

NETWORKS, CLUSTERS AND TASK GROUPS

Refugee Liaisons

Liaison: Judy Beck
Liaison: Jim Tenford

Liaison: Donna Nelson

United Church Sask Camps Network

Contact: Vicki Nelson

UC Rural Ministries

Contact: Catherine Christie

Western Intercultural Ministries Network

Contact: Mathias Ross and Salesi Takau

Women of the United Church Network

Contact: Dawn Weber

Chinook Ministry Support Cluster

Contact: Carolyn Conarroe

Chinook Worship Circle (Cluster)

Contact: Elaine Little

Korean Ministers Cluster

Contact: Rev. SunDo Hyun

Former Twin Valleys ministry personnel gathering

Contact: Susan Reed

Reconciliation United (Saskatoon area)

Contact: Jordan Cantwell

Regina and Area Cluster

Contact: ReginaAreaCluster@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2205391406391275/>

Saskatoon and Area Cluster

Contact: Gary Storey

Affirming Process Task Group

Member: Joy Cowan
 Member: Allison Sarauer
 Member: Tony Thompson

Member: Robert (Bob) Hayes
 Member: Yoonjoo Shin
 Member: Jackie van't Voort

Rural Pastoral Care Task Group

Member: Allan Gairns
 Member:

Member: Frances Kitson

For more information about networks, task groups and clusters, please contact Julie Graham at jgraham@united-curch.ca

THE REFUGEE ADVISORY GROUP

There's been some good news and bad news in the world of refugee support. Most obviously, we are still living in a world turned upside down from the COVID pandemic. Two years of travel restrictions and closed visa offices has led to a tremendous backlog of applications from people wishing to come to Canada. While some new Canadians are starting to trickle into Saskatchewan, it has been slow and frustrating for many. This has been compounded by ongoing crises around the world from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Ukraine, our ongoing climate crisis and more.

This past year we've been receiving word from the Federal Government of changes coming. There is good news that the Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR) program is back and with that, the opportunity to sponsor families at a reduced cost to our churches. On the other hand, the government has also been bringing new stringent policies regarding how churches (and other organizations) fund refugees; there will be increased costs, accountability, and audits for those doing this work. While it is good to ensure new Canadians are provided what they financially need to be successful, we fear some of these measures are going to halt many churches efforts to take on sponsorships.

One item of very good news is that so many churches in our region are still dedicated to this crucial work and it does look like this coming year will see many new Canadians coming to our province. We thank you for your generosity of finance, time, and hospitality. If you are interested in this vital work of our church feel free to reach out to any of us on your refugee support team.

God's blessings to you and your ministries,
 Judy Beck norlandcreek@sasktel.net
 Donna Nelson msdonnanelson@gmail.com
 Jim Tenford jtenford@sasktel.net

UNITED CHURCH RURAL MINISTRY NETWORK



The General Council Office of The United Church of Canada used to have a Rural Desk that coordinated work and study for rural ministries and communication between rural areas. However, that ministry is no longer there, so a few people with passion for rural ministry and healthy rural communities applied to Embracing the Spirit in the summer of 2020 for help to

establish the United Church Rural Ministry Network. Our aim is to share stories and news of rural communities across the country by networking rural communities of faith and ministers.

One of the early steps was to hire an animator, who produces and distributes UCRMN newsletters, organizes the registration for workshops and runs our 'office'. Connor Jay was hired, from PEI, a seminary student at Martin Luther University College in Waterloo.

There have been two activities UCRMN has been busy with since its inception. Monthly newsletters, which are archived on our website, www.ucrmn.ca, give news of rural issues, stories from communities of faith, sharing of resources. UCRMN invites submissions from

rural people; please send to editor@ucrmn.net. If you want to become a member, go to www.ucrmn.ca and click on “Join My Email List”.

The second activity is hosting workshops. Since the fall of 2020, 7 Zoom workshops have been held: *Coming Together While Apart: Being Church During Covid*, in September; *Grief*, October; *Ashes and Resurrection: How Covid Days are Shaping us for Newness*, February 2021; *Practical Technology for Rural Churches*, March 2021; *Community Check In*, November 2021; *What is On Your Heart?*, February 2022; *Discussion on GCE06 (Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s)*, April 2022. All of these are available to see, either video or report, on www.ucrmn.ca. There is another scheduled for November 2022, *Trauma-Informed Ministry*, by Michelle Rowe. Registration information is in newsletter.

UCRMN made a recommendation to St. Andrew’s College to award an Honorary Doctorate to Rev. Joyce Sasse, who has been a force for advocacy for rural ministry through her 50 years as an ordained minister in western Canada. This was awarded at the Convocation in May of 2021. After being nominated for this honour, Joyce prepared a book of her valuable memories, reflections and writings from throughout the years called *Gleanings from a Prairie Pastor*. This document is available for downloading from the Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry website (www.circle-m.ca) of the Saskatoon Theological Union, an organization which Joyce was an integral part in establishing.

