

# Regional Rambler

## Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



June 16, 2021

1. **Living Skies News:** Pastoral Relations Ponderings; 2021 Living Skies Regional Gathering material; General Council 44; Annual Declaration deadline; Regional service of lament; Let's get the climate emergency onto every MLA's summer reading list; Deepen Your Church's Culture of Generosity & Gratitude; VAM Q&A; Statistical urgency; Retired Ministry Personnel Survey; "PRACTICALLY PROPHETIC" Recorded Webinars & Feedback Request; GO PROJECT – Summer Day Youth Program; Updated: Camping & Outdoor Ministries Summer 2021; Youth Employment Opportunities (age 16-30); Updated: COVID Guidelines; Updated: Unmarked burials and a call to a time of mourning; Updated: Re-open Step 3 Q&A; Summer is coming; Nominations update: Opportunities still open; Ministry Personnel Gatherings;
2. **Wider Church Information:** Updated: Indigenous History Month and Day of Prayer June 20; Opportunities to Serve St. Andrew's College; United Church Condemns Attack on Muslim Family in London, ON; Pride Month resources for you;
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Community of Faith calendar; United in Learning; Final Gathering: Intro to Indigenous Lands and Issues in Canada; Two-Spirit People: A Part of our Circle and our Teachings; An Earthy Experience: Awakening to New Perspectives of Wisdom; Queen's House;
4. **Reminders:** St. Andrew's College is seeking your wisdom; Call to end the violence in Palestine and Israel through meaningful negotiations;

*The Regional Rambler is our primary resource for sharing information across the Regional Council. To be added to the list, please email Bev Diebert ([bdiebert@united-church.ca](mailto:bdiebert@united-church.ca)).*

### 1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

#### Pastoral Relations Ponderings – Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 26 - new

Please review this document for volunteer opportunities and updates. **Please be aware** that effective immediately, Tracy Murton, has changed her office phone number to 1-800-268-3781 ext 6322.

#### 2021 Living Skies Regional Gathering material- new

Documents for and from the Regional Gathering can be found on the [Regional Gathering page](#) on the Living Skies Regional Council website. As well, the links to the Sunday Service and bulletin created by Westminster United Church in Humboldt in partnership with St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Humboldt and Quill Plains United Church Pastoral Charge in Watson and Quill Lake are there. They are also here:

You tube link: <https://youtu.be/ct529VVKx2A>

[June 6th Regional Council Service](#) – Word (for download) ; [June 6th Regional Council Service](#) – pdf

You will also find the link to the **Living Skies Region YouTube Channel:**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQumvdyab1\\_LIPiluOPgArg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQumvdyab1_LIPiluOPgArg) There you will find the full video record of proceedings along with a variety of worship, music, and acknowledgement videos from the Regional Gathering.

#### General Council 44 - new

The Nominations Committee is still receiving names for Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners for General Council 44. If you would like further information, please be in touch with the Nominations Committee at [lsrcnominations@gmail.com](mailto:lsrcnominations@gmail.com), or you are welcome to phone Susan at 306-482-3932. The background letter seeking Commissioners, a General Council Commissioner job description, and a link to our online nominations form can all be found on the Living Skies Regional Council website, under Governance and Administration, then [Nominations](#) tab. We look forward to hearing from you!

**REMINDER: Ministry Personnel - Deadline approaching**

**The closing date for annual declarations is June 30 2021.** You **do not** need to get a new police records check if you completed your annual declaration last year. If there is a reason you will not be able to complete your annual declaration by June 30, please email Office of Vocation Minister, Karen Medland at [kmedland@united-church.ca](mailto:kmedland@united-church.ca) so that we can make other arrangements for you.

Remember that ChurchHub is not compatible with Safari. To access all the aspects of ChurchHub, we recommend using Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge as your web browser.

If you have any questions about or problems with ChurchHub, please contact Karen at [kmedland@united-church.ca](mailto:kmedland@united-church.ca). She's always happy to set up a zoom meeting to walk you through your annual declaration.

**Regional service of lament, Sunday June 20 at 7:30PM - new**

To be a settler or newcomer Christian in Canada and a member of the United Church is to inherit a legacy that holds the heartbreaking stories of residential schools. Lament – facing and feeling the truth of our brokenness - is a necessary step on the path toward healing and transformation.

Join us on **Sunday, June 20, at 7:00pm** for a service of lament for the church's participation in colonization, and the way it continues to disrupt and distort our relationship and prevents us from becoming the people we long to be. This worship is open to everyone, with a focus on joining with other grieving settler and newcomer Christians. The service will be on Zoom, but you are most welcome to come together in groups and participate together.

