

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



January 24, 2024 – News

*The **Regional Rambler** is our primary resource for sharing information across the Regional Council. To be added to the receiving list, please email Bev Diebert at bdiebert@united-church.ca.*

**Church office workers, please feel free to use these announcements
in your church bulletins or newsletters.**

In this **NEWS** edition of the Rambler, new and time-sensitive items are listed near the top of each section. Items included for the first time will have **NEW:** beside the title of the event. **Dates** are highlighted in green for easy identification.

1. Living Skies Regional Council News

NEW: Pastoral Relations Ponderings - [Pastoral Relations Pondering Vol 49](#). Update from the Pastoral Relations desk.

NEW: Jordan Cantwell, our new Growth Animator has a letter of explanation and invitation. [Click here to see the full letter](#).

NEW: Celebrating two new Affirming ministries! Westminster UC, Humboldt, and Mayfair UC, Saskatoon Congratulations and gratitude to two Living Skies communities of faith who have recently voted in favour of [becoming Affirming ministries](#) who publicly, intentionally, and explicitly embrace Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities and people. [Westminster United Church in Humboldt](#), and [Mayfair United Church in Saskatoon](#), thank you for your years of careful discernment, conversation, worship, and learning, and for this commitment to living out the good news that God's love embraces all. May your journey continue in new ways. We look forward to hearing more about your planned public Affirming celebrations.

NEW: Updates on Remit voting: set a date; accessing your M&S or Community of Faith ID; invitation to a learning circle Two letters were sent recently to all pastoral charges in the Regional Council: [Click here for the letter from General Secretary Rev Michael Blair](#), and [click here for the letter from your Regional Council leadership](#). Both have important reminders and resources on the Remit on creating an autonomous Indigenous organization within the United Church. You are urged to set a date for a vote if you have not done so already. Do not hesitate to call the Regional office with any questions, so that we can put you in touch with resource people. Beginning in late January, the Regional Council will be calling pastoral charges who have not voted.

In order to vote, you will need your Mission and Service number or Community of Faith ID.

Your Mission and Service number can be found in your ChurchHub account or in your PAR info, if you use PAR. When you sign into your ChurchHub.ca, your Community of Faith ID number should be in the upper right-hand corner of your screen. If either of these aren't set up for you or just don't work, don't hesitate to call the office and we'll help.

Invitation: Remit learning circle 2, Tuesday January 30, 7:30 PM Central, 6:30PM Mountain.

Open learning conversation with elder Gloria Cook, member of the National Indigenous Council; Rev Murray Pruden, Executive Minister, Indigenous Ministries and Justice; Rev Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister. [Please click here to register.](#)

NEW: The most wonderful time of the year

It's annual meeting/ annual report season. Hooray! A time to celebrate and give thanks for all the ministry that happened in your community of faith in 2023 and imagine what is possible for 2024. Here are the [Best Practices for annual report writing](#) from the Committee on Community of Faith Support. When it is written, please send a copy to Tracy Murton at tmurton@united-church.ca. Let's see if this year can be the one where we have 100% of the reports to read!

NEW: Annual Declaration – Early Bird Draw

You've made it through another intense Advent and Christmas season! We know, and appreciate, how much you have put into your ministry as you enter this season of Epiphany. Of course, there are always more tasks and ministry waiting for you in 2024. The **Annual Declaration** process is one of those important (and simple) tasks to add to you list.

Follow the link below to ChurchHub and complete your **Annual Declaration** by **February 16th** and your name will be entered into an **Early Bird Draw** for a chance to win a \$50 Gift Card, of your choice. <https://churchhub.ca/> **Need help accessing ChurchHub?** Please contact ministry@united-church.ca. Questions about the Annual Declaration process can be answered by your Vocational Minister or feel free to send an email to LGiffin@united-church.ca.

NEW: An opportunity – maybe for you?

Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Council's Candidacy Board provides an essential role in assisting people to discern their call into ministry. The Prairie Candidacy Board is currently **seeking two lay members and a diaconal minister**. We currently meet on the **3rd Thursday of March, May, September, November at 1pm** (SK time) and **in person in January**.

This could change depending on the availability of the committee members. If you are interested but have questions, please contact Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse by emailing lfouhse@united-church.ca or phone 1-800-268-3781, ext. 2005. If you know of someone who may be a good fit, please tap them on the shoulder and give them Laura's contact information.

Deadline for applications is February 26. To apply for these vacancies click [express interest or nominate someone](#).

St. Thomas More De Margerie Ecumenical Lectures – tonight - January 24 and 25, 2024

This year, the theme is "Grassroots Ecumenism", presented by the Rev. Dr. Karen Petersen Finch. For more information, head over here: <https://stmcollege.ca/events/2024/01/annual-de-margerie-ecumenical-lecture.php>.

Centre for Christian Studies invites you to CCS Friday - "Artificial Intelligence in Pastoral Care:

Who cares?" on January 26, at 12:00 CT on Zoom Join David Lappano (former CCS program educator) as he shares and engages us in exploring research he has been doing for his MDiv studies in the UK. Please [register](#) to receive a link. Everyone welcome.

To All Women of the United Church in Saskatchewan

We are changing the AGM meeting from 3 p.m. on Saturday, 27th January, 2024 to **7 p.m., Friday, 26th January, 2024**. Please register with Barb Bradley at greenview@sasktel.net or (306) 370-0136. We are looking to fill the position of secretary.

Grasped by the Holy: *God's Call can be unrelenting! How do we listen to the Spirit?*

St. Andrew's College, in partnership with Living Skies Regional Council, invites you to our next **contemplative gathering**, to be held with the Saskatoon Theological Union Chapel community on **Tuesday January 30, at 11:40am Sask time**. Come spend 45 minutes or so in quiet contemplation, centered on the ancient practice of *lectio divina*. Join us via zoom, and be welcome!

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/5845127421> If you would like, you can also pre-register here: [Contemplative Gathering: Tues, Jan 30, 11:40am \(jotform.com\)](https://www.jotform.com/Contemplative-Gathering-Tues-Jan-30-11-40am)

Ministry Personnel Gatherings

Facilitated gatherings for all ministry personnel (active or retired) continue every **Tuesday at 1pm** on Zoom. Please check the website calendar for [connection information](#) to join colleagues.

Prep for Affirming PIE Day (Thursday March 14).

The Affirming movements in our three Regional Councils will host an open house online to talk about our local plans for celebrating Affirming PIE Day: Public, Intentional, and Explicit support for 2SLGBTQIA+ people and allies. It's also a great excuse to share in whatever desserts are a sign of celebration in your culture and area. More information to come but for now: *Prairie to Pine's* Equity and Diversity committee will host a conversation on **Wednesday January 31 at 7:00PM CST**.

2. Wider Church Information:**NEW: Stewardship conversation and training opportunities, multiple dates, January through May**

When you are ready to make good stewardship a core part of your community of faith, these courses are here to help. Each course has a specific focus enabling you to set goals, create a plan, and be successful, and includes both learning and practical elements. [Access all the options, details, and dates here](#). Questions? Vicki Nelson, vnelson@united-church.ca.

NEW: United Church letter to the Prime Minister: support for International Court of Justice genocide case

The national church has released a letter calling on Canada to support South Africa's application to the International Court of Justice regarding Israel's breach of its obligations under the 1948 Genocide Convention. It also calls for a halt to Canadian arms sales to Israel. [Please click here to read the letter.](#)

NEW: Survey: Mental health and illness in Canadian congregations

Do you attend or lead a Christian church in Canada? If so, on behalf of a national partnership between the Flourishing Congregations Institute and Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, you are invited to participate in a ten-to-fifteen minute online survey. This survey will explore the experiences of Canadian congregants living with mental illness or mental health challenges, attitudes towards and beliefs about mental illness and mental health challenges in Canadian churches, and the congregational supports and resources related to supporting mental health and wellbeing. [Click here for the survey.](#)

NEW: Opportunities to serve the Regional Council and the national church

Both the Regional Council and General Council seek people to serve on a range of committee and task groups. Regional opportunities are being sent out through this newsletter and other channels over the next month. If you know someone who should be considered for one of the national roles, or if you want to lend your own unique talents to the church, let us know. Diversity—in terms of racial and ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, geographical location, vocation or economic status—makes us strong, as the church is committed to proactively address inequities and historic patterns of exclusion. [Click here for a summary of General Council openings.](#)

3. Upcoming Opportunities:

A Wellness Weekend at Shekinah Retreat Centre from **January 27-29, 2024!**

Treat yourself to a winter getaway only 40 minutes from Saskatoon! For more information, visit <https://www.shekinahretreatcentre.org/winter-refresh> or call us at 306-945-4929.

NEW: Beloved Is Where We Begin: An Online Conversation With Author and Artist Jan Richardson

You are warmly invited to join us for an amazing online conversation with author and artist Jan Richardson on **Saturday, February 17th, 2024 from 9:30am - 12:00pm PT**. This event is co-hosted by Oasis United Church and Naramata Centre, and registration is now open! If you register between **now and January 26th**, there is a 20% discount. For more information, please see [the Naramata Centre website](#).

Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre welcomes you! Their ecumenical programming combines in-person and online events using Zoom. Please visit their webpage for a list of all upcoming programs and to register for all programs: <https://www.queenshouse.org/programs/> ***Nourish Your Mind and Nurture Your Spirit at Queen's House!*** For inquiries/additional information contact Sarah Donnelly, Programming Director: 306-242-1916 x226.

If you are considering an event at Queen's House, please connect with Bookings Coordinator, Angela Brockmeyer. Angela can be reached at 306-242-1916 x230; bookings@queenshouse.org.

Please check out our CoF calendar for upcoming local events on the LSRC website.

Watch for other upcoming events to be added. Our [Community of Faith events calendar](#) is open 24/7 for online events! As long as the public is invited, you can post it. From workshops to worship, go for it. [Here's the handy form](#). Be sure to **submit your events**, so folks don't miss events in their own 'backyard'.

4. Reminders:

FAQ on General Council decisions re Designated Lay Ministers

At the October 2023 Annual Meeting of the 44th General Council, General Council offered individual Designated Lay Ministers a pathway to commissioning or ordination. [Click here for additional information](#) and clarification about what this means and how it works.

An Ecumenical Opportunity - World Day of Prayer 2024 (wicc.org)

The theme for 2024 is written by Palestinian Women. The service is offered in two formats: a 55-minute video service or the traditional format of using the paper copy. The WDP service can be any time of the day from March to September. The women who have done these services in their local area are not able to carry on and WDP is looking for new coordinators. We are trying to revive this great ecumenical tradition among churches in Canada. Please contact me for more information. Linda M. Ervin (Diaconal Minister) at fieldrep567@wicc.org or call 250.493.5333.