

NETWORKS, CLUSTERS AND TASK GROUPS

Chinook Ministry Support Cluster	Contact: Carolyn Conarroe
Chinook Worship Circle (Cluster)	Contact: Elaine Little / Sandra Watson
Korean Ministers Cluster	Contact: Rev. SunDo Hyun
Reconciliation United (Saskatoon area)	Contact: Jordan Cantwell
Refugee Network Liaisons:	
Liaison: Judy Beck	Liaison: Donna Nelson
Liaison: Jim Tenford	
Regina and Area Cluster	Contact: ReginaAreaCluster@gmail.com
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/groups/2205391406391275/
Saskatoon and Area Cluster	Contact: Gary Storey
United Church Rural Ministries Network	Contact: Catherine Christie
United Church Sask Camps Network	Contact: Lindsay Mohn
Western Intercultural Ministries Network	Contact: Mathias Ross and Salesi Takau
Women of the United Church Network	Contact: Dawn Weber
Affirming Process Task Group	
Member: Joy Cowan	Member: Robert (Bob) Hayes
Member: Shelly Manley-Tannis	Member: Allison Sarauer
Member: Yoonjoo Shin	Member: Tony Thompson
Member: Jackie van't Voort	
Rural Pastoral Care Task Group	
Member: Allan Gairns	Member: Frances Kitson
Member: Marilyn Peters	

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

CHINOOK WORSHIP CIRCLE CLUSTER

Our Worship Circle in southwest Saskatchewan serves six pastoral charges on a regular basis. Some request 4 services per month and others, 1 or 2 per month. There are nine of us in the group. We include retired ministry personnel and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and lay worship leaders. Some of us are Sacrament Elders. Sacrament Elders can offer Sacraments and Baptism services in their home churches. All of us lead Sunday worship, some will lead funeral services.

We cover a large area and try to keep each worship leader within an hour drive from home. That is not always possible, we are aware that the round trip often is much longer than the average one-hour service.

We do not offer pastoral care. As more congregations choose not to call paid ministry in favour of only paying for worship services (and travel costs), they might remember that during the years when they were searching, pastoral care was primary concern. Pastoral Care is still important. We are looking for ways to address that issue. Pastoral Charges need to consider what they are letting go of when they choose not to call a minister.

Colleagues in Ministry includes paid ministry personnel within our geographic boundaries, active and retired, as well as Worship Circle LLWLs. They meet monthly via zoom.

Sandra Watson,
Co-ordinator for Chinook Worship Circle

THE REFUGEE ADVISORY GROUP

Imagine being forced to leave your home, your community, your country. The Refugee Network supports Living Skies congregations sponsoring displaced people escaping conflict and poverty around the world as they seek to rebuild their lives in Saskatchewan. We believe that it is our Christian imperative to share ourselves and our resources with refugees, and by doing so we are helping to bring about a more just society and world.

Refugee work is still not back to what it was pre-pandemic but there is movement of both people and policies. After a long time with very little official arrivals in Canada visa offices around the world have been opening and while the wait times are sometimes very long, people have been arriving. Welcoming newcomers has also become easier with the removal of quarantine plans. As for government policies, the BVOR program which assists private sponsors with 6 months of settlement costs is back. Also being instituted is a new process of accountability for sponsoring groups. For this reason, a number of changes has been brought in for United Church sponsors. When calculating the amount of money that needs to be raised, please do not count in kind donations as money. The reason for this is that IRCC may assign a different value to that nice set of china Mrs. McChurch donated, leaving you short of the money you're obligated to raise. Also, while money is given directly to the newcomers while they are here, please keep all receipts of startup expenses in case they are requested later.

If you are looking for average processing times, information can be found here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/check-processing-times.html>

A very important link to have on hand for all refugee questions is Refugee Sponsorship Training Program which has a wealth of information and their 4 part webinar covering all the aspects of sponsorship is indispensable viewing. <https://www.rstp.ca/en/>

We wish to extend our thanks to Judy Beck for her help with our work for the last few years but she will now be stepping down from the committee. Donna Nelson and Jim Tenford are still available to answer your questions and sing the praises of sponsoring refugees.

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

THE REGINA AND AREA CLUSTER

The Regina and Area Cluster was formed at the final meeting of Wascana Presbytery in 2018. Throughout 2019 and into the early months of 2020 the Cluster worked to create conversations about the future of the collective United Church in the City as well build community within congregations both in the urban area, rural area and between the two.

During the pandemic there was some work undertaken like the completion of a Rural Ministries project funded by the EDGE network as well as two pre-recorded shared online services and one cluster wide event at Lumsden Beach Camp.

Despite this, for the most part the pandemic was a slow time for Cluster work beyond maintaining a Facebook Group to share events as well as shared work in supporting the effort at City Council to create a Regina Bylaw to ban conversion "therapies".

In the spring of 2022, the Cluster was invited by the Board of the Regina Native Outreach Ministry and Rev. Deb Anderson-Pratt to celebrate the relationships being built around reconciliation work.