UCRMN has obtained a charitable donation number, and so welcomes donations from rural congregations or people. On the website, www.ucrmn.ca, there is a link for online donations, or an invitation to email for e-transfer information, or an address for mailing a cheque.

The UCRMN Executive is made up of Catherine Christie, chair, Eric Skillings, secretary-treasurer, Donna Mann, Felicia Urbanski and Shelley Roberts. Any others who wish to join to share the leadership roles are most, most welcome.

Submitted by Catherine Christie
UCRMN Chair

WESTERN INTERCULTURAL NETWORK

The Western Intercultural Ministry Network includes the people of, and leadership from, Prairie to Pine, Living Skies, Northern Spirit, Chinook Winds, Pacific Mountain Regional Councils, and the Indigenous Church)

The Western Intercultural Network is a relatively ‘young’ network of communities in The United Church of Canada committed to a fully inclusive and intercultural church, covering the five Western Regional Councils.

The network holds gatherings and online conversations that focus on intercultural discussions. Network members are engaging in and promoting action in their regions towards living out the UCC’s vision of being an intercultural church ([Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church | The United Church of Canada \(united-church.ca\)](http://www.united-church.ca)), and come together occasionally for educational events and other opportunities for dialogue. An executive from the five Western Regional Councils of the United Church offers us leadership.



Our vision of becoming an intercultural United Church encompasses:

- Racialized people and communities, which includes ethnic churches within the United Church, racialized lay leaders, and ministry personnel, and more.
- Indigenous people and communities, within the United Church and beyond, of all traditions.
- People with disabilities.
- LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people and communities.
- The privileged, yet broken, who are seeking wholeness and justice.

We are each worthy individuals and numerous cultural groups, and richer for our diversity. And we are at the same time engaged in a common pursuit of caring for each other and the planet. We honour our identities, and the spaces where they intersect. Our ministry includes courageous (and awkward!) conversations about our diversity, and about the social privilege and history that hinder right relationships. We believe the Good News of Jesus Christ calls us into such conversations, right relationship, and mutual transformation.

2021-22 Activities

During the 2021-2022 period since the WIMN Executive provided an update to Regions the Network has continued to offer its Coffee Chai time series. These series offer opportunities for learning, discussion and reflection on themes related to interculturality. The sessions held between June 2021 – March 2, 2022 were:

- June 3, 2021 – *Let's Get Uncomfortable* – A follow up to a conversation between Damber Khadka and Rev. Bill Millar on the Open Out Podcast (#7) which focussed on giving away power, creating a vulnerable space to support intercultural understanding.
- November 2, 2021 – *The Cultural Iceberg: The Clergy Collar* – A session where, following an overview of the Cultural Iceberg framework for creating intercultural understanding, Rev. Lee Spice and Rev. Piotr Strzelecki provided personal perspectives on what the clergy collar means to them and different cultural perspectives on the clergy collar

Due to ongoing pandemic restrictions the network did not hold an in-person event for the network.

During the past year we have taken the opportunity at our monthly meetings to review the Terms of Reference for the Network and ask ourselves how we have engaged with each of the statements to date, and how we might move forward by building on areas of strength and develop stronger support and ministry for areas which we have not been able to truly focus our attention.

Annual Meeting

WIMN hosted its Annual meeting on November 2, 2021, in conjunction with one of its Chai/Coffee Sessions.

At that meeting the members of the Executive that had guided the Network's activities for 2020-21 largely remained and chose to offer their gifts and stewardship for the work of the network for another year.

The Executive for 2021-22 comprises:

Co-Chairs: Deborah Richards (Pacific Mountain) and Kurt Katzmar (Northern Spirit)

Secretary: Kathy Yamashita (Chinook Winds)

Pacific Mountain: Alwin Maben (past chair)

Northern Spirit: Chelsea Masterman

Living Skies: Mathias Ross, Salesi Takau

Prairie to Pine: Damber Khadka, Bill Millar
Staff support: Julie Graham, Chris Mah Poy

Chinook Winds Region has nominated Rev. Dr. Oh Wang Kwon to join the WIMN Executive. We look forward to welcoming him to the next meeting of the Executive.

The group reaches out, as appropriate, to Emo Yango and Adele Halliday in the General Council Office for support in its work.

Our Elder Kay Quon has elected to take a less active role in the Executive moving forward. Kay has been a key member of the Executive for many years, and we value her wisdom. She will continue to join the Executive for meetings when possible, so that we can continue to benefit from her wisdom.

The Executive meets monthly for about 90 minutes, and this provides an opportunity for us to connect about activities in our region, as well as engage in planning discussions.

