

Living Skies Regional Council condemns recent abuses in SK Christian institutions

Living Skies Regional Council, the United Church of Canada within Saskatchewan, condemns the abuse that has recently come to light at [Legacy Christian Academy](#) in Saskatoon and at [Redberry Lake Bible Camp](#).

Those who perpetrated, tolerated, and enabled the abuse have not held themselves to Christian principles and practices. As the United Church, we respect human dignity and rights and the highest duty of care for all people because we are Christian- not despite being Christian.

Christians are unequivocally instructed by Jesus to put love for all ahead of all else (*Mark 12: 28-34*). For the United Church, “all” means every person of every race, gender identity and expression, ability, age, sexual identity, and economic status. All people, without exception, are beloved children of God, always deserving of dignity, safety, and respect. (*Luke 10:25-37*). We completely reject understandings of God that are based on fear, control, division, punishment, and coercion. This includes ableist, transphobic, and homophobic understandings of God and Christianity.

The so-called exorcism that took place at Redberry Bible Camp utterly failed to respect the health, dignity, and safety of the camper who was targeted, and we express to him, his loved ones, and the campers who witnessed this violence, our hope for healing from the trauma inflicted.

The [coercion and abuse that took place at Saskatoon Christian Centre Academy/ Legacy Christian Academy](#) likewise violated the most fundamental rights of the students targeted, and we offer our prayers for their recovery, and call for the appropriate authorities to take action. We offer the students our gratitude for their courage in naming this abuse. We also call on all fellow Christians to completely reject and immediately cease the long Christian tradition of persecuting and targeting Two Spirit and LGBTQIA people.

The United Church believes that all people deserve safe places to work, play, worship, and learn. This is why we support six camps/ outdoor ministries across Saskatchewan, [in addition to other community-based ministries](#). These camps comply fully with [United Church standards](#) and are [accredited under the Saskatchewan Camps Association](#).

Providing an environment where people feel safe and welcome is just one aspect of [our duty of care](#) to those we serve. This includes careful screening of volunteers and leaders, including a criminal record check and clear policies on sexual misconduct, workplace violence and harassment. The United Church also strives to eliminate all barriers, visible or invisible, that limit the full participation of individuals in any of our hundreds of ministries in Saskatchewan. As we hold ourselves to these standards, we invite the Saskatchewan communities and people we serve to also hold us to these standards.

Darrell Reine, chair of the Regional Council

Rev Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister