

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



March 13, 2024 – Events

*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*

In this **EVENTS** edition of the Rambler, events are listed in order of occurrence. **Date/s of the event** are highlighted in green for easy identification. **Registration deadlines** are highlighted in dark orange. Events included for the first time will have **NEW:** beside the title of the event. And, it's hoped the [Into the Future](#) will help facilitate your long-term planning.

Check out the Community of Faith Calendar (on the Living Skies Regional Council website - 3rd option down under News & Events). [Click here to view it](#). Don't miss the many fun and interesting upcoming seasonal events. **Communities of Faith**, be sure to **submit your events** to the calendar (use the form, 4th option down under News & Events), so folks don't miss the festivities.

All the offerings from **United in Learning**, our national online home for courses, training, and conversation, [are listed here in their latest newsletter](#). The United Church's Edge Network also offers online courses related to Change and innovation. [See their courses here](#).

1. This month:

Updated - Sending in your Remit ballot

It is important at this point, that Remit ballots be submitted electronically. We still have about ¼ of our communities of faith that have not voted yet, or whose ballots have not yet reached the General Council Office, including about 10 who indicated they would be voting in January and February. Information to submit your ballot is on the ballot itself, which is [a printable PDF file available at this link](#). Have questions? Contact the office and we will put you in touch with resources and people to talk with. Phone: 306-704-0181. Email: livingskies@united-church.ca

NEW: Childcare at the Regional Meeting Survey

The Regional Gathering Planning Committee is polling potential delegates to see if childcare will be needed. Please email Bev Diebert (bdiebert@united-church.ca) if there is a possibility of you bringing children to the Gathering in **June (13-16, 2024)**. Please include the ages of the children attending. Your responses will help decide if we provide childcare for children under 5; or Children at the Gathering (ages 5/6 to 12).

Give it up for the Earth! 2024 runs from February 14 to March 28. The climate crisis demands action, and [Give it up for the Earth!](#) makes it easy for you to make a difference. This national ecumenical Lenten campaign empowers Canadians to reduce emissions, embrace [eco-spirituality](#), and demand bolder [climate action from the government](#). Visit the campaign website for more information, resources, and to register your community of faith.

Affirming PIE Day is coming up March 14: register your event

Large and small, all services of worship and all events are welcome. There's many being planned across the Regional Council. Please add your sweet event to the national list and put this Region on the map! [Click here for the form](#). Thank you for your ministry of love and inclusion. And see the rest of the website for resource galore, including new liturgies that can be used year-round. [Click here to read a PIE Day statement from the General Council](#) in support of your faith, welcome, and work.

Equipping the Saints

Thanks to the leadership of our chaplains Lorna King and Emily Carr, Living Skies Regional Council has created a supportive group of lay folks engaged in pastoral visiting on behalf of their congregation. If you would like to join this group of saints, our next gathering will be on **March 14 (tomorrow), 1:00-2:30pm** on Zoom. Rev. Brian Walton will engage in conversation with us on "What is Pastoral Care?". Please contact Bev Diebert at bdiebert@united-church.ca to register. There is no requirement that you have participated in any of the previous gatherings.

March CCS Friday – An Ecology of Faith Formation – Friday, March 15 (noon CT, 11am MT)

Join the Centre for Christian Studies for an online conversation about the eco-system of faith formation in congregations. Our special guest will be UCC Growth Animator Greg Smith-Young. Within creation, ecosystems form as different and diverse creatures (living and non-living) interact together. Each part plays a vital role in making the whole. Ecosystems are about interdependence and integration. What can happen when we bring an "ecosystem" way of thinking into the faith formation work of congregations? Join us as we imagine the possibilities. Greg Smith-Young (he/him) serves alongside existing and newly-forming communities of faith in southwest Ontario, helping them to share in what Jesus is already doing in their places: inviting, welcoming, engaging, forming disciples, and sending to share in God's Presence. [Register HERE](#). CCS Fridays **are free** online conversations to help us all to respond faithfully to emerging issues in local contexts. These workshops are open to anyone who might be interested. Each session will be on a **Friday from 12:00 to 1:00 CT** and in the form of a Zoom workshop. There will be a presentation that will be recorded for future viewing, plus opportunities to engage with the ideas in small groups.

Affirming Celebration for Westminster United Church, Humboldt, 2:00 pm Sunday Mar 17, 2024.

Join us as we celebrate becoming an Affirming Ministry, committed to full inclusion of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and all folks marginalized in society due to ageism, racism, economic status, etc. The worship service is open to everyone! Following the service, refreshments will be served and Live and Silent Auctions of pies will take place. Stay and join the fun! Please send a message of congratulations, and an RSVP for the refreshments, to westminsteruc@sasktel.net.

St. Andrew's College Year of Intention Final Webinar

Building on the momentum of our first three online webinars, the Saskatoon Theological Union continues our Year of Intention in 2024. This involves educating ourselves about sexual orientation and gender identity, and exploring new ways to be in solidarity and celebration with LGBTQIA2S+ communities in the church and beyond.

Our final webinar is scheduled for **Tuesday March 19, from 7:30-9pm (Sask time)**. It will be an online panel discussion featuring parents of transgender and non-binary youth, speaking from faith-based perspectives. The [zoomlink for this webinar is here](#). For more information, please contact shawn.sanfordbeck@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca.

Ministry Personnel Gatherings - Tuesdays at 1pm

Facilitated gatherings for all ministry personnel (active or retired) will continue every on Zoom. Please check the website calendar for [connection information](#).

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/> Upcoming programs include: ***The Shadow and the Mystery of Evil – A Workshop for Spiritual Directors, Clergy, Therapists, and others in the helping professions.*** This is offered in-person and on Zoom on **Thursday, March 21, 7:00 - 9:00pm. MDT and Friday, Mar 22, 10:00am - 4:00pm.** Facilitator will be Donald Bisson, FMS. [More info is here](#).

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.

Invitation: Worldwide Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage, in Lent and beyond, in SK and beyond in SK and beyond; March 23 and 24 in Saskatoon and area In this season of Lent, pilgrims in 125 countries are mapping the 41 km length of the Gaza Strip, by walking in prayerful solidarity with the people of Gaza and calling for a ceasefire. These pilgrimages are not demonstrations; they are times of deep lament, contemplation, and community solidarity with the many, many people and the lands and waters who have been so deeply harmed by the immense violence in Palestine and Israel. They can take place in communities of any size, in any configuration, with any partners. [Please see the global website for principles, resources, and more.](#)

Please consider this for your community, and contact Regional Minister Julie Graham if you'd like the simple planning resource being developed: jgraham@united-church.ca or for an update on the Pilgrimage planned for Saskatoon and area **March 23 and March 24.**

2. Next Month

St. Andrew's College Year of Intention Final Event Our Year of Intention will culminate in a **worship service** of recommitment, celebrating 15+ years of [Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble](#) Affirming Ministry, 4+ years of [ReconcilingWorks](#) Reconciling in Christ, and the ongoing engagement of all three schools toward greater inclusion and transformation. This worship service will take place in person, and online, during the STU chapel service on **Thursday April 4, at 11:40am (Sask time)** ... [the chapel zoomlink is here](#). Following the worship service, there will be a **light lunch** served in the Main Lounge / Great Hall downstairs at the College. All are warmly invited to partake! (**Please RSVP to Shawn by March 21**). For more information, please contact shawn.sanfordbeck@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca

Anti Racism Work and Action conference for those in ministry with children and youth, April 4-6 2024, Vancouver. Held in-person at the Epiphany Chapel on the University of BC Campus. An [amazing line up of speakers](#), worship leaders, and hosts are already preparing to welcome, educate, and inspire *you* in Spring 2024! [Click here for full details](#). If you are considering attending, please let justice minister Julie Graham know: jgraham@united-church.ca

Tending the Light Within - A Zoom-Based Spring Retreat - Monday, April 8, 15, and 22nd, 2024 (1:30-5:00 CST) In this Spring-filled month of April, teeming with both its dull muckiness and flamboyant beauty, we will be gifted with an extra 2 hours, 7 minutes, and 22 seconds of gorgeous life-giving sunlight. In this retreat, as we draw from the work of Brene Brown, we will invite this

splendid light that makes stained-glass windows and the natural world shine with vibrant colors to accompany us as we reflect upon ways to keep: * our inner light sparking like the glistening snow as it melts, * our resiliency glowing during the mucky moments of life, * and our joy radiating like the world coming into blossom. For full details, visit: <https://www.freeflowwellness.ca/retreats>.

Registration deadline March 30.

Introduction to Godly Play – Online via Zoom - April 13 at 9:30am – 4:30pm (Mountain)

The registration link is now open for the next Introduction to Godly Play. Originally developed with children, Godly Play is both spiritual practice and a process applicable to all ages and many settings. **Cost: \$50** Now is [the time to register](#).

Save the Date!