Looking forward

The Executive will continue to build on the discussions we have been undertaking in the past year on how the Network will engage in supporting and living out the call within our regions to be an Intercultural Church. Our focus in the coming year will be on taking action to address some of areas which need more attention such as intentionally growing the network, continuing to build understanding at the community of faith level about being an Intercultural Church, and supporting persons with intercultural perspectives to step forward for nominations to regional and national committees and working groups.

Upcoming Events

Our Coffee/Chai time series will continue in 2022. We are currently working on a framework for topics for these sessions in 2022, and into 2023, with the goal of continuing to offer such conversations quarterly.

Stay tuned for more information in a few weeks about our June, September, and November Coffee Chai dates.

Contact Us

If you would like to be contacted about WIMN events you can [sign up for occasional updates here](#); you can unsubscribe at any time, and we don't share your information with anyone else.

Respectfully Submitted by
Deborah Richards and Kurt Katzmar
Co-Chairs
On behalf of the Executive of the Western Intercultural Ministries Network

THE WOMEN OF THE UNITED CHURCH NETWORK

Zoom Executive meetings were held January 16, 2021, April 10, 2021, and September 4, 2021 as well as consulting by telephone and e-mail.

Dawn Weber, 1st Vice Chair and Mary Mohn represented Saskatchewan United Church of Canada Women at the National UCW Annual Meeting held September 20 to 24, 2021 by Zoom. Our unit was assigned to prepare the Opening Prayer and Worship for September 23,

2021. A copy of the National UCW Annual Meeting Report submitted by Mary Mohn and Dawn Weber can be [found here](#).

The 60th anniversary of UCW is set for July 11 to 15, 2022 at Membertou Trade and Convention Centre in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

Monthly newsletters have been written, distributed by email and mail by Mary Mohn, Editor. She is our representative to the National UCW In Touch Newsletter [formerly Keeping In Touch]. The Sask UCCW Newsletters and revised Statistics Form are posted online at the Living Skies Regional website at www.livingskiesrc.ca under Programs>Women's Network. Mary Mohn is our Sask UCCW Communications Officer and contact person for Sask UCCW on the UCW webpage.

The Sask UCCW Statistics Form 2021/2022 was circulated with a deadline date for returns by March 1, 2022. As at March 2022 there were 741 Saskatchewan UCCW Members. The Saskatchewan UCW Bursary Fund Committee members are Mary Mohn, Susan Dokken, Chantal Ntibategera, Allison Irvine, Joan Brown. Persons who are members of Living Skies Regional Council United Church community of faith and who are participants in a recognized program of preparation for pastoral ministry in The United Church of Canada may apply. Applications will be considered twice yearly, at the end of February and the end of October. Applications may be submitted once per year per person.

Two Bursaries were awarded totalling \$3,000.00. The Bursary Fund balance at year end, December 31, 2021, is \$8,172.75.

Once again plans were cancelled for an in person regional meeting event planned for September 25, 2021 due to the significant rise in Covid 19 infections. A Sask United Church of Canada Women Regional Annual General Meeting was held by Zoom on Sunday, November 7, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. Founding member and Treasurer Wilma Will retired. The following agreed to let their names stand for Election of Executive for the coming year:

Past Co-chair: Susan Dokken

Co-chairs: Chantal Ntibategera, Prince Albert and Dawn Weber, Saskatoon

1st Vice Chair: Diane Thurlow, Meadow Lake

2nd Vice Chair: Marilyn Bodner, Lanigan

Treasurer: Phyllis Robinson, Saskatoon

Secretary: Barbara Byers Bradley, Saskatoon

The next National UCW Meeting is scheduled to be held September 19 – 23, 2022 at Queen of the Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ontario.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Saskatchewan United Church of Canada Women
*Chantal Ntibategera, Dawn Weber, Co-chairs; Mary Mohn, Communications Officer;
Diane Thurlow, 1st Vice-chair; Phyllis Robinson, Treasurer; Barb Byers Bradley, Secretary.*

LIVING SKIES REGIONAL COUNCIL AFFIRMING TASK GROUP

At the 2019 Living Skies Regional Council (LSRC) Gathering Proposal No. 8 was presented for a vote. The issue was "We believe that our faith in God is calling us to have Living Skies Regional Council become an Affirming Ministry."

The proposal was “That the Living Skies Regional Council create a small Task Group with the members appointed through the Nominations process adopted by Living Skies Regional Council to create a process for the region to begin the Affirming Ministries exploration which task group will report to the Regional Executive by March 2020 so the report may be circulated, That the task group create or adapt an educational process with respect to Living Skies Regional becoming an affirming region. That time be allotted at the 2020 Regional Council Meeting to participate in an Affirming Ministries discussion culminating with a vote on the issue (*We believe that our faith in God is calling us to have Living Skies Regional Council become an affirming ministry*) after an education process has been completed” (sic). This proposal was approved.

Our LSRC Affirming Task Group was appointed in 2021. Our Task Group consists of Joy Cowan, Bob Hayes, Allison Sarauer, Yoonjoo Shin, Shelly Manley-Tannis, Tony Thompson, Jackie van’t Voort, and Julie Graham (LSRC Staff support).