In 2022 leaders within the cluster began to seek to rekindle some of the past work, particularly around the idea of creating a shared vision for United Church Ministry in the City. A planning group made up of clergy as well as Vicki Nelson, GC Stewardship Staff member based in Regina, planned a weekend exploring shared vision through *The Theological Banquet*. <https://leadershiftuccan.org/the-theological-banquet>

With funding support from the Region and remaining Cluster funds, Janet Gear (creator of the TB resource) came in October 2022, and facilitated a Friday evening and Saturday daytime event exploring the 5 lived theologies as a lens through which to view the distinctive gifts of individual congregations, shared values between congregations, and points of connection for shared calling and ministry.

The weekend was attended by 55 people representing all 9 urban congregations in the city plus 2 rural congregations as well.

The weekend culminated with A Place at the Table | Shared Worship in the Style of the Theological Banquet, a collaboratively planned and lead service involving a choir of 50 voices from 6 different congregations, musicians from 3 different churches, a shared sermon with 5 voices, each representing a different lived theology, a shared children's program lead by staff

from 2 different churches and more. The service drew 175 attendees despite it being the morning of the first snow storm of the year!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBjHsb9Uowk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpyj2PkJN1A>

Later in the fall the Cluster created a shared statement of support and affirmation following the troubling public incident of a young queer youth being removed from the volunteer team of their churches Kids Club after they came out.

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/statement-beloved-queer-and-trans-children-of-god-in-regina/>

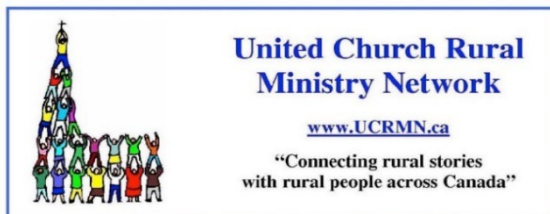
Following from the Theological Banquet Weekend the group began planning *Deep, Bold, and Daring*, an evening exploring the Vision and Call of The United Church of Canada. General Secretary Michael Blair was invited to speak via Zoom about the vision and call in general and then small group conversations were held to discuss how these statements could provide a focus for shared ministry in diverse areas of church life like Refugee Sponsorship, Youth and Children, Houselessness, Spiritual Exploration, Growth and Evangelism, Climate Justice, Reconciliation and Anti-Racism, and Shared Worship. The event was a success drawing 60 people (plus awesome online guests from Humboldt) on an icy and cold January evening.

Deep, Bold, Daring

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVqJZj_19mE

The Cluster is now preparing an event looking at different models of shared ministries which are being used across the country as possible and leading to growth and revitalized ministry that could offer inspiration and possible best practices. This will be held later in 2023.

UNITED CHURCH RURAL MINISTRY NETWORK



The United Church Rural Ministry Network (UCRMN) is a national network, that connects electronically to share stories and news of rural communities across Canada (and around the world), by networking with leaders of rural communities of faith – lay and clergy.

Our ways of connecting with people are monthly e-Newsletters and quarterly Zoom workshops.

The e-Newsletters are always available (<https://ucrmn.ca/>) for sharing worship ideas and hopeful stories from rural congregations (there's a wonderful story of the Star City Community Pantry told by Carole Beal McKenzie in the March 2023 newsletter, and reflections on GC44 from Frances Kitson in October 2022). The e-Newsletters publicize events happening throughout the Church which are of interest to rural folks, advertising from Regions and committees like Affirming Connections, Curiosity Cohort, etc. There is excellent tech advice and challenges from Martin Dawson in PEI and from Peter Chynoweth in Cochrane, AB.

Our Zoom workshops throughout the year 2022 were held on February 24 (Rural Church check-in), April 28 (talking about GS128 and GCE06 – better rural support and DLM, conversation being held at GC44), October 13 (Michele Rowe sharing on Trauma-Informed Ministry, 'Ministry in the Midst') and then January 19, 2023 (Peter Bartlett, an Eastern

Ontario Regional staff shared information on the United Church Strategic Plan, which inspired lots of conversation, both pro and con). These workshops are advertised in the e-Newsletters and registration is done through Eventbrite – they have a \$5 or \$10 cost to assist with our budget.

UCRMN received a one-time start up grant of \$5,000 from United Church Foundation in 2020. UCRMN is a charitable organization that receipts donations from Regional Councils, Congregations or interested people. At UCRMN.ca, there is a link for online donations, or to email an e-Transfer, or how to mail a donation by cheque. As well, UCRMN has been contacting Regional Councils requesting that funding for UCRMN be in their annual budgets, as 70% of United Church congregations across the country are in rural or small towns, therefore a relevant cost to each Regional Council. We want to thank Living Skies Regional Council very much for making a donation of \$500 to UCRMN in 2022. (See also Proposal in docket).

UCRMN has been in discussions with Edge about running rural ministry Conferences in strategic areas across Canada. We are finding that some Regions are hosting their own Rural Ministry Conference, such as “Rural Routes Through the Holy” in the Maritimes Region (information can be found in the UCRMN e-Newsletter: <https://ucrmn.ca/newsletter/>).

UCRMN folks ran the Canadian portion of the International Rural Churches Association (IRCA) 24-hour Global Prayer event that took place March 7 & 8, 2022. Catherine Smith, a UCRMN member from the Atlantic Region, was the host of ‘Canada East’, and Tim Wray, a Lutheran pastor and member of CiRCLe M at the Saskatoon Theological Union, hosted ‘Canada West’. You can check them out on the IRCA website (<https://irca.online/>).

