

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



June 30, 2021

1. **Living Skies News:** Regional reflection and reminder of commitments; Service of Lament for residential schools; A word about orange shirts and sourcing them; Re-open Step 3 Q&A; COVID Guidelines; Advice re United Church Communities of Faith and vaccination policies; Annual Declaration deadline - **TODAY**; Staff summer holidays; Comings & Goings; Ministry Personnel Gatherings; Save the date!; Worship service: Supporting Palestinians in their struggle; Affirm United: Treasurer search & July Annual Conference invitation; Statistical urgency; GO PROJECT – Summer Day Youth Program; Camping & Outdoor Ministries Summer 2021; Youth Employment Opportunities (age 16-30); **Nominations update:** Opportunities still open; Deepen Your Church's Culture of Generosity & Gratitude;
2. **Wider Church Information:** Opportunities to Serve St. Andrew's College;
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Community of Faith calendar; United in Learning; **Head|Heart|Hands|Feet: Timely Conversations about Racial Justice**; An Earthy Experience: Awakening to New Perspectives of Wisdom; **Centre for Christian Studies Summer Offering**; Queen's House;
4. **Reminders:** Pastoral Relations Ponderings; Living Skies Regional Gathering material; Unmarked burials and a call to a time of mourning; 2021 Summer is coming; Let's get the climate emergency onto every MLA's summer reading list; "PRACTICALLY PROPHETIC" Recorded Webinars & Feedback Request; **Last Regional Rambler until late August**;

*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).*

1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

Regional reflection and reminder of commitments: 751 graves - new

[Please read and share these words](#) from the Regional Council, offered after the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan held a press conference detailing the rediscovery of 751 graves on the grounds of the former Marieval residential school. This reflection seeks to remind the non-Indigenous church of the commitments we have made, and to offer, in the words of former chair of the TRC, Murray Sinclair, resources and "strength for climbing".

Service of Lament for residential schools - new

This service was offered by members of Living Skies Regional Council in response to the bodies of the 215 children found at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. It was shared with Living Skies Regional Council and others on the Indigenous Day of Prayer, Sunday, June 20 2021. [Please click here](#) to access the service and accompanying PowerPoint.

A word about orange shirts and sourcing them carefully - new

Please be careful! As many of us search out orange t-shirts and pins to show commitment to residential school survivors, a growing number of non-Indigenous for-profit companies are selling them. Please follow two principles when searching or buying:

- Support Indigenous-run companies or non-profits, or artists: the more local the better where possible;
- Check which groups or efforts they are donating to, such as the Indian Residential School Survivors Society, First Nations-controlled searches, local healing supports, and more.

Both of these will involve some research, but learning and discerning are part of what non-Indigenous people are called to do.

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.

COVID Guidelines

The provincial government developed a Roadmap outlining a plan for releasing restrictions which has an impact on communities of faith. ***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. 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 or Tracy Murton at tmurton@united-church.ca.

Advice re United Church Communities of Faith and vaccination policies – new

Some communities of faith and church leadership have been asking whether communities of faith may set rules around COVID vaccinations for members and others who participate in church activities on site. Cynthia Gunn, Legal Counsel for The United Church of Canada, has prepared a Q&A resource to help communities of faith discern how they will deal with this issue. [Click here to have a look](#).

REMINDER: Ministry Personnel - Deadline

Today is the deadline for annual declarations. 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 today, please email Office of Vocation Minister, Karen Medland at 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. She's always happy to set up a zoom meeting to walk you through your annual declaration.

Staff Summer Holidays - new

Due to the timing of the lifting of COVID-19 related restrictions being, Regional Council staff may not have firm holidays plans. The only confirmed holiday at this time are: Executive Minister, Shannon McCarthy will be unavailable all of July; Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Minister will be unavailable from July 25 until August 14; Madeleine McLuhan-Myers, Archivist will be working most of the summer. She is best reached by email though, as she has part-time hours and is often deep in the stacks and storage areas, and far from her office phone. Kent Mohn, Youth and Young Adult Minister, will be away from July 20-22. Vicki Nelson, Stewardship Animator will be available all summer. Please send her an email if you would like to talk to her. Heather Dootoff, Financial Administrator, will be taking time off in July, but dates and not firm at this time. Please watch for bounce back messages from staff emails for each person's plan. Julie Graham, Justice and Communication Minister, will be off July 19-23 and will be taking more time in mid to late August.

The Living Skies Regional Council office will be mostly open through July and August. Bev Diebert is currently planning only day-trips and Fridays off. Emails and phone messages will be checked at least a couple of times a week.