One of our Task Group’s goals is to provide education to our Living Skies Region on affirming. We provided an introductory letter outlining our group and it was posted in the Living Skies Regional Rambler. We also hosted two informational Zoom Gatherings (March – PIE Day in Living Skies and May – Preparing for Pride) and invited anyone to “Zoom-In”. We will be hosting future Educational Zoom Gatherings throughout the year.

Our Task Group created a Living Skies Regional Council Affirming Vision Statement which reads: “To support an ongoing, engaging, educational process for Communities of Faith to understand what it means to be affirming. We are committed to celebrating the diversity of God’s creation and encouraging the full participation of all people in our ministries. The full rainbow spectrum of human diversity includes (but is not limited to) age, gender identity, racial / cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation, differing abilities, ethnic and theological backgrounds, spiritual beliefs, economic circumstances, and all definitions of family. We are willing to share our faith and our gifts as we respond to God’s call to love, compassion, and justice.”

Under the direction and leadership of Yoonjoo a video of our Vision Statement will be produced. This video will be shared with the LSRC Executive and with a link on the LSRC website. We will also post the Vision Statement in the Living Skies Regional Rambler. We will plan on conducting a Zoom Gathering to discuss our Vision Statement. We will also be requesting feedback on the Vision Statement and once finalized, will send it to Affirm United for their feedback and approval.

Our Task Group will develop an action plan on becoming an Affirming Region and will share this plan with Affirm United for their approval.

The dedication, support, and love of our United Church of Canada are exemplified by the Task Group in their commitment to being part of this exciting ‘Affirming Journey’!

Respectively submitted
Living Skies Regional Council Affirming Task Group

REGIONAL MINISTER: JUSTICE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Many of you will remember that shortly before we gathered at last year’s annual meeting, news came from the Tk’emlúpsenc First Nation in Kamloops that confirmation of unmarked burials

at the residential “school” had been announced. That confirmation of decades of survivor testimony was both devastating and a moment for renewed commitment to the Calls to Action, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Church Apologies, the Caretakers’ Calls to the Church, and more. Those commitments have shaped a lot of my work over the past year, and I have been grateful to work alongside many in these Regional Council and beyond as we try to renew and live into our responsibilities.

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY

Community-building: Snow and Ice Art. ([Click here for the web page](#)).

This COVID winter we launched a three-Region Love Your Neighbour ice art and snow sculpture initiative. The Committee on Community of Faith Support gave its blessing and off we went, with a good number of Prairie to Pine Communities of Faith joining in with sculpting, ice art, media coverage, and lots of great photos. My follow up has not been as extensive as I’d like; I am hoping to be in touch with all registrants to see if we should do this again, and to thank them for brightening a hard winter.

Nominations: It has been a pleasure to offer some communications support to this small committee that accepts the challenge of finding new people for a range of governance needs and special projects. Thank you to chair Susan Reed and members Yvonne Terry and Jeanette Warrian for many creative, connected meetings.

Special thanks to Bev Diebert for expanding the Regional Council directory to include United representatives on the boards of community ministries, camps, chaplaincies, and partner groups. We hope this will help you, the people and delegates of the Regional Council, as well as members of Nominations, better see the network of relationships and personal commitments that sustain our ministry.

Missions ministries and assessment task group: The Regional Assessment Task Group has wrapped up its work; staff continue to connect with the EDGE Network to offer grants data and writing support. Thank you to Tim Ellis, Leslee Whalley, and Brian Maitland for several years of careful and thoughtful discussion and planning for opportunities and support to Living Skies ministries supported by mission support grants.

The Grants Committee has updated its main application form and the webpage detailing available grants, making it easier for it to add a section for applications to the Assessment fund (and/ or the more permanent fund proposed after the 2020 regional annual meeting.)

I continue to be in touch with ICM, RAPM, Parkland Restorative Justice, and Micah Mission.

Networks and Clusters: The updated list of LSRC Networks and Cluster is posted here, on the [Networks and Clusters page](#). Bev is including all Network and Cluster contacts in an invitation to submit a report to the annual meeting workbook. Understandably, many Clusters seem to be inactive, while Networks have in some cases found it easier to move online.

Newsletters: This continues to be a lot of vital weekly work, especially for fearless editor Bev Diebert, who works with the mountain of content that comes in, maintains the website archive and contact list, and works with new subscribers. I am so grateful for her work. This year, we began an experiment that will run through June and will give our 700 plus subscribers a chance to evaluate: We split the newsletter into alternating News and Events, in an effort to narrow down the focus and both the amount and scope of the content. Thank you to all who have written in with constructive feedback; we welcome this as we continue to adapt to our new structures.