UCRMN members are taking part in the “Rural Townhall” by Edge Network for Ministry Development, to hear peoples’ thoughts about what is going on in rural churches, and how rural ministries can be supported.

UCRMN always is looking for members to serve on the Board, as e-Newsletter Editor, Workshop Coordinator, or on the Finance Committee. Peter Chynoweth of Cochrane, AB, has been our Web Minder since October 2022.

There are many UCRMN members in Living Skies Region. We encourage others to join so that you receive the e-Newsletter automatically. We are eager that United Church Rural Ministry represents lay-led congregations, as well as congregations with Ministry Personnel. You can subscribe on the webpage <https://ucrmn.ca/> .

Respectfully Submitted
Catherine Christie
President, UCRMN (Abbey, SK)

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, educational events and online conversations that focus on intercultural discussions and dialogues. 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 \(united-church.ca\)](https://www.united-church.ca)). An executive composed of representatives 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, 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.

2022-2023 Activities

During the 2022-2023 period the WIMN Executive of 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 session held between April 2022 – March 2023:

June 23, 2022 – Topic: "Residential Schools: Introduction to Trauma Awareness and Strategies to support communities" – This session led by Rev. John Snow, Jr. and Rev. Tony Snow offered an introduction to trauma awareness and how to support communities as they seek to understand, and process news that continues to emerge about unmarked graves being located at sites of former Indian Residential institutions.

November 29, 2022 – Topic: "Jesus and the Marginalized" – This session led by Rev. Dr. Ohwang Kwon, MDiv., PhD., focused discussions on the book *Jesus and the Marginalized: Jesus Christ for Koreans in The United Church of Canada*, co-authored by Rev. Dr. Ohwang Kwon, and Dr. Don Schweitzer, which explores the meaning of Jesus for Koreans in The United Church of Canada, and in the Canadian context.

The Executive continues to engage in discussions at its meetings about 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. The Executive has also engaged in discussions with staff from the National Office about how best to support and invite clergy and lay persons in under-represented groups to step forward as nominees for positions on the many denominational groups seeking these unique voices at the table.

Annual Meeting

WIMN hosted its Annual meeting on November 29, 2022, 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 2022 largely chose to remain involved and to offer their gifts and stewardship for the work of the network for another year.

The Executive for 2022-23 comprises:

Co-Chairs: Kathy Yamashita (Chinook Winds) and Deborah Richards (Pacific Mountain)

Secretary: Rev. Chelsea Masterman (Northern Spirit)

Pacific Mountain: Alwin Maben (past chair)

Chinook Winds: Rev. Dr. Ohwang Kwon

Northern Spirit: vacancy for one more representative

Living Skies: Mathias Ross, Salesi Takau

Prairie to Pine: Damber Khadka, Bill Millar

Staff support: Julie Graham (Living Skies, Prairie to Pine and Northern Spirit Regions), Chris Mah Poy (Pacific Mountain and Chinook Winds Region).

In the past year, Rev. Kurt Katzmar (Northern Spirit) retired from active ministry and we were sorry to see him step down from his role as Co-Chair. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

Our Elder Kay Quon continues to join the Executive for meetings when possible and we enjoy having her join us as she is able.

The Executive meets monthly for about 90 minutes. This provides an opportunity for us to connect about activities in our region, as well as engage in planning discussions. All of our meetings were online this year.

Looking forward

The Executive will continue to build on the discussions on how the Network will engage in supporting and living out the call within our regions to be an Intercultural Church.

Upcoming Events

Our Coffee/Chai time series will continue in 2023 and we are hoping that we might be able to hold an in-person event in fall 2023.

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

Kathy Yamashita and Deborah Richards

Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Executive of the Western Intercultural Ministries Network

THE WOMEN OF THE UNITED CHURCH NETWORK

Executive Meeting at Mount Royal Emmanuel Saskatoon May 1, 2022, Zoom Executive meeting was held November 20, 2022, as well as consulting by telephone and e-mail.

Fall Gathering and Regional Meeting at Watrous, September 24, 2022.

Dawn Weber, Co-Chair and Barbara Byers Bradley represented Saskatchewan United Church of Canada Women at the National UCW Annual Meeting held September 19 to 23, 2022 in Mississauga, Ontario. Our unit was assigned to prepare the Opening Prayer and Worship for September 23, 2022

Mary Mohn, Brenda Getz, Chantal Ntibategera, Dawn Weber, Phyllis Robinson, Norma Hain, and Pat Dyck Bunkosky represented Sask UCCW at the 60th anniversary celebration of UCW from July 11 to 15, 2022 at Membertou Trade and Convention Centre in Sydney, Nova Scotia. A 60th Anniversary Report is below.

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: [<https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/ucw/> 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 2022/2023 was circulated with a deadline date for returns by March 1, 2023. As at March 2023 we estimate there are 275 Saskatchewan UCCW Members.

The Saskatchewan UCW Bursary Fund Committee members are Mary Mohn, Chantal Ntibategera, Allison Irvine, Dawn Weber, and 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.

One bursary was awarded during 2022. The Bursary Fund balance at year end, December 31, 2022, is \$7692.00.

Chantal Ntibategera and Mary Mohn took part in the closing service for the UCW at Calvary United in Prince Albert on June 19, 2022.

