

# Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council  
The United Church of Canada



September 22, 2021

*The **Regional Rambler** is our primary resource for sharing information across the Regional Council. To be added to the receiving 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 27](#) - new**

Please review this document for volunteer opportunities and updates.

**Attention M&P Committees - new**

Please note the announcement regarding the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. While the provincial government has not made this a statutory holiday, The United Church of Canada is encouraging communities of faith to offer this to their lay employees and ministry personnel to enable them to participate in local events. If you have questions, contact Tracy Murton at [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca)

**COVID guidelines - new**

The provincial government has re-introduced mandatory indoor masking, effective immediately. For all other safety considerations, communities of faith are responsible for determining the best practices in their context. There are tools including common questions, information about vaccine mandates, and a template for discernment, on the Regional Council [COVID-19 page found here](#). Tricia Gerhard, chair of Living Skies Regional Council Executive, has written a pastoral letter to help put the new measures into context. You can find that [letter here](#). Tricia has also provided this further interpretation:

- **Masks can be removed** *"While seated and consuming food or a beverage in a restaurant, food court at a shopping centre or food store, bar, movie theatre or in any other location where food or beverages are served"* (i.e. during communion or meals). That being said, I would encourage you to make sure that you have designated volunteers serving the food instead of allowing people to serve themselves.
- **For worship leaders/preachers:** *"Individuals who are leading a service, ceremony, or other public event while speaking from a podium, lectern, platform, stage, desk or other standing or seating area dedicated to speaking, but only when the individual can maintain a distance of three metres from other individuals;"* I would recommend trying to lead as much of the service while wearing the mask, and removing it just for the sermon/reflection. If your congregation is singing, I would recommend you wearing your mask during singing as well. Singing is still considered a high risk activity.
- **For those congregations that have guest musicians or instruments as part of worship:** *"Individuals playing a woodwind, brass, or other instrument operated by breath, but only if they can maintain a distance of three metres from other individuals, as measured from the mouth or opening/bell end of the instrument, whichever is closest, to another individual while playing;"*
- I have **three phrases** I would like to have you keep in mind: Be cautious, Be ready to pivot, Stay safe.

**Celebration of Ministry service – new**

Living Skies Regional Council is thrilled to celebrate two significant milestones on the leadership journey for two members of our Regional Council. On **Sunday, September 26**, we will participate in the ordination of Jonathan Worrall, and the admission of Emily Carr at Melfort United Church at 3pm. Due to rising COVID case numbers, in-person participation is limited. If you wish to participate, please join the livestream on FaceBook – search for Melfort United Church or watch the video that will be available at a later date.

### Thank-You to Our Summer Students! - new

On behalf of the entire Living Skies Region, we want to thank two of our summer students for sharing their talent, skills, and laughter with us. Although they were engaged in separate projects, they shared a level of adaptability and creativity that was quite remarkable.

**Alicia Monson** developed the flexible congregational website template & process that we're currently piloting with a couple of ministries in the Region. There are exciting possibilities, particularly for communities of faith trying to implement their own website.

**Nick Kenney** was on the staff of the GO Project youth day camp, and then followed up with development work on online faith formation resources. He helped to introduce a number of creative options for Children's faith formation programs available to congregations.

We're so thankful for Alicia & Nick, and we wish them nothing but God's blessing as they return to school!

### Conversion therapy ban petition to the SK government - new

Grosvenor Park United Church and Saskatoon Affirming Ministries invite you to circulate this petition in your community of faith and wider community. This is in keeping with the Regional Council's 2020 annual meeting decision to seek a provincial ban on this harmful, transphobic and homophobic practice, which tends to be disproportionately supported by a minority of Christian groups. As Christians, may we speak out against it. Please see full details, including downloads and background, [right here](#).

### Updating the Regional Council Directory

The Regional Council Directory is created from information gathered during registration at Annual Gatherings of the Regional Council, including permission to include. If you registered for the Regional Council annual meeting in 2020 or 2021, and answered "yes" to inclusion, your contact information has been included in the directory. **If you have *not* registered for an annual meeting in the last 2 years** and wish your contact information to remain included in the directory, please send Bev Diebert an email **by Sept. 26/21** ( [bdiebert@united-church.ca](mailto:bdiebert@united-church.ca) ) with your current contact information (name, address, phone number(s) and / or email) and permission to include it in the directory. Any questions, contact Bev.

### New Statutory Holiday: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action number 80, the Government of Canada recently passed legislation making September 30 a federal statutory holiday commemorating the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#). The new holiday only applies to federally regulated employers. The United Church of Canada and its communities of faith are governed by provincial employment statutes. However, the General and Regional Council offices will be closed on **September 30** this year, while conversations with the National Indigenous Council and the National Indigenous Elders Council determine future practice. *Communities of faith may offer September 30th as a designated paid holiday for their ministry personnel and employees at the discretion of their governing body and the guidance of their regional council.* This day provides an opportunity for Canadians to recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools. This may present itself as a day of quiet reflection or participation in a community event.