Events: For two years we have all set sail on a sea of online events that occasionally builds to a tidal wave. This is both amazing and occasionally overwhelming for everyone. I have prioritised working with the newsletters team (Bev, Cherry, and Kathy) to promote events and workshops that: have Indigenous leadership/ are focused on right relations; are Affirming; or intercultural; or anti-racism focused; focus on anti-poverty or climate justice; or reflect Regional initiatives and concerns such as government policies that worsen poverty. Generally, we priority-promote first Regional, and then General Council, ecumenical, and national/ regional KAIROS events. Please remember that community of faith events have a [dedicated calendar](#) and [event posting form](#). [Regional events are here](#).

Website troubleshooting and development are always ongoing. As of February 2022 some persistently annoying technical issues have been mostly resolved (of course writing this down ensures they'll start happening again). Keeping the site up to date is a priority for Bev, Kent, and me, and we hope it remains a useful home base for news, key documents, events, and more. www.livingskiesrc.ca For over two years we have maintained a special COVID newsfeed, and this month that page was archived. We hope this is a sign of hope. Over on **Facebook**, our group has reached almost 600 members and remains very active. Thank you to all who contribute to this community!

JUSTICE WORK

Affirming Task Group: It is a privilege to accompany the skilled and diverse membership of this group. Task group members are: Joy Cowan, Bob Hayes (chair), Shelly Manley-Tannis, Allison Saraurer, Yoonjoo Shin, Tony Thompson, and Jackie van't Voort. We've also used the task group's work as another reason to hold semi regular Affirming events for the Region, with much appreciated help from Trisha Little. We decided that we should recognize this ongoing work by creating a Saskatchewan Affirming Network (SKAN), to accompany networks in Regina and Saskatoon. Our latest event was held in May 2022 and focused on Preparing for Pride. [Our Affirming Regional page is here](#). We also value an association with the [Korean Rainbow United Network](#), whose videos of songs and reflections uplift us.

Intercultural ([Click here for the web page](#)). The Western Intercultural Network continues its work, which includes Mathias Ross and Salesi Takau as Living Skies members on the executive. More LS people are always welcome! The Network will not hold a fall 2022 event, instead taking another break from big online events, and advocating that people attend the Fifth Intercultural Adventure in Edmonton this October. It will continue with at least quarterly open, 90 minute intercultural "coffee/ chai" learning and conversation events focused on specific practices of intercultural and anti racist ministry. I maintain the Network list and send out occasional updates, and feel privileged to be part of this vibrant and diverse group of leaders. I also presented on this network at a national staff gathering.

Right Relations/TRC:

Okanese First Nation: Many thanks to Sue Bland, and all who attended the feast to remember the children on Okanese First Nation last August, as we attempt to renew our commitment to Okanese First Nation, the survivors, the surrounding communities, and those at rest in the cemetery. This small group of non-Indigenous people is a vital part of our TRC commitments at this annual feast, and more participants are welcome. Please contact me.

Cote First Nation: Along with Susan Bear and Gwen Reilkoff in Kamsack, I am part of an ecumenical group trying to offer support to survivors of St Philip's Residential School on Cote First Nation. The Presbyterian Church ran the Crowstand institution, followed by the United Church-run Cote Federal Day School, so our church holds intergenerational responsibility even as we respect the Catholic archdiocese's overarching commitment to the community.

The elders have begun language and culture camp work under a cooperative they have formed, and are determined to pass on the Onakawewin language to the youth. We have struggled to work out a stable funding path. And yet, the elders have invited us to the July culture camp, and I honour their generosity of spirit. I continue to struggle with how we free up resources for work that does not fit neatly into structures and funding models.

Many thanks to Rev Deb Anderson Pratt and the board of Regina Native Outreach for your [generous feast invitation to the whole Region](#). It was a beautiful day in every way, and may your partnership with Regina congregations continue to deepen as we follow the Calls to Action.

I prioritise promoting events and resources related to significant days in the Indigenous and right relations calendar, especially June 21 and September 30, and any events offered by Indigenous leadership in the United Church. There have been many of these, meaning that we all have the space needed to come out, to learn, and to be challenged or transformed.

I continue to be in regular contact with staff of Indigenous Ministries and Justice at General Council and with colleague Charlene Burns, and am grateful for these relationships. I feel the absence of a Right Relations/ TRC committee here in our Regional Council and welcome conversations with any of you about how we can carry our responsibilities and relationships forward in a good way.

KAIROS Prairies North Decolonization Committee: Along with Jordan Cantwell and Sheila Catto, I participate in this ecumenical group which offers education and reflection gatherings focused on practical steps towards decolonization in which everyone can be involved, with a focus on Indigenous leadership. Our May workshop series focused on land acknowledgement best practices for faith and spiritual communities. We are looking at a second summer land-based event.