Melfort UCW's 60th Anniversary Tea and Fashion Show was held on September 17, 2022. Mary Mohn was the guest speaker and showed slides from the 60th National UCW celebrations at Sydney.

A Regional Fall Gathering of Sask UCCW was held at the Watrous United Church, Watrous, Sask., on September 24, 2022 prior to the Business Meeting. Twenty-three (23) UCW Members Registered. Vicky Finnigan, Chairperson of the Watrous UCW and all Women of the Watrous United Church welcomed those attending.

The tables were nicely set up with white tablecloths and lovely floral centerpieces in bone-china teacups. A buffet of a variety of homemade muffins and fruit followed by a noon delicious lunch were provided and served by the Women of Watrous United Church.

Guest Speaker Marg Janick-Grayston spoke on the theme God Standing With Us and Standing With God in Hope. Love for community, Grace for our neighbour, Hope for tomorrow. Let's get back to that!:

Love for Community, with a poem *In Praise of Crazy, of a Certain Kind* written by Mary Oliver.

Extravagant Love:

Visualization exercise of the senses; *Smells Like, Tastes Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like, Looks Like.* .

Grace for Our Neighbours with a poem by Julia Fehrenbacher:

One area of grace to think about where we might soften and blossom in more.

Hope for Tomorrow with words from Havel 1990, pg181:

One way to actively stand with God in hope.

Keeping Our Balance as we Stand with God in Hope:

One spiritual practice we might engage in.

The meditation included Spiritual Breathing as a Way of Standing with God in Hope.

An Executive Meeting was held by zoom on January 5, 2023 and a Sask United Church of Canada Women Regional Annual General Meeting was held by Zoom on Saturday January 7, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. The following agreed to let their names stand for Election of Executive for the coming year:

Dawn Weber, Saskatoon Co-chair

Diane Thurlow, Meadow Lake Co-chair;

Allison Irvine, Shellbrook 1st Vice Chair

Treasurer: Phyllis Robinson, Saskatoon

Secretary: Barbara Byers Bradley, Saskatoon

The next National UCW Meeting is scheduled to be held September 18 – 22, 2023 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.*

UCW 60th Anniversary Celebration – Continuing in Hope

Some 250 registered at Membertou Trade and Convention Centre in Sydney, Nova Scotia to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of United Church Women on July 11 -15. They travelled from across Canada and Bermuda and ranged in age from 6 months to 96 years. The theme "Continuing in Hope" was evident throughout the event. It was hosted by Maritime United Church Women.

I will try to summarize the week's events:

We began with dinner on Monday evening and received a warm welcome from Ruth Kennedy, chairperson of the 60th Anniversary committee and Nancy Risto, national UCW president. We also heard from Marilyn Bubar and Debbie Hawkins, co-presidents of Maritime (Bermuda, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Gaspé) UCW. Then Chief Terry Paul,

whose current role is Chief and CEO of Membertou greeted us and gave an overview of Membertou and how it has become one of the most progressive Indigenous communities in Canada with an employment rate at 80%. Next, we were entertained by dancers and drummers from the Membertou community with the Elder explaining the meaning of some of the Indigenous dances, music and songs that were performed.

Banners from all regions were carried in and put on display for the entire week. Most evenings ended with vespers and mornings began with music and worship led by Rev. Alice Fnnamore. She wrote the words to our theme song "Into Your Hands" and was one of our enrichment speakers. Our musician/pianist/choir director was Stephanie Cole who is the Director of Music Ministries at Winsloe United Church on Prince Edward Island and holds a Master's Degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy as well as a Bachelor of Music Degree.

During our Tuesday morning worship all 15 Regions were invited to bring sand they had collected and pour it into one common vessel. We were greeted by National UCW President Nancy Risto. Then, Plenary Speaker Sally Armstrong spoke about the plight of women and girls in zones of conflict all over the world. She has covered stories featuring the dangers encountered by women and girls in areas including Bosnia, Somalia, middle East, Rwanda, Congo, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Iraq. She is well known as a human rights activist, journalist and award-winning author. She urged us to continue to speak out, offer financial assistance when possible and address ways of pushing human rights to the forefront, saying: "Evil thrives on apathy!"

Rev. J.D. Kennedy was the enrichment speaker on Tuesday afternoon giving and explaining excerpts from his book "How to C.O.M.F.O.R.T. a Dying Friend". He was also a driver, meeting our plane at 2:30 a.m., videographer and full-time go-fer for the event (maybe because his wife was the chairperson). I've seen worship resources by J.D. Kennedy used in worship services here in Saskatchewan.

Comedian Patrick Ledwell was our Tuesday evening entertainment. He has appeared several times on CBC Radio's "The Debaters" and is the author of "I Am an Islander", his first book which became a Canadian bestseller. I don't know if I have ever heard a better comedian: no swearing, no sexual innuendos and no racist remarks...just everyday good humor that we could all relate to.

Wednesday was tour day. There were choices of three tours: Louisbourg, the Highland Village in Iona, or half way up the Cabot Trail to Cape Smokey. Wednesday evening's entertainment was The Men of the Deeps. Need I say more?

