

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



May 1, 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: Registration for the upcoming Regional Council Meeting is now open

The Living Skies Regional Meeting will be held from **June 13 - 15, 2024** at the Saskatoon Travelodge (106 Circle Dr.), with the Service of Praise being held at Knox United Church (838 Spadina Cres. E.) beginning at 10am. The theme of this meeting will be '**Bold, Deep, Daring**', a variation of the United Church's Call and Vision. **Please ensure you have elected a Regional Representative** for your Community of Faith who will be able to attend. Please see [the Accommodations List](#) on the Regional Gathering page for **recommended accommodations** and **blocked room deadlines**. **Billeting will not be available at this meeting**. This year, the registration fee is \$175 for the full in-person meeting and will include meals and break items provided at the meeting. The registration fee for joining on-line is \$50.

To Register:

- Click on the link to open the registration form found on the Regional Gathering/Meeting page (beside the list of Committee members). Please answer all the questions on the form.
- Payment Options: You can pay by mailing a cheque to the Living Skies Regional Council Office (60A Athabasca St. E. Moose Jaw, SK S6H 0L2), by E-transfer by emailing livingskies@united-church.ca (no password) or through PayPal (credit card). If you are paying by cheque, please ignore the final PayPal section. You can also purchase tickets to only attend the **Saturday evening Celebration of Ministry Banquet**.

If your Community of Faith representative can't access the website or encounter problems, please contact **Bev Diebert at the Regional Council Office** (306-704-0181) and she will register for you when you are on the phone.

NEW: Can you help with Children's Programming at the Regional Meeting?

The Regional Council Meeting Planning Committee is working on providing programming for children ages 5 – 12 (kindergarten to grade 6) during the meeting. Please contact Bev Diebert at the Regional Office (bdiebert@united-church.ca or 306-704-0181) if helping with this would interest you.

Updated: Proposals to the Regional Council meeting **Deadline: May 17**

Proposals to the 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 or commissioners is included.

The Regional Council proposals template is now updated and ready for use. Please click here for the [Proposals PDF overview](#) (best for sharing and reviewing) and [click here for the Word version](#) (best for copying and pasting into a new document so you can build your proposal with the correct information and format.) **Deadline: May 17**, to allow delegates enough time to read and reflect in advance.

Completed proposals should be sent to the office, to Bev Diebert: bdiebert@united-church.ca

Please do not hesitate to contact the office with any questions, so that staff can help you find the right person to speak with.

NEW: the Nominations Committee introduces *The Grants Committee*

Your Living Skies Nominations Committee is hard at work trying to fill vacancies on our commissions, committees, task groups and positions, both lay and ministry personnel, to be Commissioners to General Council 45. Over the next few weeks, we will highlight the work of some of Living Skies working groups that have some vacancies. This week, we would like to introduce you to the work of the [The Grants Committee](#):

Are you passionate about supporting creative, new and faith-filled ministry?

Do you value the work of the Church beyond the walls of church buildings?

Do you enjoy analyzing information, prioritizing, discerning, and making decisions?

If so, you could find fulfilment on the Grants Committee. This committee receives and reviews applications for Mission Support grants and regional grants and makes recommendations to the Living Skies Regional Council Executive regarding funding of these applications.

If this doesn't sound like you, [here is the Current Opportunities list](#) with a description of the work for other committees. If something is of interest to you, please fill out the [expression of interest form](#) and someone from the Nominations Committee will be in contact with you.

To see what the Nominations Committee does and who they are, [it's all right here in this new short video](#). Please enjoy, and please share.

NEW: Affirming You Are Loved T shirt and bunnyhug sales for the Region

You might remember the You Are Loved t shirts and bunnyhugs for sale at last year's meeting. Artist Yoonjoo Shin has updated the design a little, and we're again making these available for online purchase, with pick up at the meeting to save on the considerable mailing costs. As of the newsletter deadline, the ordering page hasn't been updated, so please watch Facebook, the website, and next week's newsletter. T shirts are around \$32 and bunnyhugs (aka hoodies) \$56.

Ordering deadline: May 31.

Living Skies Regional Council Affirming celebration **Thursday June 13, 2:00PM**

Having finished the formal requirements of the Affirming process, Living Skies now moves into new commitments to living into being Affirming. **All are welcome** to the Affirming celebration, online via YouTube, and in person, **Thursday June 13 at 2:00PM**, at the Living Skies Regional Council meeting opening worship, **Saskatoon Travelodge**. **Absolutely everyone is welcome!** You do not need to be a meeting delegate to attend, and the space is accessible. Free parking is available. [Please use this link to invite others!](#)

If you would like to send a note of congratulations and support, please email livingskies@united-church.ca, or send a card to 60A Athabasca St. E., Moose Jaw, SK, S6H 0L2 (the card needs to arrive **by June 10, please**).

NEW: Invitation to send photos of your ministry to the Regional meeting!

In keeping with the theme “DEEP | BOLD | DARING” of Living Skies Regional Meeting 2024 being held in Saskatoon, **June 13-16**, we are creating a slideshow to bring greetings from all parts of the Region.

Help us make sure your community of faith, ministry, or partnership with the United Church is represented through some creative photos and short text. **Deadline: June 2.** [Click here for all the details!](#) Thank you to Mark Pitman, member of the planning committee, for wrangling all the photos and helping us greet one another.

Updated - You are invited!!

The Living Skies Nominations Committee invites you to an online party - **Prepping for Pentecost** on **Tuesday, May 14 from 7:00-8:30pm** to learn about volunteer opportunities with the Regional Council and how your gifts, skills and interests might fit. **We hope you will** come and meet some new folks from the comfort of your own home and share why you serve the wider church OR find out how you could contribute to the wider church. We'll have lots of fun and discover how we can find our joy as we support the ministry of the Living Skies Regional Council. *Bring your party hats, snacks and spirit of fun.*

NEW: Climate justice/energy transition opportunity for young adults! May 20 deadline

KAIROS is seeking young adults to participate in its Strengthening Voices for a Just Transition project. This project aims to nurture a cohort of up to 12 changemakers from Edmonton or Saskatoon to help guide us through the next stages of the energy transition and strengthen just transition policies and programs with principles from Indigenous peoples, young people, and those most affected by the climate crisis. [Click here for full information.](#)

Apply here: <https://forms.office.com/r/KsEZpY14CX> **Deadline** to apply has been extended to 11:59 p.m. PDT on **Monday, May 20**. You can also share these posts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#). If you have any questions, please contact Beth Lorimer, Ecological Justice Program Coordinator at blorimer@kairoscanada.org.

NEW: Reflections from a Growth Animator

One of the simplest ways to grow our community of faith is to be genuinely welcoming when new people come to our church. Folks who show up are looking for a community where they can experience belonging. How we welcome them - or fail to - will determine whether they come back again. Although most people describe their community of faith as friendly and welcoming, newcomers often tell a different story. How does someone experience your community of faith when they don't already know people there? [Here is a story](#) from a United Church Growth Animator about a community of faith who offered exceptional welcome to their family. Perhaps there are lessons for all of our communities of faith for how we can strengthen our welcome and grow our church.

Invitation: plan for SK Arbor Week, May 19 - 25

Walter Farquharson, Moderator 1990-92, encourages the people of Living Skies Regional Council to help celebrate Arbor Week in Saskatchewan. [Have a look at his invitation here.](#) The province inaugurated this focus on trees three years ago in response to a request from nature groups, and Walter believes churches have a unique community contribution they can bring. The week runs annually **the last full week in May** (Saturday to Sunday) and celebrates Arbor Day on the Friday of that week. Have a look at his reflection and invitation below. As an additional resource, [this is an editorial Walter wrote for the Yellowhead Flyway Birding Trail Association](#), and you have his permission to use it as you wish. Go forth and hug, plant, or save a tree!

2. Wider Church Information:

NEW: Continued support for Search the Landfill; Red Dress Day

As we enter the hope of spring, the communities, families and loved ones of Rebecca Contois, Morgan Harris, Mercedes Myran, and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe (Buffalo Woman) continue the exhausting work of calling for a search of the landfills near Winnipeg. Jury selection for the trial of the accused murderer has begun, with the trial to begin this summer, and this is a very hard time for the loved ones and communities. [Please click here for some updates and some commitments](#) requested at a recent national learning circle. As we get ready for [May 5, Red Dress Day](#), let's do what we can as church people to end this terrible epidemic of violence. That includes bringing our resources, buildings, and our hearts and spirits to support this struggle.

Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization has passed!

All 16 Regional Councils, the National Indigenous Council, and just over 80% of pastoral charges in The United Church of Canada voted in the recent remit process. Huge thanks to all who participated in learning spaces, especially Indigenous knowledge keepers; to all who were on the phoning teams that helped push us into a large majority voting on the remit; and to all who voted, participated, and learned together. The conversation is not over! More detail on numbers and next steps [is available here](#).

Updated April/ May Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage: in your own community and with national church leaders

Throughout Lent, many communities of faith across Canada, and around the world, with their bodies prayerfully mapped Gaza onto their own communities through the worldwide Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage. This renewed invitation is for everyone! Walk or roll together in your own community, preferably before **May 13**. Pray and act for a ceasefire, and for more than a ceasefire- for a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. KAIROS member church leaders, including Moderator Carmen Lansdowne, will gather in Ottawa on **May 22-23** to bring these calls in person to the Government of Canada and Parliamentarians. They'll urge them to take immediate and sustained steps to advance and promote the calls made in the [Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage](#). **Please see the [United Church site](#) and the [KAIROS site](#) for more details.** If you would like to plan a pilgrimage in your community, please let the Regional Council know so that we can support you. **Here's a [new, introductory little guide for planning your pilgrimage](#), especially in smaller communities.** Email Regional Justice Minister Julie Graham at jgraham@united-church.ca

Reminder: 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.

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'.

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.

NEW: [No Cause for Despair: Finding Holy Joy and Vocation in the Midst of Secularization with Dr. Stefan Paas](#) Tuesday, May 7, 2024: 10 am – 3 pm (ET) Does the deep secularisation of western societies mean that God has disappeared, or is it rather a path through which God leads the people to new discoveries, a new dependence on grace? Join Dr. Stefan Paas, author and expert on church planting and mission, for the day as he explores faithful responses to secularization. Join online and pay what you can (suggested amount \$25)

Summer Camp in Saskatchewan!

Spring is here 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/>

Camp Christopher (<https://www.campchristopher.ca/>): *Registration is open!*

Camp Woodboia (<https://www.facebook.com/p/Camp-Woodboia-100070296482386/>)

4. Reminders:

Pastoral Relations Ponderings - [Pastoral Relations Pondering Vol 52](#). Updates from the Pastoral Relations desk.

Are you missing the Rambler?

The Living Skies Regional Council office has been contacted by several folks to say they aren't receiving the Rambler anymore. We aren't entirely sure why, but we haven't changed anything. If you (or someone in your congregation or you know) isn't getting the Rambler, you / they will have to sign up yourself to get back on the list. Please use the sign-up form - [here is the link](#).