### Ministry Personnel Gatherings

Join your ministry colleagues every Tuesday over Zoom for conversation, support and information sharing. Facilitated conversation begins at 1pm; connection information is found in the [calendar](#).

### Season for Creation: homegrown Living Skies resources and event

In 2021, faith communities across Canada are invited to work together for climate justice through the ecumenical initiative, [For the Love of Creation](#). Lots of resources and opportunities [are outlined here](#). We invite you to amplify that work by recognizing Creation Time in worship and congregational life.

This Living Skies document series builds on existing Creation Time resources, and connects them with Creation as experienced in the landscapes and creatures of the Living Skies Region. We invite comments, contributions, and feedback as you work with these resources, and look forward in hope, to see what grows from this small seed. **Here's the Google Drive link:** [Creation Time 2021 in Living Skies Region](#) or [use this link to the Regional Council website](#).

**Celebrations galore - updated**

Many postponed covenanting services are being planned for this fall. We ask you to hold in prayer the following events:

- **September 29** – Covenanting with Saskatoon: St. Paul's United Church and Mitchell Anderson, at 7pm.
- **Postponed to November** – covenanting with Rosetown United Church and Allan Gairns, at 7pm

**Save the Date - Camp Tapawingo Annual General Meeting - new**

The meeting will be on Saturday, Nov. 20 at 10 a.m. by Zoom. A link to the meeting will be posted on the camp website [camptapawingo.net](http://camptapawingo.net).

**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.*

**Orange Shirt Day**

**Thursday September 30 - [Orange Shirt Day](#)**/ National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (a new federal holiday). Not limited to the children in your life! This day is for everyone. Please consider looking into plans at your local school and within the community; and planning on how your community of faith or ministry can use its resources to hold space for an all-ages focus on truth-telling and learning about residential schools. [Click here for a prayer and resources](#) from Indigenous Ministries and Justice. [Click here for information on a full week of online learning events](#) from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

**Taste of Palestine worship and online events - new**

Fall is harvest time throughout the Northern hemisphere, and in Palestine and Israel, the October olive harvest is a deeply important time for community, culture, and traditional food for the coming year. But it's also a time where violence directed at Palestinian farmers spikes to new levels, as radical Jewish settlers [target olive trees and harvesters](#). The World Council of Churches offers [extensive videos and photos in a special project launched last year](#), and you can use these freely in your community of faith. New this year: The *Palestine Service for Peace* was created by the Saskatchewan and Ontario Taste of Palestine Group, and compiled and edited by Ineke Medcalf. It's [available on YouTube](#) to use freely in your worship services. SK planners will also offer two online events focused on traditional Palestinian food and the realities of living and eating under military occupation or blockade. Haneen AbdAlnabi will be our first host on October 12. She is a teacher and translator living under blockade in Gaza, and, we hope, will come to us live from Gaza. Please see the Events listing for details.

**All Saints Day service remembering those who died of COVID: names needed**

Please assist the national church with this important work. [Please use this link](#) to submit the names of people to be remembered during the service. Names can be submitted up to October 1<sup>st</sup>, (please note that every effort will be made to include names shared past this date).

**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** - a quick look at fall events - [click here!](#)

**United for the Love of Creation: Climate Justice, Wednesday, September 22, 2021: 2:00pm MDT/CST-new.**

Heat domes, wildfires, and a "code red for humanity" from the IPCC. Eco-anxiety. Rising ambitions. A major climate conference in November, when a new Parliament will be getting down to work in Canada. Hear and share updates about theological reflection, conversational engagement and advocacy efforts. Learn and plan to work for climate justice across Canada this fall. [Register here](#).

**Practically Prophetic: “Church Websites...Maybe It’s Time To Ditch The Fax Line?”****When:** Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 7pm**Where:** Zoom online webinar**Registration:** info will be posted on Region website & Facebook by the end of the week.**What else:** The idea of making a church website can be intimidating. Our prophetic goal this month is to de-mystify the scary stuff and introduce a basic website template & process to get congregations set up easily. It’s always good to have goals!**Remember:** *Practically Prophetic* is a webinar series collaboration with Living Skies Faith Formation, St. Andrew’s College, and the Centre for Christian Studies. Everyone is welcome to take part!**Indigenous Children Then, Now, and Tomorrow: Online Panel, 29 September:**

Indigenous Ministries and Justice is hosting an Orange Shirt Day panel on September 29, 2021 at 3:30 – 5:00p.m SK time. Panelists Allison Forsberg, Jocelyn Formsma, Leeann Shimoda, and the Rev. Murray Pruden will explore how Indigenous children and families were and continue to be impacted by colonialism. They will touch on a range of topics including Indigenous Children in Residential Schools, Sixties Scoop, Millennial Scoop, and bringing our children home. For more information or to sign up please [visit the United in Learning website](#).

**Orange Shirt Day vigil, September 30, 3:00PM in SK:** Executive Minister Murray Pruden will be hosting a candle light vigil to honour the children who never made it home from Residential Schools and survivors. Please join us for an evening of remembering and please bring a candle or a light. This gathering will be live broadcast on the Indigenous Ministries and Justice Facebook page, which is accessible to all: <https://www.facebook.com/IndigenousMinistries/events>

**Whose Land? Whose Promise? Palestine, Justice and the Bible, October 2, 10:00AM in SK – new**

This two-part webinar (90 minutes each), hosted by Canadian Friends of Sabeel (CFOS), is being presented by a team from the United, Presbyterian, Mennonite, and Christian Reformed churches. For registration and more details, please click [here](#). (*Sabeel is an ecumenical grass-roots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians, and a long-time United Church partners based in Jerusalem.*)

**Taste of Palestine live cooking webinar part 1, Tuesday October 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM. – new**

Enjoy learning (virtual) hands on about Palestinian traditional food, and the realities of living and eating under military occupation or blockade. Haneen AbdAlnabi will be our first host on October 12 at 10:30AM. She is a teacher and translator living under blockade in Gaza, and, we hope, will come to us live from Gaza. [Please register here to get the Zoom link](#), which will be sent automatically. A second Taste of Palestine will take place November 2 live from the West Bank, details TBA.

**Korean United Church: Jesus and the Marginalized October 18, 7:30 pm (EDT)**

Online panel discussion of Jesus and the Marginalized, the fourth and latest book from *An Intercultural Adventure*, an ongoing series of seminars for Koreans in The United Church of Canada. Theologians, clergy, and a United Church of Canada national church staff person will discuss how this book relates Jesus Christ to the hopes, joys and struggles of Koreans in the United Church. They will assess its attempt to inculturate Christology into the Korean diaspora context in Canada, its meaning for the United Church as an intercultural church, and its contribution to Asian American theology. Non-Koreans are welcome to attend and join the conversation. The panel discussion will be in English. Following it there will be Korean and English-speaking break-out groups. Participants can indicate which they prefer when registering. Register: [united-church.zoom.us/j/97926572021](https://united-church.zoom.us/j/97926572021) Buy this book: <https://stu.usask.ca/standrews/bookstore/bookstore.php>

**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](#).

**Living Skies Youth Retreat (Gr. 9-12) – postponed - new**

Ah shoot! Unfortunately, we've had to cancel/postpone the Fall Youth Retreat because of the current provincial COVID situation. BUT, we're staying optimistic, so keep an eye out in the coming weeks and months. We'll get together again! Check out our Instagram @lsyayac.

**Questions:** contact Josie at [lsyayac.josie@gmail.com](mailto:lsyayac.josie@gmail.com) or Kent at [kmohn@united-church.ca](mailto:kmohn@united-church.ca) (306-221-5529)

**Remember:** If you love planning & leadership with young people, there are lots of opportunities for ministry personnel & youth leaders to join the Youth & Young Adult Community teams.

**Practically Prophetic: "Preacher Series – Brian Walton" – new**

**When:** Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 7pm

**Where:** Zoom online webinar

**Registration:** info will be available soon on the Living Skies website.

**What else:** Admittedly, we're working on a catchier title for this first one, but **Brian Walton** kicks off what we hope will be an ongoing series of sessions in support of Preaching in Worship. Brian will look at the structure and design of sermons, helping to establish some of the foundations for meaningful, thoughtful preaching. As always, these sessions are intended for both order of ministry people and lay leaders within congregations.

**Remember:** *Practically Prophetic* is a webinar series collaboration with Living Skies Faith Formation, St. Andrew's College, and the Centre for Christian Studies. Everyone is welcome to take part!

**Stewardship Best Practices module - new**

**Tuesday October 26, November 2, November 9, 7-9pm SK time**

Join others in this special cohort of the Stewardship Best Practices module of **Called to be the Church: The Journey** for a 3-week program and dig into the best practices for stewardship specifically for your context. Whether a camp, inner-city ministry, chaplaincy, or some other form of Community Ministry, spend some focused time developing skills to find new supporters and better engage current donors. This module includes individual support sessions following to create and implement a plan to increase your year-end donations. To register or for more information contact [Vicki Nelson](#).

**4. Reminders:****What do Chaplains do? (Part 2)**

Most of us probably have a reasonably good idea of the role and work that a hospital chaplain does. Here, in Emily Carr's words, as United Church Chaplain for the Northern Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincy, is one of the many and multifaceted ways spiritual care is offered.

**Chaplaincy Exists to Facilitate Communication and Advocacy** - The world of the hospital is not easy to understand and even more complicated when one is sick. In many cases, especially when decisions are required to be made by a patient or family, spiritual care providers are able to act as a bridge in communication between patient and family and hospital staff. We help families understand what it means to end life support, and what will happen in this process. We are able to communicate with staff when a family is ready. We help and support patients who are choosing Medical Assistance in Dying, and are able to help them communicate their decision to their children and families. When needed, we are able to help patients connect with resources such as social workers within the hospital or other programs and services provided in the community upon discharge.

**YAYAC is back!**

The Youth And Young Adult Community has returned and is ready to plan some fun activities for youth!

We are sending out an email newsletter that anyone can subscribe to here:

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/yayac/>. If you know any youth who might be interested, let them know! We also have an Instagram now @Lsyayac! We will be posting new information there and on our Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2314532113/?ref=bookmarks>.