Short link to this calendar listing for social media: <https://bit.ly/3cGusLK>

Zoom link: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/94404739517?pwd=TDF3cy9MQ0NZYVN5SIFBMDI3aUxxdz09>

Meeting ID: 944 0473 9517. Password: 918297 Dial by your location: 855 703 8985 Canada Toll-free

**Let's get the climate emergency onto every MLA's summer reading list - new**

The book [A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency](#), by Seth Klein, describes how Canada's political leaders implemented the war effort during WWII, and why similar government action is needed now to respond to the climate crisis. Our climate discussion group at Broadway United Church in Regina would like to encourage all of our MLAs to read this book. We invite other church groups from across Saskatchewan to join us in this project. Can you help to purchase a book? Could you contact your MLA urging them to read the book? If you would like to be involved with emerging ecumenical climate justice work in Living Skies, please send an email with your contact information to [vmang@sasktel.net](mailto:vmang@sasktel.net). We will inform you of an upcoming Zoom meeting.

**Deepen Your Church's Culture of Generosity & Gratitude - new**

Starting Wednesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, *Called to be the Church: The Journey* is being offered in your Region. This is an online course that will help your community of faith learn stewardship best practices and help you develop a stewardship plan. Interested congregations can form a Learning Team, and participate in four 2-hour sessions to learn best practices in stewardship, plus receive ongoing coaching and support. Spaces are limited, so reach out to Vicki Nelson ([VNelson@united-church.ca](mailto:VNelson@united-church.ca)) right now for more details or to express interest.

*During this course, I really changed my thinking about Stewardship - and can see how stewardship is discipleship and talking about generosity and gratitude is crucial for our communities of faith!* – Carol, recent participant

**VAM Q&A**

If you are a member of a Community of Faith with a retired minister who is offering leadership in any way, or if you are a retired minister who is interested in occasionally offering leadership either in your home community or elsewhere in the Regional Council, you are invited to join the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support for a Question and Answer session regarding the Voluntary Associate Minister process. As background, the [policy may be found at this link](#), and the [form may be found at this link](#). We will gather on **Thursday, June 17 at 10:00am by Zoom** – connection information will be in the Regional Council calendar. Let's work together to support these folks and the important ministry they offer among us. Any questions, contact Tracy Murton at [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca).

### Statistical urgency

This is an urgent reminder to those communities of faith who have yet to complete the annual statistics forms. They need to be done within the next few weeks in order that assessments for 2022 might be calculated. Remember – ***the assessment levied by the General Council is directly connected to the information contained within the statistics.*** If income has changed due to COVID, the only way your assessment would change is if the stats reflect that change. Further information regarding statistics and assessments may be [found at this link](#).

### Retired Ministry Personnel Survey - new

Thanks to those individuals who completed the survey. This information helps the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support discern how best to reach out to the retired ministers in our Regional Council. A full report on the results will be available in the fall. If you have further questions or still want to contribute your opinion, please contact Tracy Murton at [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca)

### “PRACTICALLY PROPHETIC” Recorded Webinars & Feedback Request - new

“Practically Prophetic” is a webinar series focused on tools & tips for our UCC ministry together, and is a working collaboration of Living Skies Region Faith Formation, St. Andrew's College, and the Centre for Christian Studies. Recordings of all webinar sessions are available at the **Living Skies YouTube Channel**: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQumvdyab1\\_LIPluOPgArg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQumvdyab1_LIPluOPgArg)

**Feedback?** Do you have helpful recommendations, feedback or suggestions for “Practically Prophetic” topics? Please don't hesitate to send your comments & ideas to Kent at [Kmohn@united-church.ca](mailto:Kmohn@united-church.ca). Let's gear up for more inspirational & creative sessions in the fall.

### GO PROJECT – Summer Day Youth Program – new

This event for anyone in grades 7-10, will be hosted by St. Martin's United Church, Saskatoon from July 14-24, 9:30am-5pm. **Cost:** \$300. **To Register**, email Keith Hall at [keith@stmartinsuc.com](mailto:keith@stmartinsuc.com) **More Info:** <https://livingskiesrc.ca/go-project-summer-day-youth-program/>

**Download Poster:** <http://www.stmartinsuc.com/files/21-goproject.pdf>

### UPDATED: CAMPING & OUTDOOR MINISTRIES – SUMMER 2021

Great news! All of our UCC Camps will offer different degrees of safe program opportunities this summer as we emerge from COVID. Check out the latest news - everything from at-home programs to on-site overnight camps! Registration info & details at:

- 1) Lumsden Beach Camp: <https://www.lumsdenbeachcamp.com/>
- 2) Camp Shagabec: <https://shagabec.com/>
- 3) Camp Tapawingo: <http://www.camptapawingo.net/>
- 4) Camp Christopher: <https://www.campchristopher.ca/>
- 5) Camp Woodboia: <https://www.campwoodboia.ca/>

Contact info for all of our regional UCC Outdoor Ministries is also available at:

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/yayac/camps/>

Additionally, online Camps/Summer programs specifically for **2SLGBTQ+ youth**:

- 1) Camp fYrefly (OUT Saskatoon & UR Pride Centre): <https://www.fyreflysask.ca/>
- 2) Rainbow Camp (Welcome Friend Association): <https://www.welcomefriend.ca/camp/>
- 3) CampOUT! (University of British Columbia): <https://campout.ubc.ca/>

### Youth Employment Opportunities (age 16-30) - More Info coming very soon! - new

The position details are being finalized as we speak, but we're very excited to announce that Living Skies Region will be accepting applications for **2-3 student employment positions in the coming weeks.**

This summer, we're looking for independent, creative people as a “**Video/Tech Team**” to head up the development of resources for an online Children's Faith Formation program. Techie skills, or at least techie interest, will be a real asset, and there's also an opportunity for some creative website projects too.

As we prepare for and head into the fall, we'll also be looking for the right person to grab the role of “**Leadership Animator**” in support of program development and networking within the wider Youth &

Young Adult Community. (Please note: “Animator” is kind of a weird churchy jargon word, but it means someone who likes to be creative and get stuff done).

More details will be available very soon, but if you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Kent anytime at 306-221-5529 or [kmohn@united-church.ca](mailto:kmohn@united-church.ca)

#### **Updated: COVID Guidelines**

The provincial government developed a Roadmap outlining a plan for releasing restrictions which has an impact on communities of faith; the maximum numbers permissible for worship, including graveside services, increased to 150 or 30% capacity on May 30. ***It is important to highlight that all current health orders and guidelines remain unchanged at the present time.*** The projected lifting of the mask mandate and physical distancing requirements is expected on July 11, depending on vaccine rates. Tricia Gerhard, our representative to the Faith Leaders, has written a letter outlining the impact of this decision on communities of faith, [see this link](#). As a reminder, [here is the letter](#) from the Regional Council Executive highlighting the church’s role in supporting accurate vaccination information. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Tricia Gerhard at [lsrcexecutive@gmail.com](mailto:lsrcexecutive@gmail.com) or Tracy Murton at [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca).

#### **Updated: Unmarked burials and a call to a time of mourning**

With the Indigenous Ministries and Justice Unit of the United Church, we join in saying, “As news came on May 28, 2021, that the remains of 215 children were found in a mass unmarked grave on the grounds of the former Kamloops Residential School, we entered into a time of mourning for these relatives, their families, and their communities.”

Many people are asking what they can do. First, we come together as people of the United Church and take the first step of mourning and remembering. The United Church web site includes [this page of reflection](#), which includes links to prayers from Murray Pruden, Executive Minister for the Indigenous Ministries and Justice Unit, and Richard Bott, Moderator. On **June 4, Indigenous Ministries and the national church offered a further summary** of the work the United Church is currently doing in response to the many layers of anger, grief, and trauma uncovered by this profoundly shocking, through not surprising, discovery. KAIROS, the ecumenical justice coalition of which the United Church is a funding member, [offered this challenge to the churches](#).

For more information, reflection and resources, [please also see this summary on our website](#). Please share these resources and more as widely as needed in your community of faith and other circles.

#### **Updated: Re-open Step 3 Q&A**

Understanding the implications for the removal of COVID restrictions can be time-consuming and confusing. Tricia Gerhard and Tracy Murton developed a Step 3 checklist and template for assistance in decision-making for your community of faith. [These are found here](#). Any questions, contact Tracy Murton at [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca).

#### **Summer is coming**

As the weather warms, a reminder to discuss with your ministry personnel their plans for vacation leave and to offer generosity so that they might have additional time for renewal and replenishment during this extra-ordinary year. Ministry personnel have transformed everything about their practice of ministry in the last 14 months, from pastoral care to providing worship to understanding COVID guidelines. As we all discern ways of recovering together, please ensure generous support for self-care and rest for your ministers – perhaps an extra week off? Contact Bev Diebert at 306-704-0181 for access to the pulpit supply list.

#### **Nominations update: Opportunities still open**

Please have a look at this diverse array of openings in the Regional Council. Your Nominations committee is working with the many people who have generously offered their time and skills, or have approached others. The committee has put together this update of continued needs. Remember, lay people are just as welcome as ministry personnel. We all have diverse skills and experience to bring. Please consider these carefully! [Click here for the summary](#) and please share.