Thursday morning we heard from our two special guests for Women for Change (WFC) from Zambia. Lumba Siyanga was appointed Executive Director of Women for Change in 2015. Shadrack Chembe is the Program, Monitoring and Evaluation manager for Women for Change, who works with rural communities to help women and girls "achieve sustainable development". One of their main focuses is on upholding gender equity and equality and trying to prevent gender-based violence. Girls' education is of primary concern. They explained how Zambia is one nation but is made up of 73 tribes and 287 chiefdoms. 75% of the population lives on an income of less than \$2 a day. Women for Change, Zambia was the five-year 60th Anniversary project for UCWs across Canada and Bermuda. To date \$103, 294 has been raised by UCWs along with over \$5,000 from UCW member Marilyn Rogers who sewed and sold UCW masks and donated all proceeds to Women for Change, Zambia. It costs \$2,789 for one child to have 3 years of middle-school education.

Our Thursday morning enrichment speaker was Rev. Alice Finnermore who spoke on “Self-Care – Hope in Action.” She pointed out that poor self-care leads to isolation and lonesomeness and suggested we should “Start Now”. She also pointed out that helping others is self-care. Meetings can be about helping each other. Alice has a degree in theology and two in psychology and was ordained in The United Church of Canada in 2019 after having a career in psychology private practice for many years.

Rev. Catherine Stuart gave hope for the journey by offering “Spiritual Renewal Through Movement and Song” on Thursday afternoon. She is Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults in all three Atlantic Regions and has been a member of UCW since her internship days. She is a liturgical dancer, Ukelele player, singer and liturgist and likes to bring all of these things into her ministry.

Guest speaker at Thursday night’s banquet was Rev. Michael Blair, General Council Secretary for The United Church of Canada. He thanked UCW for their contributions to the United Church and praised them for the amount they raised for the Women for Change, Zambia as their 60th anniversary project. He suggested that, though we are a very welcoming church, maybe we need to consider welcoming people as they are. Fiddles and Friends provided our entertainment on Thursday night. They were from Cape Breton and are members of the Cape Breton Fiddler’s Association. They shared their musical and singing talents with us and even provided dancing music.

Friday morning worship and communion was led by Rev. Alison Etter. Worship was done in Gaelic and English. She is an ordained minister serving a two-point charge in Glace Bay and recently completed a term as member and interim chair of the Theology Interchurch Interfaith Committee of The United Church of Canada. The communion cups were donated from churches in the Maritimes that amalgamated or closed and were to go home with each participant. The banners were marched out at the close of the service to bagpipe music. Following the noon lunch some left for home and some took advantage of extra time to visit the harbor in downtown Sydney.

There was a gift at every place setting each day – crocheted pot holders hand done by UCW members in the Maritimes, musical egg shakers from Barrie Hill, Rockwood, Ontario, a Bermuda penny with an explanation of why Bermuda pennies have a picture of a hog on them and a beautiful tea cup and saucer donated by various Maritime UCW members. The centre pieces for Thursday’s banquet were fresh flowers in a tea pot. Each centre piece went to whoever had a dot on their cup at that table. All registrants also received a special canvas tote bag with UCW Continuing in Hope Logo and the date 1962 – 2022 on it and including information pamphlets, pens and a book with the week’s agenda and backgrounds about all the guest speakers and entertainers and all other information we might need. Also detailed information and pictures are available on the National UCW website.

Mary Mohn

SYNOPSIS OF THE NATIONAL UCW MEETING 19 – 23 September 2022 Mississauga, Ontario

1. The 5-year special Project for the UCW is The Healing Fund -Aboriginal Ministries Council of the United Church of Canada. Nancy Risto, our national president and Carolle Dallas-Arbuckle, our national treasurer, will meet with Murray Pruden to discuss our request that the monies be used for women and children.

2. Our president-elect is Barbara Davison from Alberta.
3. SUCCW duties for the 2023 national meeting which will be held September 18 to 22 is thanking the guests and writing the thank-you cards.
4. Barb Byers Bradley, our SUCCW secretary, and myself and Carolle from Eastern Ontario, did a skit called "Dumb and Dumber" for Wednesday evening entertainment. After the entertainment, Barb and I did the Vespers. We showed the video "Shin-Chi's Canoe".
5. Thursday brought sad news of the death of a very active UCW lady, Emily Petitpiece who was active in her unit, presbyterial/area, conference/region as well as being a national secretary. She had been at the 60th anniversary.
6. Every Thursday is "Thursday in Black – Towards a world without rape and violence"
7. Stay tuned for news in a project taken on by a couple of NUCC women to see how we can encourage young women to be part of the UCW units in their area.
8. A fabric-art bag has been donated to the NUCCW to be auctioned off. The auction information will be in the "Keeping In Touch" newsletter. Watch for it.
9. We will not know how much money was lost as the final numbers will not be known for a while. There were a number of cancellations due to people having medical procedures scheduled now after COVID-19, cancellation of flights by airlines or became scared to travel because of COVID.
10. No region has stepped up to do the 65th Anniversary. Maritimes just did the 60th; BC did the 55th; Ontario has done several and Quebec and Manitoba have each done one. It is between Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Submitted by
Barb Byers Bradley and Dawn Weber

LIVING SKIES REGIONAL COUNCIL AFFIRMING TASK GROUP

At the 2019 Living Skies Regional Council (LSRC) AGM gathering Proposal No. 08 was presented and passed that the LSRC create a small task group to create a process for the region to begin the Affirming Ministries exploration, create an educational process with respect to becoming an affirming region, and culminating with a vote on our proposed Regional Affirming Statement and on the issue of becoming an Affirming Region.

