



The common-tater

This spud's for you

Volume 2

LIVING SKIES REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING NEWS

Issue 1

May 25—May 28, 2023, Prince Albert

Welcome to LSRC Meeting 2023

President Darrell Reine welcomed delegates to the Annual Meeting of LSRC. He introduced Chantal Winslow and Carolyn Woodall. Rev. Deb Anderson Pratt offered a prayer in Cree calling on Creator to look down and be with us. She offered a heart-felt plea to work together and be **united** with Indigenous Ministries. Elder Bunny Ermine of Treaty 6 was greeted a gift of tobacco. He identified himself as an Indian Residential School Survivor and shared his story. He offered a prayer in his traditional language and way. He sang a song honouring women. Inspector Scott Hayes of PA Police Service welcomed delegates to Prince Albert and Treaty 6 territory. He spoke of human connections and understanding "Together we can address the needs of our communities collectively." He thanked especially Rev. Nora Vedress, Police Chaplain. "We have a shared commitment to discerning our path together". Written greetings were also received from Sherry McLennon, West Region of Metis Nation and Mayor Greg Dionne.

Opening worship

Yvonne Terry, Jim Tenford and Joy Cowan provided our first worship experience. The opening prayer "I embrace you", "I love you", "I'm glad you're here" – this is the reaction of people hungry for personal interaction after years of being apart. Just as good, foundational garments are necessary to look our best, we need a good foundation as Christians: a statement of relationships based on compassion and love. The way relationships were built in the past may not work now. Are decisions we make bringing us closer or driving us away from life-giving relationships?

The closing prayer to bless our time together: "bold discipleship, deep spirituality, daring justice."

Reports Thursday Afternoon

After an heartfelt start to the afternoon session a variety of reports were heard by the delegates.

The Nominations committee asked what the difference was between the Nominations Committee and a Shark? Nominations Committee doesn't live under water! They assured delegates "We come in peace." There are currently 21 opportunities for service in the Region, so folks looking to utilize their gifts are encouraged to explore the Council Web Site for the opportunity to serve.

Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy acknowledged that the pandemic was a difficult time for individuals and the church. Shannon also extended thanks to the ministers who learned technology to be the church in isolation. The court was encouraged to be patient as we dream of how we can be the Church moving into the future. Thanks were extended to the Regional Council Staff for their faithful service.

In the Convenors' Report, Darrell Reine shared that the first Conference meeting he attended had 600 delegates and we currently have 160 delegates along with those joining via Zoom this year. He asked "How do we be the church" in our communities today. Darrell also extended thanks to the members of the Executive who meet monthly to deal with the business of the church.

In the General Council report Jennifer Janzen Ball shared information about the strategic plan and invited delegates to email planning@united-church.ca to share what their congregations are about. In 2025 The United Church will be celebrating our 100th Anniversary and the Centennial Celebrations Committee wants to hear your ideas about how we should celebrate. Staff Heather Dootoff, Julie Graham, and Tracy Murton shared the financial report, the work of justice and communications and Pastoral Relations.

Richard Manley-Tannis shared the work of St. Andrew's College and the exciting new two Learning Pathways: Academic and Life Long Learning.

A lot of good work is being carried out in our Region!

Memorial worship

Yvonne Terry opened with an invocation seeking the Spirit's inspiration and guidance, faithfully following the examples of those who have passed, as well as communities of faith that have closed. Jim Tenford gave a prayer of lament – for what has been lost and those who are no longer with us ("God dwells in our tears"), as well as thanks for the Creator's work in the world and in the church ("We breathe the breath of new life and community").

Yvonne Terry reflected on Matthew 5:13-16. Christians are to be salt – as salt draws out the flavour of food, we share our salt-seasonings with others, making their lives more flavourful. We are also light – bringing 'God-colors' to the world. God isn't a secret to be kept, but shone brightly even in difficult times. Dare to be bold, discern our path with courage. Encourage others to open themselves up to God.

Congratulations

Ordinands: Sarah Giles & Minhyuk Hwang

Retirees: Allan Gairns & Michele Rowe

Celebrating: Years of Ministry:

65 years: Carlton Miller

40 Years: Janet Brown

60 years: Ken Powers

Brenda MacLauchlan

John Crawford

Miles Russell

50 Years: Don Barss

Leslie Schweitzer



Youth Community Pow Wow

United Church delegates joined 3,500 area school children to attend the Youth Community Pow Wow at Kinsmen Park. An elder opened the event with welcome and prayer. The Grand Entry of flag-bearers and invited dancers were accompanied by drum circles. The enthusiastic and appreciate audience rose and removed headgear in respect of the ceremony. Then various dances were performed: intertribal, grass, shawl, golden age, jingle and traditional. A great deal of work went into the dancers' colorful regalia reflecting their commitment to celebrate and promote cultural connections. A delicious lunch of beef stew, bannock and sweets was available.