Our next online **Contemplative Gathering** will be held on **Friday April 19, at 10am (Sk time)**. Join us for an hour of contemplation and conversation. As we move through the Great Fifty Days of Easter, we will explore being “**Rooted in Resurrection**”. Please join online here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85211124350?pwd=3orbaz8d8UDOcDVSWAUlK4ALe2aWSW.1>

NEW: Wait- Is This Racist, new online community to explore anti-racist practices!

Beginning **Monday, April 22 at 6:00 PM CDT, 5:00PM CST/ MDT**. Together, we'll be drawing from some of the themes of the book [Wait—Is This Racist? A Guide to Becoming an Anti-Racist Church](#) to explore very practical ways of co-creating anti-racist congregations. This will not be a book study! Reading the book and using the provided assessments will be useful, but it is the shared experiences of learning and implementation that are what will change our communities. As part of the first session, Kerry Connelly, the author, will join us. There will be lots of support along the way. Full description: "[Wait—Is this Racist?](#)" on Church X, the national church's online learning platform.

YAYA Spring Youth Retreat – April 26-28, 2024 at Knox Met United Church in Regina.

Grades 7 – 12 are welcome. **Cost: \$50** (with funding available if needed.) [See here for more info](#).

Updated: An Invitation: Sask UCCW AGM and Gathering: Saturday, April 27, 2024

At **St. David's Trinity United Church** (3318 Merritt Street, Saskatoon). The Saskatchewan United Church Women's Gathering is for all women of The United Church of Canada. Full details, a poster and registration form are all found [in the Living Skies Regional calendar announcement](#).

Cost is \$30 and **Registration Deadline: April 19, 2024**. Please note the requests for “In Memoriam” material, nominations and more.

ATTENTION: Pastoral Charges with Manses

We have been notified by Erik Mathiesen, Chief Financial Officer of The United Church of Canada, about a requirement for all Pastoral Charges with manses to submit a CRA form related to “Underused Housing Tax” by **April 30, 2024**. It is the responsibility of the UC General Council and Regional Councils to **flag the risk related to not complying. There is an apparent duty to file -with a penalty for noncompliance**. For more information about the Underused Housing Tax, please read this [memo](#). The General Council website offers some information [here](#). The Tax was also discussed at the Treasurer's webinar held on **February 28**, including a bit of a "how to" complete the form. To watch the recording, [click here](#). The discussion about the Underused Housing Tax begins at 33:45 minutes. **To keep up-to-date** on the latest news and advice for treasurers, trustees, payroll contacts, and more, join every month. [Register here](#).

3. Into the Future:

Music Matters AGM and conference, May 2-5, 2024, at St. Paul's United Church (Thunder Bay, ON) **or online**. Music Matters and its AGM are open to everyone who is interested in music in The United Church of Canada—music leaders, singers, instrumentalists, lay volunteers, clergy. There are a variety of payment options to suit your needs; the suggested fee is \$200 per person, with a sliding scaling down to \$150, depending on circumstance. Registration to participate online is \$75. [Register](#), and for more information and the schedule, email worship@united-church.ca, or visit [Music United](#).

Hear ye; hear ye. Good News is here!

The Living Skies Regional Council Meeting will be held from **June 13 to 15 (2024) at the Travel Lodge** (Idylwyld Dr. N. and Circle Dr) **in Saskatoon**, with the **Moderator, the Right Rev. Carmen Lansdowne attending** for part of our meeting. The Service of Praise will be at a United Church in Saskatoon on **Sunday, June 16**. This year the **registration fee will remain at \$175.00**.

Advance notice: Rural ministries conference: experience the rural culture of the Alberta Foothills, June 18-21 2024, Cochrane, AB. Hosted by the Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry and by the Rural Church Network of the United States and Canada.

Accommodation, meals, and some programming at Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre. Off-site programs include visits to a farm involved in regenerative agriculture; a site with Immigrant and Indigenous urban gardening; a Stoney Nakoda community in the foothills, with roots in the history of the Indigenous Day of Prayer, and Banff. Total cost for residential conference and all tours will be \$500. Options available for people not staying at Mount St. Francis. Information at www.circle-m.ca and [registration is now open at this link](#).

SAVE THE DATE: UCC Office Admin Conference! October 1-4, 2024

Planning is underway for our next Office Administrator's Conference at Home Inn & Suites in Saskatoon, SK. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to connect, learn and "fill our cup". A registration package will be coming out in early April with more details, along with a letter for support to provide to your M&P Committees.

COSTS: Single accommodation: \$600 / Double accommodation: \$475 / No accommodation: \$300. For more information, contact Chantal Winslow at cwinslow@united-church.ca