Our LSRC Affirming Task Group was appointed in 2021. Our Task Group includes Shelly Manley-Tannis, Allison Sarauer, Yoonjoo Shin, Jackie van't Voort, Joy Cowan, Tony Thompson, Bob Hayes (chair) and Julie Graham (staff resource). Joy has stepped down from the group due to other commitments.

As the result of Covid, all our meetings were conducted via Zoom except for January 31 to February 2, 2023 which was an in-person meeting at Queen's House in Saskatoon.

As part of our Educational Process, we conducted information / workshops by Zoom; had mailouts; and posted articles in the LSRC Regional Rambler.

A highlight for our Task Group was our Affirming Vision Statement Video and Survey. The comments, feedback, and suggestions received were appreciated and will assist the Affirming Committee in developing a 2023-2024 Action Work Plan. The Task Group also amended the LSRC Affirming Statement which will be presented at the AGM for Approval. The proposed Regional Affirming Statement is:

LIVING SKIES REGIONAL COUNCIL AFFIRMING STATEMENT

Living Skies Regional Council recognizes the diversity of God's creation and encourages the full participation of all people in our ministries.

The complete spectrum of human diversity includes (but is not limited to) age, gender identity, ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation, abilities, spiritual beliefs, and all definitions of family.

We make a public, intentional, and explicit commitment to sharing our faith, gifts, and resources to live out God's call to love, compassion, and justice.

As an Affirming Ministry, we will support ongoing, engaging, educational processes for Communities of Faith and other ministries to understand what it means to be affirming. We will also offer encouragement and inspiration to existing Affirming Ministries.

We honour those who walked this path before us and celebrate the opportunity to journey further.

It has been an exciting journey and we are looking forward to becoming an Affirming Region at our 2023 LSRC AGM!

Respectfully submitted:
Living Skies Regional Council Affirming Task Group

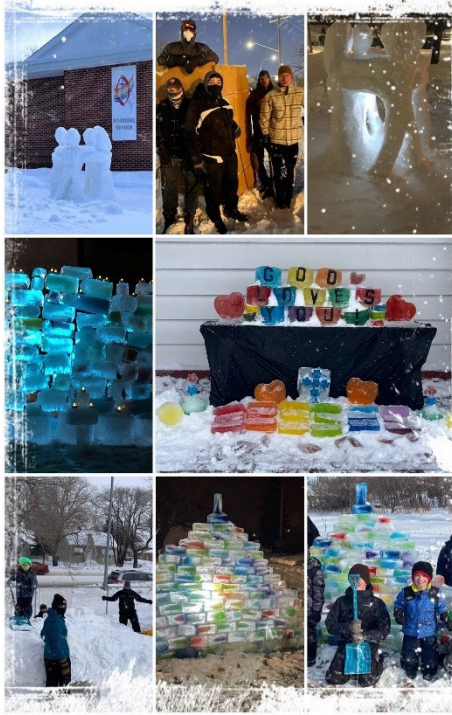
REGIONAL MINISTER: JUSTICE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Communications and Community

Media and statements from the Regional Council

Abuses at Legacy Christian Academy and Redberry Lake Camp: In August 2022, a number of Regional Council members expressed great concern with serious abuse that came to light at two different SK Christian groups, and felt the United Church had the responsibility to address this directly. The result was a [statement](#) and an [open letter](#). The letter in particular led to extensive media coverage, and an expression of thanks from one of survivors of abuse at Legacy Christian Academy.

Continued sale of Crown (treaty) land, January 2023: The Region again called on the provincial government to cease the privatization of Crown / Treaty lands, which sells off lands formerly held in common to private interests, eroding the common good and violating treaty agreements. As of May 2023, other churches are joining in this call alongside the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations and the Treaty Land Sharing Network. [The letter is here.](#)



Community-building: Snow and Ice Art. ([Click here for the web page](#)). In January 2022 we launched a three-Region Love Your Neighbour, intergenerational ice art and snow sculpture initiative. About 25 communities of faith participated and the creativity was impressive! In 2023 we didn't have capacity to run this again, as I was on sabbatical, and even thinking about being creative in the new reality of living permanently with COVID seemed a bit much. However, we will think about this for 2024, because it was a great way to connect congregations with the wider community in a way that involved lots of food colouring and hot chocolate.

Directories: Special thanks to Bev Diebert for assisting Northern Spirit and Prairie to Pine as we worked together on creating / re-creating Regional directories for these two councils. These are vital connecting tools for any Regional Council, and our Living Skies directory continues to be well-used.

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 that also involve prayer and laughter.

Networks and Clusters: The updated 2023 list of LSRC Networks and Cluster is posted 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. We love any opportunity to help you post news and events from your area or Network. I hope to connect more with the Rural Ministries Network, and continue to help staff Western Intercultural Ministries.

Newsletters: [Click here for the newsletter archives](#). The weekly news continues to be a lot of vital weekly work, especially for fearless editor Bev. Bev continues to work with the mountain of content that comes in, maintains the website archive and contact list, and works with new subscribers. In 2022 we made permanent a 2021 experiment that 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 in response to our survey.