My Morning

I had said I would be willing to share some reflections on my experience at the Pow Wow. And, I realized I had my own (cultural) expectations. I thought I would hear some instructions, some background, some teaching. But I couldn't hear what the announcer was saying, and I could not see very well and there was a lot of 'ambient' noise from hundreds of children. I long to hear more, to know more, to understand more about the dances, the dancers and the culture that offers such beauty. And I also rejoice that the event was not about me. I could watch and listen as well as I could. I could offer prayer when I heard the drums and the voice. I could give thanks for the laughter and shrieks and colourfully dressed children, swirling around me. I could remember and pay honour to those children whose names are not known to many of us now, but who once would have laughed and sang and shrieked in their own communities. I could remember these children, taken and forced into a life where they could not understand their teachers, where their own language was punished and the ambient noise of their friends and siblings were completely silenced. And this is what I did. Now, I give thanks for the experience. I give thanks that children of every culture and colour are here dancing, laughing and learning together. I pray for all that has been missed because my ancestors made the choices they made. I give thanks that perhaps we are moving in a better way. I rejoice that even I am welcomed here.

Nominations

If you're interested in volunteering for a particular committee vacancy, now's your chance! The Nominations Committee matches peoples' skills, gifts, and call with needs in the Regional Council. Not quite sure what they are? We'll help you find the best way you can serve the wider church!

LSRC Affirming Proposal

The Living Skies Regional Council presented their work around becoming an Affirming Council. They worked at making a public, intentional and explicit commitment to sharing our faith gifts and resources to live out God's call for love, compassion and justice. Hoeun Lee and Yoonjoo Shin produced a video promoting an Affirming Regional Council. The video was well received by viewers. Responses were submitted, mostly positive, a few with improvement suggestions. The task group presented will present the following motion—which has been approved by Affirm United for the court to approve in order to become an Affirming Regional Council.



Chief Cadmus Delorme

We have all inherited the challenges that have resulted from the clash of Indigenous and Western world views. No one here is responsible for the Indian Residential School, or the 60s Scoop, or the Indian Act — but we have inherited the mess that these have created. When we feel guilt or shame about these things, we mustn't let these feelings in us; instead we need to let them motivate us to do better in the future.

We share a common goal, but often disagree on how to get there. Our biggest barrier to overcome is ignorance. If we want to move forward together, we have to start with the truth. Chief Cadmus invited all of us to put down our shields so we can learn. So many of our conflicts are rooted in not understanding what is underneath the emotions and positions we each hold.

We need to center relationship and try to understand one another and listen deeply to each other in order to work through these conflicts. There has been reluctance in many settler people to listen to Indigenous people. The discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves broke through this resistance. Why did it take something so drastic?

Because for generations, Canadians were taught untruths about indigenous peoples and Canadian history; we were taught that the goal for all indigenous people was assimilation; and we were taught that the effect of Treaties was that Indigenous peoples relinquished their title and rights to the land. These generations were not taught the truth.

Younger generations will be and are our teachers because they are learning the truth.

Once we understand that what we have learned was not the truth, we can begin to be educated and learn and become part of the work and journey of reconciliation.

Because of Residential Schools and the 60's Scoop and Canadian child welfare policies, generations of Indigenous children have been cut off from their traditional teachings and culture (vertical lineage) and they went into survival mode. They passed on this hurt and their mistrust and anger to their children. This is beginning to turn around, but it will take a long time.

People and families are at all different places in this healing journey. Indigenous people don't want pity—they want parity. Reconciliation means decolonization. Indigenous world view and Indigenous dignity must be given parity with Western world view and the dignity afforded to white people.

The Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action are about our obligation to take what we have inherited and correct it and make sure we do better going forward.

Indigenous people just want the agreements embedded in the Treaties to be honoured so that we can travel together as equals and friends with mutual respect.

Reconciliation is important to all of us because our children will either thank us for doing the hard work and having the hard conversations that lead to reconciliation, or they will resent us for leaving this hard work for them to do.

DISPLAYS Eighteen tables of colourful displays are a great place to get information. Please check out the many displays on a variety of group and organizations. Thanks to all who have completed the Display quiz, there are still several Tim's gifts cards still to be won. Thanks to all who brought their informative displays that helps us learn more about the work done with in our United Church.