### 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.*

### **Updated: Indigenous History Month and Day of Prayer June 20**

This year the Indigenous Day of Prayer falls on Sunday June 20. You're invited and encouraged to include the day in worship, recognizing the many words of truth and witness Indigenous leaders in and beyond the United Church have shared with us over the years. [See resources here](#). Please see also the separate listing for a Regional service of lament for June 20.

### **Opportunities to Serve St. Andrew's College - new**

You are invited to share your gifts and experience to the fulfillment of God's mission through a committee of St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon.

The college has is currently seeking volunteers to serve in a variety of committees. Two of the most urgent opportunities are as Chair of the Academic Committee and member of the Audit Committee. The College also has vacancies on the Academic, Audit, Nominations and Board Education, and Personnel Policy Committees.

If you are interested in any of these committees or the Board of Regents, please contact Melanie Schwanbeck at the College at [melanie.schwanbeck@usask.ca](mailto:melanie.schwanbeck@usask.ca).

### **United Church Condemns Attack on Muslim Family in London, ON – new**

The United Church of Canada strongly condemns the [horrific hate-filled attack](#) that killed three generations of a Muslim family in London, Ontario on Sunday, June 6. Please [read and share this letter](#), and consider what acts of solidarity and care your community of faith can offer Muslim kin.

### **Pride Month resources for you - new**

As the church also moves into Pride month, there are many [resources on the national website](#), and at the Round the Table blog, which brings together stories of belonging, struggle, and identity from all over our church. Pride Month leads off with a reflection on why Pride remains a source of hope and of struggle for Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people. [Read it here](#). And, find a [prayer for Pride 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](#).

**United in Learning** - [Click here](#) to see the Newsletter from United in Learning, with information about many new June and summer learning opportunities.

### **FINAL GATHERING: Introduction to Indigenous Lands and Issues in Canada, June 19**

9:00-11:00AM Mountain Daylight; 10:00AM to noon, Central Daylight.

Hosted by the Sandy Saulteaux Centre. SESSION 5, final session: Traditional Lands and Environmental Protection, Gitxsan Elder Ray Jones. An examination of unceded Indigenous territories and traditional Indigenous duties to the lands and peoples. The long history of Indigenous resistance to colonial exploitation and the current vitality of Indigenous identity will be the focus. [Registration info here](#). Please check the times carefully!

**Two-Spirit People: A Part of our Circle and our Teachings - new**, June 28, 6:00 pm in MB/ NW Ontario [Click here for details and to register](#). Free, thanks to our support for Mission and Service.



**An Earthy Experience: Awakening to New Perspectives of Wisdom July 11-17, 2021 (9:30-12:00 PD)**

At Naramata Centre, BC; Leadership by Marg Janick-Grayston and Janicka Grayston

Beautiful mountains, sunny beaches, and luscious trees - explore the beautiful Naramata this summer at the Naramata Centre. Like you, we are looking forward to the end of winter and isolation. Fortunately, The Naramata Centre has officially opened registration for their Summer Week-Long Retreats. Marg and her daughter Janicka will be leading this program in Week 2 of the Centre's summer program focusing on "Celebrating Diversity". This retreat will offer nature-based wellness practices through invitations to connect with the earth and create with the very gifts it offers us. Full Description at <https://www.freeflowwellness.ca/retreats> or <https://www.naramatacentresociety.org/summer-2021#/event/3276/celebrate-diversity> Please register through the Naramata Centre link above.

**Queen's House**

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:****St. Andrew's College is seeking your wisdom**

If you are willing, there are several short surveys regarding ministry training (of all kinds!), and what the College needs to be offering in the years to come.

If you have not already received the invitation to participate in those surveys, and would like to, please contact the College's recruitment officer, Shawn Sanford Beck: [shawn.sanfordbeck@usask.ca](mailto:shawn.sanfordbeck@usask.ca)

**Call to end the violence in Palestine and Israel through meaningful negotiations**

The United Church has followed the lead from its partners in Palestine and Israel and [released a letter](#) calling for the cycle of violence to stop. "Palestinian and Israeli partners are clear that negotiating a just peace is the only way out of the cycle of bombs and guns," says the Right Rev. Richard Bott. "I invite United Church people to [pray for the peace of Jerusalem](#) and to put faith into action by [writing to urge Minister Garneau to uphold international law](#)." <https://united-church.ca/news/call-stop-violence>

In some cases, media coverage is missing the fact that a spark for the current violence was evictions of Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah, a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem targeted by militant Jewish settlers. [Read more background and see a related action here.](#)