Events: We continue to navigate a lot of online events, and at times the flow is hard to manage. In early 2023 I had initial training on and experience with the new national platform, Church X, which may offer us some good options for regionally-based courses in the near future. I have prioritised working with the newsletters team (Bev, Cherry, Kathy and Chloe) 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](#). Your community of

faith and community ministry use of the events calendar is welcome and important, as we try to stay connected.

Website troubleshooting and development are always ongoing. Keeping the site up to date and running well is a priority for Bev, and me, and we hope it remains a useful home base for news, key documents, events, and more at www.livingskiesrc.ca

Over on **Facebook**, our group has reached over 700 members and remains very active. Thank you to all who contribute to this community, especially our admins who keep the group safe from spam and mindful of its commitments to respectful communication.

Justice work

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.

I continue to be in touch with ICM, RAPM, Parkland Restorative Justice, and Micah Mission as I am able. The Region has funded a number of workshops and individual support sessions for fundraising, communications, and governance for community ministries through the Edge Network, open to all community ministries and ecumenical group with which the Region partners. These are temporarily on hold, as the Edge Network goes through extensive restructuring, but we hope to resume some support through Edge's successor, and hope these opportunities have been helpful to our community ministries and partners during a challenging time.

Affirming work and Task Group: It is a privilege to accompany the skilled and diverse membership of this group. Task group members are: Bob Hayes (chair), Shelly Manley-Tannis, Allison Saraure, Yoonjoo Shin, Tony Thompson, and Jackie van't Voort, and a past member is Joy Cowan. [Our Affirming Regional page is here](#). We continue a relationship with the [Korean Rainbow United Network](#), whose videos of songs and reflections uplift us. As you will see in the regional meeting 2023 docket, the task group has prepared a beautiful video introducing the region to the [draft vision statement](#), which is a required part of the Affirming process; this in turn is intended to help the whole Region's membership, including delegates to the regional meeting, prepare for a vote.

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 did 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 again in August 2022, 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. Elders invited us to the July 2022 culture camp, and I was honoured to attend for a day along with Marg Jannick-Grayston, to listen and learn. I continue to struggle with how we free up resources for work that does not fit neatly into structures and funding models. As of May 2023, it

is uncertain where this relationship is going, and over the summer I will work on this.

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 2022 workshop series focused on land acknowledgement best practices for faith and spiritual communities. A summer land-based gathering was hosted on Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, and welcomed over 50 people to the community. May 30 2023 a learning event on the lived impact of 1930s resource legislation will be offered; part of decolonizing is learning to recognize that seemingly old, historic decisions and choices have a major impact on Indigenous communities today.

Anti-racism: I continue to be part of discussion with national staff about coordinating anti-racism networking with Regional Councils, including the possibility of rural-focused training. In June 2022 I 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.

Support and sponsorship for people seeking refuge: As I write this, I received a note from Jim Tenford, our amazing Regional refugee liaison to the national church, reminding me that 100 million people are in this moment away from their homes - likely forever - and desperately seeking safety. Jim continues to work with the Refugee Advocacy Group. In March 2022 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. The three Regional refugee liaisons continue to meet with staff as we can.

Other justice networking:

Throughout the year, opportunities emerge. Some highlights of crucial work Regional Council members support:

Faithful Footprints ecumenical climate action.

Strong and continuing concerns about Sask Income Support changes and clawbacks of assistance for people with disabilities, led by Regina Anti Poverty Ministry;

Guaranteed Livable Income national network.

Advocating for Palestinians who face continuous violence in their own lands, and creating space for church members to learn.

It is a privilege to support the people and communities of the Regional Council in this way.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Graham

jgraham@united-church.ca

YAYAC: YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

It has been an exciting year in the Youth and Young Adult Community (YAYAC) as we began to welcome back some of our previous events and start to experiment with new ones. We were thrilled to be able to host:

- Spring 2022 Retreat in Moose Jaw with a day trip to Lumsden Beach Camp
- Fall 2022 Retreat in Saskatoon
- Confirmation 2023 Retreat in Saskatoon
- Youth at Regional Gathering in Prince Albert (hopefully happening as you read this!)

Each of these events had amazing leaders and resource people and as we start to re build our team it has been a real blessing to work with passionate and caring people.

Summer Camps

One of our long-term goals has been to build stronger connections with our 5 summer camps in Saskatchewan, and to help the camps to connect with each other in order to share ideas and resources. We began the camping season in 2022 by hosting Camp-A-Palooza at Lumsden Beach Camp in June, where staff, board members, and leaders gathered for a day of sharing about everyone's passion for camp. We were then pleased to be able to send our summer students, Erika and Avery Stronski, around to each of the camps to work on some promotional videos and help to build our social media following. Camp-A-Palooza 2023 will be happening again this June and we can't wait to talk about the upcoming season together. After various levels of programming shut down over the pandemic, we are so pleased that all of the camps are up and running again at full capacity for 2023. With changes in the accreditation process, we will be working with the camps in the coming year to meet the new requirements.

