

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



October 6, 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).*

1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

Sacraments Elder training - new

The Committee on Lay Leadership Support has received a request regarding training opportunities for sacraments elders. They are trying to determine the scope of the interest before planning a learning opportunity. If you would be interested in taking the training, or if you know of someone in your community of faith who might be interested, please let Tracy know at tmurton@united-church.ca. For more information on the process, [check the handbook](#).

Website updates - new

Updates from community ministries, camps, and chaplaincies in Living Skies [can be found here](#); if you're involved with any of the ministries, please remember to send Regional staff news and invitations!

Supporting Circles of Support and Accountability in SK - new

Micah Mission and Parkland Restorative Justice are two long-time ecumenical partners of the United Church in SK. They want us to be aware of important work they support in the wider community, through Circles of Support and Accountability to help those who have offended sexually to not re-offend. Together, their mantra is "No More Victims." [Click here for details](#), and for a bulletin insert to share in your community of faith. Restorative Justice Week, the third week in November, is a good time to do this- or, any time at all.

Changes to benefits for active ministry personnel - new

At its recent meeting, the General Council Executive approved some changes to the Benefits plan for active ministry personnel. During the regular weekly Zoom gathering on **Tuesday, October 19** (1:00 to 2:30), Mitchell Anderson and Jordan Cantwell as members of the GCE will provide some background and an opportunity to ask questions. Stay tuned for a similar opportunity for conversation for retired ministry personnel. Connection information is in the calendar.

New opportunities to volunteer with the Regional Council

Your Nominations committee is working with a new round of openings on the many groups that do the ministry and mission of the Regional Council. There's a [complete list here](#), along with more info and a PowerPoint slide to use in your community of faith.

Clergy Appreciation Month

October is the month when we take a moment to publicly acknowledge the contributions of our ministry personnel. A tribute during worship or a governing body meeting, a token of gratitude, or extra time off might be some ways to show appreciation. The sky is the limit when honouring those who continue to nurture and care for our spiritual selves.

Conversion therapy ban petition to the SK government: deadline October 15

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](#).

COVID guidelines

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.

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](#).

Save the date! - new

The Micah Mission's AGM will be Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Please RSVP to info@themicahmission.org. The Zoom link will be emailed to you shortly before the meeting.

Closed Camps - new

Sieuwke Stoppel is doing a research project about closed camps and/or pivoted programs and services in the last 70 years (not due to COVID). If you know of a closed camp and have information that might be helpful to Sieuwke, please send an email to sieuwke.k@shaw.ca.

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 are supported by our Mission and Service givings.

Taste of Palestine worship and online events

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. 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. See the Regional Calendar and the events section of this newsletter for details.

Thanksgiving Sunday resources - new

We're all a bit tired, and maybe you need a few more ideas for Thanksgiving. As always, [click here](#) for some ideas from the national church. Bonus: the link to Thanksgiving 2021's Minute for Mission.

40 Days of Engagement with Anti-Racism for all ages - new

Continue the journey towards becoming an anti-racist church with this 40-day time of learning, reflection, activities, advocacy, and action. Each day from Tuesday, October 12 to Friday, November 26 (with the exception of Sundays) there will be a new reflection on anti-racism, as well as activities suitable for adults and children. These activities can be done alone, as a family, or in groups. And, every Tuesday will include a live workshop with a resource person. [Full details are right here.](#)

The struggle against poverty: Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) worship resources - new

On October 17, 2021, the church is invited to celebrate GLI Worship Sunday as an opportunity to draw attention to the need and the growing call for a Guaranteed Livable Income. Worship resources can be found on the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty worship page](#). [Watch this video message](#) from Moderator Richard Bott promoting GLI Sunday. Moderator Bott has also recorded an introduction, a call to worship, and an opening prayer that you can use in your online worship service; these will be posted soon on the worship page.

Then Let Us Sing planning committee invitation - new

The Then Let Us Sing Development Committee will develop the new digital hymnal for the whole church. The committee's work will include music selection, development, education, animation, and promotion. Interested or know someone who is? [Here's the link to more information.](#)

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!](#)

Taste of Palestine live cooking webinar part 1, Tuesday October 12th at 10:30 AM.

A group of United Church people from SK, MB, and ON invite you to enjoy learning 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: [click here for details.](#)

40 Days of Anti-Racism: Conversation Tuesdays, October 12-November 23 - new

These online sessions are a chance to go deeper on the week's readings, working with resource people and each other. [Click here](#) and scroll down for the schedule.

Faith Leaders for Such a Time as This: October 13, 20 and November 3, 10 – Online – new

These times continue to be disorienting, challenging and require rapid adaptation for all church leaders. Join Cheryl Bear and Kim Uyede-Kai to dig into this call, for those of us holding responsibility for many kinds of leadership roles in our faith communities. [Register and find details at LeaderShift](#); \$50 total.

Updated Korean United Church: Jesus and the Marginalized October 18, 5:30 pm (MDT)

Theologians, clergy, and a United Church national staff person will discuss how this book relates Jesus Christ to the hopes, joys and struggles of Koreans in the United Church. The panel will assess its attempt to enculturate 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.

Registration link: united-church.zoom.us/j/97926572021. To buy the book, please click [here](#).

Exploring our Sacred Texts: A conversation about stewarding our common life - new

All are invited to join this online series with Jewish, Christian, and Muslim panelists to discuss the scriptural sources for understanding generosity, hospitality, and compassion. Join us for this three-episode series, **Thursdays, October 21 (Generosity), October 28 (Hospitality), and November 4 (Compassion) at 3 pm.**

- **Rabbi Jeremy Parnes** is the spiritual leader of Beth Jacob Synagogue in Regina. His long involvement in multifaith and community organizations includes Regina Multifaith Forum, Habitat for Humanity, numerous City of Regina committees on social housing and homelessness, and several inner-city boards, including Youth Connexions and The Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada.
- **Rev. Amanda Currie** has been minister of First Presbyterian Church in Regina since 2017. She previously ministered in Saskatoon for 14 years and has recently completed a two-year term as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- **Imam Dr. Mohamed Masloh** is the leader of the Islamic Association of Saskatchewan in Regina, an RCMP chaplain, and a teaching assistant at the University of Regina. He studied at the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo and the Graduate Theological Foundation in Indiana, where he earned a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies.

In these days of increased social polarization and intolerance, where racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia appear to be increasing daily, dialogue between faith communities is an antidote to ignorance and hatred. Generosity, hospitality, and compassion are social virtues that can heal the wounds of our society.

Register in advance for this series: <https://bit.ly/3iwyPfm>

For further information, contact Archdeacon Cheryl Toth at stewardship@sasktel.net

This webinar is planned in the spirit of the LAURC Covenant by the Ecumenical Stewardship Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle, the Saskatchewan Synod of the ELCIC, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina.

Updated: Practically Prophetic: "Preaching Tips When The Sermon Isn't Coming"

When: Tuesday, October 26th, 7pm

Where: Zoom online webinar

Registration: <https://form.jotform.com/212764711572052>

More info/Poster: <https://livingskiesrc.ca/event/preaching-tips-structures-forms-practically-prophetic-webinars/>

Description: *Brian Walton* believes that many sermons are the product of 'holy inspiration' and almost write themselves. For those Sundays when that doesn't happen he offers some tips for shaping the creative process. In particular this month, Brian will **focus on structural forms, explaining some of the structures and practices that can support and enhance our sermon writing.**

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

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](#).

Exploring Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan together, October 27 and November 6, 7:30PM – new

Join KAIROS Prairies North and resource people to learn about Indigenous understandings and oral traditions of Treaty. [Details on the Living Skies website!](#)

Building Operator Training Sessions, November 5 and 19 - new

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society Building Operator Training Program is designed to introduce trustees, custodians, and building operators to energy conservation principles, new technologies, and facility retrofits that will save energy and money. [Click here for details and sign up.](#)

Coming Soon: Watch the Living Skies website for upcoming Practically Prophetic Webinars - new

November 23, 2021: "TREASURE CHEST OF PRAYER" - an interfaith & ecumenical panel discussion of traditional prayers & devotional practices.

Lent 2022: "BEYOND THE BEDSIDE: SPIRITUAL CARE FOR EVERYONE" – a day of practical workshops for the practice of pastoral & spiritual care in hospitals, care homes, and other settings. Co-hosted by the North & South Sask Hospital Chaplaincies.

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](#).

COVID UPDATE: As infections continue to rise in Saskatchewan, we are requesting that those attending all in-person gatherings at Queen's House wear masks and be fully vaccinated. Please note that many of our programs are also offered on Zoom, so that we are able to welcome as many participants as possible to our upcoming retreats, workshops and gatherings. Thank you.

4. Reminders:

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 27](#)

Please review this document for volunteer opportunities and updates.

What do Chaplains do? (Part 3)

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 Carry Out Rites of Passage - Hospitals or long-term-care facilities are not where most of us would choose to mark or celebrate rites of passage, but the reality is that it is a place where families find themselves at some of life's most important intersections. The Northern Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincy seeks to help families honour the meaning, beauty, and dignity in their lives by providing rites of passage upon request, including baptisms, prayers for the end of life, marriage ceremonies, and celebrating important birthdays and milestones.

Thank-You to Our Summer Students!

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!