Anti-racism: This is a denomination-wide commitment that will soon have a public action plan in which we can all join. I continue to be part of discussion with national staff about coordinating anti-racism networking with Regional Councils, and accessing lists of people who have done Sessions 3 and 4 of the national training and could be leaders for us. I am part of the facilitation team for the national training, and in spring 2022 supported Rev Jordan Cantwell, Rev Paul Douglas Walfall (Northern Spirit) and elder Russel Burns to offer a three-Region June evening series on anti racism planning in local ministries, based on the book *Wait-Is This Racist?*

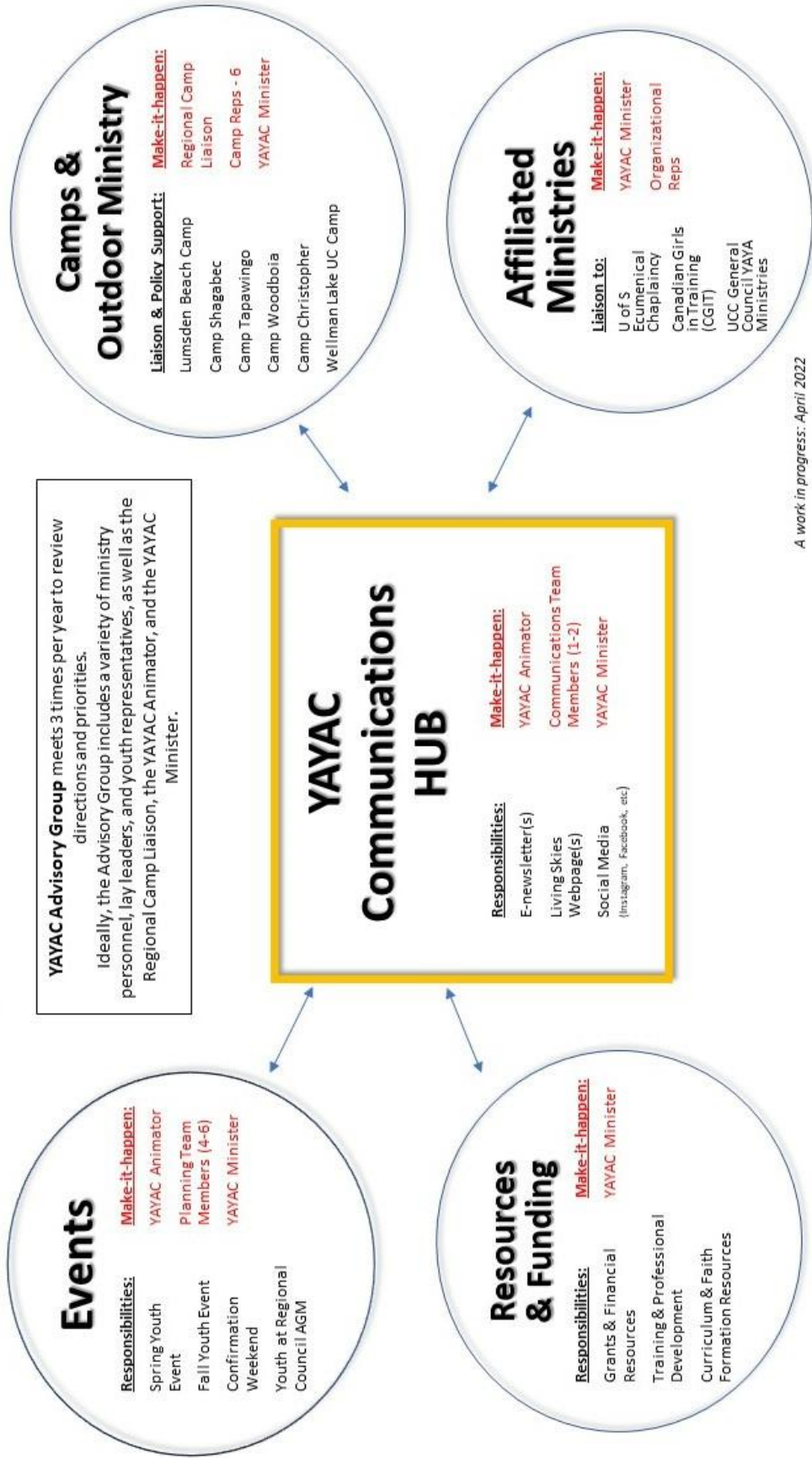
Climate justice: United reps to KAIROS Regina continue to engage with For the Love of Creation, the national ecumenical initiative of which the UCC is part. I continue to promote the Faithful Footprints program however I can.

Other justice networking: Strong concerns about Sask Income Support changes, led by Regina Anti Poverty Ministry; Guaranteed Livable Income; Palestine; Faithful Footprints and For the Love of Creation, both climate change related: these are all areas in which Living Skies people are active. In March we held a three-Region refugee supporters and sponsors check in concerning the national refugee sponsorship program, with national staff Khwaka Kukubo. This included a focus on COVID impacts; Afghanistan; and LGBTQ refugees. From time to time I am also drawn in to General Council related justice work and network conversations and projects.