Ongoing Projects

We continue to work on our constantly evolving communication strategy as the platforms that our community uses are ever changing. Mostly this means us old people scratching our heads and asking "how does tiktok work?" and muttering to ourselves but we do our best to call in the experts.

We are consulting with the Affirming Committee on a few projects and hope to launch some new resources and projects in the coming year for LGBTQIA++ youth and allies.

Finally, we are connecting with the YAYA staff and ministries across the United Church to share resources, ideas and programs. There are many exciting opportunities coming up for youth from Living Skies to participate in!

Thank you

Thanks this year to everyone who participated in or volunteered to lead/chaperone/resource our events, and to Josie Williamson (YAYAC Animator), Rod Leuty (Camp Liaison) and Avery and Erika Stronski (Summer Students) for their work this year.

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Lindsay Mohn

ARCHIVES

The past year of archival work has seen noticeable progress on several fronts, as well as new challenges.

Record transfers in 2022 and early 2023 added up to approximately 5.3 linear metres (if lined up end-to-end). Among these were records from 11 Saskatchewan churches, including congregations at Balcarres, Clavet, Gravelbourg, Saskatoon: St. Thomas-Wesley, Shellbrook, and Swift Current.

After arriving at the region archives office, volumes, files, and items that met the necessary criteria were re-housed into acid-free folders and protective archival boxes, then moved into archival storage, at the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (PAS). Though time and

resources limited capacity, processing was completed for approximately 10 linear metres of records, mostly paper documents and around 160 photos.

As of March 2023, our processed collections at PAS include:

- approximately 272 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 while housed at PAS, and for responding to questions about their content. Reference activities in 2022 included replying to approximately 150 requests for information, mostly relating to baptisms, marriages, burials, and memberships, as well as properties and other historical topics. Most requests were received and handled via e-mail.

Collections listings continue to be important, as they enable researchers to find records they may need, or at least narrow down their interests. Descriptions for over 160 of our collections can be viewed online (at <https://memorysask.ca/united-church-of-canada-saskatchewan-conference-archives>).

For the archives program, 2023 begins a new transition period. The arrangement that allowed the Regional Council to store its archival collections with PAS since the 1980s will be coming to an end in 2025, so the collections will have to be relocated. This will bring some new and different challenges but, looking back at the evolution of this archives program since 1925, an ongoing theme seems to be adaptability in the face of change. The creative solutions that come out of challenging circumstances often pave the way for much needed growth and development.

In the meantime, anyone seeking information from our archival collections, or hoping to transfer records can still visit our regional archives webpage (<https://livingskiesrc.ca/resources/archives/>) to find guides, forms, and other tools, as well as up-to-date contact information.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped preserve historical records and contributed to ongoing archival efforts. It has been a privilege working with you all.

Respectfully submitted,
Madeleine McLuhan-Myers

**COMMUNITY OF FAITH STEWARDSHIP SUPPORT STAFF
FOR LIVING SKIES REGION
VICKI NELSON**



This QR code will take you to a digital filing cabinet of [stewardship resources](#)



I am delighted once again to bring news from the stewardship support team, Mission & Service, and the United Church Foundation to the good people of Living Skies.

Over the past year I have had the honour of meeting with many of you, whether as participants in a *Called to be the Church: The Journey* program, through a phone conversation or webinar. 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 I would love to connect in 2023 and beyond is through the learning programs, *Called to be the Church: The Journey*. We currently have 4 course offerings that provide training and support for different parts of the stewardship journey. Whether you want to learn some stewardship-first principles, get resources to run a congregational Giving Program, or are hoping to set up a Legacy Giving Program in your community of faith, we have training options for you!! One participant provided this program feedback, *"I appreciate the leadership, the enthusiasm, the knowledge and the support of the leaders of this course. It was a lot of information, and was presented in a way that was not overwhelming. The recommendations are practical and doable."* You can 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 2022 saw \$24.5 million raised, including Mission & Service givings totalling \$21.1 million, bequests and other planned gifts totaling \$1.8 million, and over \$1.5 million for the people of Ukraine.

Locally, Mission & Service funds supported a number of amazing ministries in Living Skies. Anti-poverty work happening with the Anti-Poverty Ministry and River Bend Inner City Ministry, restorative justice with Micah Mission and Parkland, and the North and South Hospital Chaplaincies are some of the transformative programs supported with your Mission & Service donations. Thank you!

Setting giving goals and sharing inspiring stories about Mission & Service are effective ways to hold up and celebrate this amazing work, and to encourage deeper generosity in your community of faith. New Stories of our Mission are [posted monthly](#). 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 conversations about stewardship, gratitude, generosity and Mission & Service into your community of faith, consider signing up for the monthly newsletter [God's Mission, Our Gifts](#).

Finally, I want to draw your attention to the important work being done by the United Church

Foundation. In 2022 the Foundation established [four priority areas](#): Anti-Racism, Reconciliation with Indigenous People, Climate Justice, and Communities of Faith. If your community faith has program ideas or is engaged in work that falls into one of these areas, there may be grants available. Additionally, the United Church Foundation is there to help you invest in the ministries you care about.

Thank you, Living Skies Region friends. I am so grateful for your spirit, creativity, generosity, and thoughtfulness. I look forward to learning together in 2023.

In gratitude,

Vicki Nelson, Community of Faith Stewardship Support Staff for Living Skies Region

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