to learn more about the planning.

St. Andrew's College announces major changes – new

St Andrew's College, based in Saskatoon SK, is a partner of our Regional Council. Board chair Rev Doug Neufeld writes, "A large unanticipated shortfall in revenues has necessitated realignment of our course programs to better utilize partnerships with other colleges in Saskatchewan, Canada and around the world... As well, we hope to better respond to the needs and expectations of a more diverse faith community in a post-COVID world."

The Board has committed to seek integration of the College's academic programs with the Lutheran Theological Seminary and Anglican College of Emmanuel & St. Chad. The goal is that this change will allow the College to continue providing justice-driven theological education, academic excellence and leadership practice while sustaining its long-term viability and health. [Please click here for more details](#).

Invitation on behalf of the Board of Regents at St. Andrew's College: - new

Doug (Chair) and Richard (Principal), invite you to a Town Hall gathering to share updates since the adoption of the strategic plan and decisions in February to accelerate changes for the college. We look forward to this time with all who are able to attend. At the moment, there are two gatherings planned: **March 16th @ 4:00 pm** and **April 13th @ 4:00 pm**. If you could please confirm attendance with Melanie (melanie.schwanbeck@usask.ca) by 9:00 am on the day of the Town Hall, and send any questions you may have, that will help us during our time together. Finally, Zoom information will follow prior to the town halls.

Update: Conversion therapy actions

At our recent Affirming check in for the Regional Council, we heard about a number of actions and updates against conversion therapy. Since then, even more has happened. [Click here](#) for a summary, and for an update on the proposal the Regional Council passed against this practice in November 2020.

Reflection from SK: Strategies for ending racism – new

Living Skies' Moses Kanhai explores ways to develop a strategic plan to end racism. [Click here to read his blog](#), a contribution to United Church engagement with the March 21 International Day to End Racial Discrimination.

Lumsden Beach Camp featured in EDGE-y conversation video – new

Learn from Executive Director Vicki Nelson how Lumsden Beach has approached an uncertain future, and COVID on top of it all, with innovative ideas. [Here's the video](#). Want to learn more about Living Skies' chaplaincies, outdoor ministries, outreach ministries, and Northern congregation? [Click here](#) for the latest news!

Easter Sunrise Worship Service (Region-Wide) - Sunday, April 4th, 6:20am - new

Let's celebrate the joy of the Risen Christ together – experience the sky coming to life throughout our Living Skies Region! Join your church family for a Sunrise Easter Zoom from a frosty hill or your warm living room!

Date: More Info: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/event/region-wide-easter-sunrise-worship-service/>

Download Poster: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Easter-Sunrise-2021-Poster.pdf>

Save The Date: Spring To Life Regional Concert! - Sunday, April 25th, 7pm - new

Spring is almost here, and it is time for a celebration of music! Following up on December's online Advent concert, an incredible diversity of United Church musicians from throughout Living Skies have prepared an amazing evening of musical entertainment & story. Please watch for ticket information & details in the coming weeks. **More Info:** <https://livingskiesrc.ca/event/spring-to-life-regional-concert/>

Update: Your online annual meeting and report

Lots of you are going ahead with congregational meetings online, and have many good questions. [Here are some thoughts](#) from Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy on not so secret ballots and your community of faith's online annual meeting. [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.) The Centre for Christian Studies also has a great [recorded "how to"](#) workshop (and a [hilarious video](#) that may sound just a bit familiar). Here is the announcement form General Council Executive about an [Important update: re Congregational annual meetings for 2021](#). As well, here is [a Note from the Committee on Community of Faith Support re your Annual Report](#) (bottom of page 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](#).

FAITH FORMATION**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/>

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.

Open Out podcasts: Finding the Heart Beat - new

More than a pleasant add-on to a worship service, music is one way our spirits pray - a language of the heart itself. Universal yet specific to cultures, linked so deeply to our memories and emotions - how can we create a respectful space in our diverse communities where we can learn each other's songs?

Both episodes feature an in-depth conversation with the Scottish hymn-writer and global music pioneer John Bell (wildgoose.scot). The first episode looks at key concepts and contexts. In the second, we focus on specifics: specifics about the music itself, about the process of learning and the best ways to introduce this music to a community in transition.