Respectfully submitted, Julie Graham
Justice / Communications Minister, jgraham@united-church.ca



Living Skies Youth & Young Adult Community Organizational Chart



A work in progress: April 2022

YAYAC: YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

YAYAC Structure Developments

Re-branded Organizational Chart: The primary focus for the past year has been an intentional re-branding of the structure & purpose of the Youth & Young Adult Community (YAYAC). The emphasis has been on clarifying YAYAC's primary role as communication & connection hub in support of the various groups, congregations and organizations involved in ministry with Youth & Young Adults. This includes summer camps, university chaplains, CGIT groups, national & inter-regional youth ministries as well as local youth groups, lay leaders and ministry personnel (please see previous page).

Staffing Structure: We're hoping that the revised YAYAC Structure will also help to clarify the roles of *YAYAC Minister* & *YAYAC Animator*. We've been very fortunate to have **Josie Williamson** in the role of *YAYAC Animator* since the fall of 2021 and we're exploring ways to maintain the position on a permanent casual-time basis. It's been a difficult year for YAYAC programming with COVID, but Josie has been invaluable in helping to create & design our new structure.

Additionally, in March 2022, **Rod Leuty** took on the volunteer role of *Regional Camps Liaison* with the goal of strengthening support & communication networks with the region and amongst the various camp boards. This is a bit of a guinea pig role as we sort through changes in accreditation & reporting processes, but we hope that it will be a good voice & contact point in support of our camping ministries.

Faith Formation & Ministry with Youth & Young Adults

- 1) **Region-wide ministry programming with Youth & Young Adults** was once again a challenge with a number of in-person events cancelled due to COVID in 2021 and the first months of 2022. However, we're looking forward to a couple of events in spring and more to follow in the fall. <https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/yayac/>
- 2) Once again, it's important to recognize and appreciate the **YAYA Ministries in local Communities of Faith** who have maintained regular zoom and/or physically distanced programs, confirmation programs, weekly Zoom Gathering for Young Adults (age 18-35), etc. <https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/yayac/yayac-network/>
- 3) **UCC Camps & Outdoor Ministries** each have unique operational & staffing structures reflected in their ministry programs. All 6 of the Regionally-Affiliated summer camps plan a return to in-person overnight programs for the summer of 2022.

As mentioned earlier, Rod Leuty has volunteered in the new role of Regional Camps Liaison, and plans are currently underway for a joint camp staff & board day to bring representatives from all of the Region's UCC camps together to share resources, ideas, and experience. The hope is that this will support ongoing communication & relationship amongst our camping ministries.

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

- 4) **Ecumenical Chaplaincy at University of Saskatchewan** continues to engage with the Lutheran Campus Ministry for chaplaincy coverage. <https://www.facebook.com/EcumenicalChaplaincyUniversityOfSaskatchewan>
- 5) **CGIT Saskatchewan** for girls aged 12-17 continues with programming & fundraising initiatives in accordance with provincial health guidelines. <https://saskatchewancgit.wordpress.com/>

- 6) **Youth Forum at GC44** (February-July 2022) is a largely virtual event in conjunction with the virtual CG44 meetings. Living Skies Region did not receive any applications for Youth Forum, so we did not have any youth representatives this time around.
- 7) Communities of Faith are encouraged to link with the **Living Skies Region's YouTube Channel** to share resources and broaden our online worship & faith community together. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQumvdyab1_LIPlluOPgArg

Other Ministry Programming & Online Events

- 1) **"Practically Prophetic" Webinars** focus on tools & tips related to various areas of applied ministry each month. With much thanks to our presenters for sharing their knowledge and expertise, recordings of the webinars are posted on the Region's YouTube Channel. This has been an intentional collaboration of Living Skies Region Faith Formation, St. Andrew's College, and the Centre for Christian Studies.
- 2) **EDGE Network "Community Roundtable" pilot programs** were undertaken by St. Andrew's United Church in Lumsden, Lumsden Beach Camp, and YAYAC. This pilot program encouraged community engagement & consultation gatherings with some grant funding available in support of programs or project arising from the gatherings.

Summary

Looking ahead, we're really excited about the new YAYAC structure and communications network. We encourage people throughout the Region to consider being part of our Event Planning Teams and/or Advisory Group.

Once again, thank-you to everyone in the church called to ministry with youth, young adults, children, and families. We're emerging from a difficult time into unknown waters, and your care & ministry with young people is so greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Kent Mohn
kmohn@united-church.ca
306-221-5529

ARCHIVIST

After the challenges of recent years, 2021 provided opportunities to start to catch-up on activities that previous circumstances had limited. Among the highlights were the completed transfers of records from several churches, as well as much needed updates to archival finding aids and inventories.

