

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



March 20, 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 51](#). Updates from the Pastoral Relations desk.

NEW: Jordan Cantwell, our new Growth Animator has an offering about composting and renewal. [Click here to see the full article.](#)

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

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).

NEW: Advance notice: Proposals to Regional Council meeting June 13-15

Proposals to Regional Council or to General Council are the main avenue for asking the church to adopt policy positions or take specific and relevant action. They use a template for consistency and to ensure that all the needed information for representatives and commissioners is included. The Regional Council template will be updated and posted after Easter. Please begin to consider and discuss proposals relevant to the Regional Council, as there will be a deadline for proposals that come to the floor, to allow delegates enough time to read and reflect in advance.

Updated: Invitation: Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage in your community

In this season of Lent, and beyond, pilgrims in 125 countries are mapping the 41 km length of the Gaza Strip, by walking in prayerful solidarity with the people of Gaza, with all hostages and captives, and calling for a durable ceasefire. These pilgrimages are not demonstrations. They are times of deep lament, contemplation, and community solidarity. They can take place in communities of any size, in any configuration, with any partners, well into the spring and summer. Please consider a pilgrimage for your community, and contact Regional Minister Julie Graham at jgraham@united-church.ca if you'd like the simple planning resource being developed. [Please see the global website](#) for principles, resources, and more. A Regional Council [pilgrimage summary is posted here](#).

NEW: Reminder: 2024 Living Skies Regional Meeting, 13-15 June in Saskatoon

The meeting will be held in person with a Zoom option **13-15 June 2024** at the Saskatoon Travelodge Hotel and Conference Centre. We will begin with opening worship and the Affirming Celebration on the Thursday afternoon. Business will be conducted **Friday June 14. Saturday June 15** will be a day of learning, conversation, and small group work with the Moderator, Rt Rev Carmen Lansdowne, **open to all members and friends of the Regional Council**. Please consider coming. **Sunday June 16** our service of praise and celebration of ministries will be held at Knox United Church, Saskatoon.

As always, visitors are most welcome and delegates of the Regional Council are both welcome and expected. Pastoral charge support of delegate expenses is requested, and the Regional Council itself also subsidizes the entire meeting. Please watch for registration, theme information, report deadlines, an invitation to share greetings and photos from your ministry, and much more! [All information will be posted on our Regional Meeting page](#).

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](#).

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.) More information and the registration form are [available here](#).

2. Wider Church Information:**NEW: Earth Week is coming: here are some opportunities**

Together for the Love of Creation Earth Week - [Earth Week – 2024 – For the Love of Creation, April 21-28, 2024](#): events, resources, and more at the link! And: **Climate Motivators Program**. Do you know a young adult who could help the church live into its climate justice commitments? Please tell them about a paid opportunity through the national church's [The GO Project – Engaging faith-based curriculum for children and youth](#). **Deadline April 15, 2024.**

NEW: Advance notice: call for General Council 45 Commissioners

In 2025 we'll celebrate the United Church's 100th birthday, and see a return to an in-person General Council in Calgary. It's going to be a big and busy year. Important preparation for the 45th meeting of the General Council will include the election of General Council Commissioners, who serve a three-year term, attend the in-person meeting, and attend multiple online meetings through those three years as part of the overall governance of our church. Your Regional Nominations Committee will soon launch a process for identifying people who wish to stand for election, which takes place at their Regional Council meeting. For now, [here's the description of a Commissioner's role](#) for your discernment pleasure. Please share it freely.

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](#).

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 on either of these events, please contact shawn.sanfordbeck@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca

3. Upcoming Opportunities:

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'.

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](#).

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.

Summer Camp in Saskatchewan!

Yes, we did just have a wee bit of snow but spring is coming and with it the excitement amongst campers, volunteers, and staff at our amazing UCC Camps!

Lumsden Beach Camp (near Regina Beach): *Registration is **open!***

<https://www.lumsdenbeachcamp.com/>

Camp Shagabec (Cypress Hills): *Registration is **open!*** Applications for Volunteers are open.

<https://shagabec.com/>

Camp Tapawingo (Candle Lake): *Registration is **open!*** Staff applications are still being accepted for head cook and lifeguard/medic. <http://www.camptapawingo.net/>

Stay tuned for updates on **Camp Christopher** (<https://www.campchristopher.ca/>) and **Camp Woodboia** (<https://www.facebook.com/p/Camp-Woodboia-100070296482386/>)

4. Reminders:

Action: Major concerns about Canada's military sales to Israel

United Church people are asked to keep [writing our members of Parliament using this action tool](#) or our own letters, as concern grows that Canada's military exports to Israel may risk complicity in genocide.

In their December 2023 report, "[Fanning the Flames: The grave risk of Canada's arms exports to Israel](#)," Project Ploughshares reveals that Canadian corporations, with permits granted by the Canadian government, regularly export military hardware and components to Israel. (Project Ploughshares is the ecumenical peace research body related to the Canadian Council of Churches, of which The United Church of Canada is a member.) In fact, when adjusted for inflation, Canadian sales in 2023 were almost as high as the peak year, 1987.

Only by ending its military exports to Israel can Canada meet its domestic and international obligations to eliminate violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza, including possible war crimes.