Part 1: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/917410/8009061>

Part 2: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/917410/8062997>

Open Out podcasts are based on research funded by the United Church of Canada Foundation, through its McGeachy Scholarship.

Update: Affirming PIE Day 2021 resource and video launch for Sunday March 14

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. And, if you want your PIE hot, check out the just-launched short video on a topic that is overly close to many LGBTQIA+ people: [What the Hell?](#)

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](#).

Update: Indigenous Lenten Series: Ahogichipabi; Wednesdays March 10 - 31 2021 at 8:30 PM Central.

Join us during this Lenten season as we explore Christ's journey into the desert and the connection this has to Indigenous spiritual traditions: the 7 sacred teachings of the Assiniboine and the Vision Quest. We will examine the intercultural traditions found in Indigenous Christian theology and how this impacts our spiritual formation and worldview today. Sponsored by the Chinook Winds Region and the Urban Indigenous Circle. [Click here](#) for the Facebook event. [The Zoom link is here](#). Contact Tony Snow for more information: tony.snow@hillhurstunited.com

Sacred People Sacred Earth Climate Justice events March 11, 2021 - new

10:00AM Central – For the Love of Creation's [Letter Writing via Zoom](#)

6:00PM Central – For the Love of Creation's [A Faithful Climate Conversation](#)

The event is being organized by Green Faith International and is supported by the ecumenical initiative for the Love of Creation. It encourages groups around the world to hold events and activate our shared moral power for climate justice! See [Sacred People Sacred Earth](#).

Faith on the Move: a national online journey through Lent, March 16, March 23, March 30, 11:00AM.

[Please refer to this link](#) for a full description and to confirm times, as the dates fall over the daylight savings time change. These will be 60 minute programs.

Bill C-15: Step Forward or Step Back? - new *Tuesday March 16 2021, 6:00PM in AB/SK.*

Join us for diverse Indigenous perspectives on the federal bill to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Speakers: Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (Aki-kwe); Sylvia McAdam (Saysewahum); Brenda Gunn; and moderator Maureen Johns (Goes with Eagle Woman). **All welcome!** Organized by KAIROS Prairies North. [Full details are here](#). Register at: <https://bit.ly/2Pjos2E> The Zoom link will be sent automatically, so please check your spam folder. [Click here](#) for the Facebook event.

Introduction to Indigenous Lands and Issues in Canada, March 20 - June 19 Sandy Saulteaux Centre Host Adrian Jacobs, SSSC 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](#) - please check times as these vary from session to session.

A Free Flow Wellness Retreat: "An Imagination Pilgrimage for the Soul" – An Online Zoom Retreat Series offered by Marg Janick-Grayston Mondays: April 19, 26, May 3, 10, 2021 (1:00 – 4:30 CST)

During this time when travel has become challenging, this retreat invites us to take an IMAGINARY pilgrimage across Canada, in the company of others. As we use our imagination to travel from the Atlantic Ocean to the wide open space of the prairies, to the mountains of Alberta, and the lush gardens of BC, we will reflect upon ways that the natural landscapes we encounter under God's clear blue sky might ruminate with our lives and connect us spiritually. Please **register by April 5** via email marg@freeflowwellness.ca Full Descriptions available at: <https://www.freeflowwellness.ca/retreats>

A Breathtaking Path to Whole Hearted Living: Art as a Spiritual Practice

An On-Line Retreat series offered by Marg Janick-Grayston through Naramata Centre - April 24, May 1, 8, & 15th from 1:00 -4:15 PD (2:00-5:15 CST)

Come explore the diverse nature of spirituality that connects us with our soul, and helps us discover ways to breath in life with courage and vigor. In this retreat we will discover our place in the universe through a mandala meditation, the power of our breath as prayer, and delve into the realms of our heart as we engage in creative processes that open up the doors to new ways of being. Full description available at <https://www.freeflowwellness.ca/retreats> or <https://www.naramatacentresociety.org/online-programs> Please register through the Naramata Centre link above.

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

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>

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 22](#)

Please review this document for important updates, and more from the Pastoral Relations Commission and the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support, Community of Faith Support, and Lay Leadership.

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

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](#).