New additions in 2021 totaled approx. 7.4 linear metres (if boxes were lined up end-to-end). This included records from 11 Saskatchewan churches, as well as photographic prints and slides from 2 private donors. Congregations at Mortlach, Estlin, Fort Qu'Appelle, Manor, Redvers, Edgeley, Brownlee, Shellbrook, Leask, Earl Grey, and Swift Current were among the creators of these records.

Arriving at an archivist's office is only one step in the journey of archiving records. From there, volumes, files and items that meet the necessary criteria are re-housed into acid-free folders and protective archival boxes, then moved into archival storage, at the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (PAS).

As of 2021, our processed collections at PAS include:

- approx. 260.3 linear metres of textual records (measured as shelf space occupied), made up of church registers, rolls, reports, minutes, histories and various related items;
- about 2,000 photographic prints and 900 slides and negatives showing church events, people and other topics related to the history of the UCC in the region;
- more than 270 architectural plans and blueprints of churches, manses and other sites.

Living Skies Regional Council remains responsible for these records, even after they are moved to PAS, and the region's archivist responds to a range of questions related to their content. Reference activities in 2021 included replying to approximately 152 requests for information. Of these, about 116 pertained to baptisms, marriages, burials and memberships (for personal and genealogical purposes), and 27 to other historical topics (properties, biographies, congregations, etc.). The latter usually require more time to complete than requests for information from registers and rolls, though both can present special challenges, e.g. when a congregation was very small or remote and not well documented. Most requests were received and handled via e-mail.

An important part of archival work continues to be updating collections listings and finding aids, to make it easier for those inside and outside the church to find records and information they may need, or narrow down their research with some independence. Descriptions for many of our collections can be viewed online (via <https://memorysask.ca/united-church-of-canada-saskatchewan-conference-archives>) and new information is added regularly.

As always, the regional archives webpage (<https://livingskiesrc.ca/resources/archives/>) is a good starting point for guides, forms, contact information, links, and other help for those looking for information from our archival collections, or hoping to transfer or donate records.

Many thanks to those who diligently prepared and facilitated records transfers in 2021, and to everyone whose patience and assistance contributed to a productive year!

Respectfully submitted,
Madeleine McLuhan-Myers
Archivist

**STEWARDSHIP ANIMATOR
VICKI NELSON**

**Vicki Nelson
Stewardship Animator for
Northern Spirt, Living Skies and
Prairie to Pine Regional Councils
Philanthropy Unit, General Council Office**



Greetings,

After one year in the role of Stewardship Animator I have had the pleasure to virtually meet and work with a number of generosity-keepers from the Living Skies Region. Through phone calls, stewardship training programs, and at the virtual annual meeting last year, I have continued to get to know the amazing, faith-filled people of this Region. If we haven't yet met, my role is to provide resources and support to individuals, communities of faith, and other

ministries in the areas of generosity, congregational giving, Mission & Service, and the work of the United Church Foundation. If you have ideas, questions or inspiration to share, please get in contact [with me](#).

One way we may have connected over the past year, or could in 2022, is through the learning program, **Called to be the Church: The Journey**. These trainings are designed for community of faith leaders, working as a team, to learn and develop a stewardship plan to help increase giving and deepen connections within your community of faith. There are currently two different modules to help with this work. One Living Skies participant provided this program feedback, *“The course is smart, practical and inspiring.”* You can register or learn [more here](#).

Speaking of gratitude for shared abundance, Mission & Service is our Church’s most powerful vehicle for helping to transform lives, inspire meaning and purpose, and build a better world. Together we do more. Thanks to generous people like you, across the whole United Church, in 2021, \$240,000 in Mission & Service funding supported a number of ministries in Living Skies. Your generosity through Mission & Service strengthened camps, chaplaincies, economic justice, theological training, and more.

Beyond our borders, Mission & Service also provided \$500,000 in Covid-19 emergency funding, plus \$250,000 towards Covid-19 vaccines. This is on top of support provided to our partners around the globe. And this continues to be a priority as Mission & Service is receiving [donations](#) for the crisis in Ukraine. Your donations to Mission & Service are changing the lives of your neighbours—both here in Saskatchewan, and around the world. Thank you for your gifts.

Sharing inspiring stories about Mission & Service is an effective way to hold up and celebrate this amazing work, and to encourage generosity in your community of faith. The pandemic has changed many things, including the way Minutes for Mission are distributed and told, however they certainly have not gone away. New stories are frequently [posted](#). For those who utilize videos in worship, there are also [videos](#) that tell personal stories of the life changing work of Mission & Service. If you want to bring more Mission & Service inspiration into your community of faith, and would like help finding resources, please let me know.

Finally, I want to thank you, the people of the Living Skies Region. I have been impressed (though not surprised) by the dedication, creativity, thoughtfulness and joy of the people in Saskatchewan. You have found meaningful ways to faithfully create community during a challenging time. It is amazing and so are you.

In gratitude,
Vicki Nelson, Stewardship Animator for Living Skies Region
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