Comings and Goings - new

As this pastoral year comes to a close, we want to send our blessings with YongSeok Baek, starting a new ministry in Horseshoe Falls Regional Council and Hyun Heo, starting a new ministry in Chinook Winds Regional Council. We are grateful for your presence among us and wish you grace and peace in your new calls. Over the summer we will welcome Doreen Hewitson who will begin a new ministry with Eston Pastoral Charge. We look forward to the gifts and presence you will bring to our Regional Council.

Ministry Personnel Gatherings - new

Facilitated conversations have been suspended for the summer, resuming September 7. However, the Zoom space will continue to be open on Tuesdays at 1pm for unstructured, collegial support. Check the [calendar](#) for the connection information.

Save the date! - new

The Celebration of Ministry service for the Ordination of Jonathan Worrall and the Admission of Emily Carr will be on **September 26, 3:00pm**, in Melfort. We are waiting until September to discern what guidelines might be in place related to COVID so will share more information about how you might participate either in person, or remotely. Stay tuned!

Worship service: Supporting Palestinians in their struggle - new

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been going on so long that it's easy to tune it out – headlines from today could be headlines from twenty years ago, forty years ago. It is the stories of the people involved, who make it real. Members of Living Skies Regional Council offer this worship service as a mean of reconnecting with the people who live this conflict. Through image, song, testimony, prayer and preaching, we are invited into the lives of Palestinian Christians who are gracious enough to share their faith with us. [Please click here for full information and links.](#)

Affirm United: treasurer search & July annual conference invitation – new

Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble (AUSE) is on a treasure hunt for a treasurer and is asking for our help in getting the word out. AUSE is a United Church partner and is the Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ movement within the United Church and beyond. The treasurer is also a member of AUSE's national council. This is a great opportunity for someone to offer leadership to a movement that is an important part a growing number of ministries in our Regional Council. [Click here for more information.](#)

And while we're at it: all are welcome to AUSE's annual conference and meeting, online again this year. Affirming ministries can send one voting rep each, but anyone can attend. [Click here for details.](#)

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.](#)

GO PROJECT – Summer Day Youth Program

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 **More Info:** <https://livingskiesrc.ca/go-project-summer-day-youth-program/>

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

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!

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

Nominations update: Several Opportunities still open

The Nominations Committee is still receiving names for Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners for General Council 44 as well as a diverse array of openings in the Regional Council structure. See the [Nominations page](#) on the Living Skies website (under Governance and Administration) for more information about these opportunities and a link to our online nominations form. Remember, lay people are just as welcome as ministry personnel. We all have diverse skills and experience to bring!

Deepen Your Church's Culture of Generosity & Gratitude

Starting Wednesday, August 4th, *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) 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

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.

Opportunities to Serve St. Andrew's College

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.

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.

Head | Heart | Hands | Feet : Timely Conversations about Racial Justice - new

Wednesdays, July 7, 14, 21, and 28 at 7:00 PM via Zoom. With Dr. Carol Schick; Dr. Lynn Caldwell; Dr. Verna St. Denis; and Dr. Mike Cappello. Hosted by Knox-Metropolitan United Church, Regina SK, Treaty Four. Find these events on Knox-Metropolitan's [Facebook page](#) or [website](#).

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.

Centre for Christian Studies Summer Offering - new

Learning on Purpose: Changing Leadership for a Changing World is the Centre for Christian Studies' 2-week intensive leadership development module. It is a practical, holistic, hands-on, learning community experience, and those who take it come out feeling transformed (in a good way!). [Register for Learning on Purpose](#). **Dates:** August 16 – 27 online (Full days—Saturday and Sunday off) **Cost:** \$1680 Bursaries are available by application. **For more information**, contact the Registrar sdouglas@ccsonline.ca .

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:

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 26](#)

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

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 There you will find the full video record of proceedings along with a variety of worship, music, and acknowledgement videos from the Regional Gathering.

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.

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.

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

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 We will inform you of an upcoming Zoom meeting.

“PRACTICALLY PROPHETIC” Recorded Webinars & Feedback Request

“*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_LIPiluOPgArg

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. Let's gear up for more inspirational & creative sessions in the fall.

Last Regional Rambler until late August - new

As summer has arrived, so has the time for rest and relaxation (summer holidays), The *Regional Rambler* will be suspended until late August. However, if important items or information arises during this time, it will be distributed in a timely manner. Also, for those on Facebook, keep an eye on the Regional Council Facebook page for any announcements. Have a safe summer!