

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



December 11, 2024 – News

"I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today." Genesis 21:26

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 Admins, please feel free to use these announcements in your 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 57](#). Updates from the Pastoral Relations desk.

NEW: Coffee with Jim Simpson and Sarah Charters

You are invited to a short webinar on **Thursday, December 12 at 11AM CST** that will feature Jim, The United Church of Canada Foundation Board Chair, and Sarah, Foundation President, as they reflect on the past year and look ahead to what's in store for the United Church of Canada Foundation in 2025. Here is the registration link: [Click here to Register!](#)

NEW: Advent funding invitation for community ministries

Here in Living Skies, we are blessed to have over a dozen community-based ministries who offer care, creative programs, advocacy, and support to diverse communities across the province. As we prepare to welcome the Christ child, and offer gifts to our loved ones, keep these ministries in your heart and consider supporting them. Learn a little more about the ministry they offer, and [share this invitation to learn and to give](#).

NEW: Praying for Community

As you continue on your Advent journey, hold space for the following communities of faith that will be worshipping together for the last time on Christmas Eve – Knox United Church in North Portal, and Leader United Church. Many the memories of faith-filled gatherings be abundant and joyous.

NEW: Ministry Personnel Gatherings

The regular online gatherings will be suspended until **Tuesday, January 7, 2025**.

2025 Living Skies Prayer Cycle

The 2025 Prayer Cycle, available for use in your bulletins, announcements or during your Prayers of the People, is now posted on the Regional Council website under [Resources> Worship](#). It can be found in the Prayer Cycle box, near the bottom of the page (just click on it and it will open). Also, in that expanding list, is the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle [link](#).

Treasurer reminder:

If there is a called or appointed minister in your community of faith, please ensure that you have made the necessary salary adjustment with ADP to ensure a smooth transition for payroll in January. [Here is the link for the most accurate salary amounts.](#)

NEW: Equipping the Saints

On behalf of our hospital chaplains Emily Carr and Lorna King, you are invited to participate in the next session on **Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 1:00pm**. Visiting people to provide Spiritual Care is a calling! With kindness and skill, Spiritual Care Visitors listen, pray, and maybe even share Communion with people who are in hospital, long-term care, shut-in at home, or in prison. As we pour light, love, and prayer out with other people, it's so important to allow ourselves to regularly be filled with love, light, and relationship. We must consider practices of spiritual nurture for ourselves so that we can give to others from a full cup. In this session we will engage in life-giving, cup-filling practices of awareness, compassion, and relationship building. Leadership will be provided by Rev. Jennifer Holtslander, a hospital chaplain with experience in palliative care, hospice, long-term care, and Spiritual Direction. Contact Bev Diebert at bdiebert@united-church.ca to register. You are not required to have attended previous sessions in order to participate. **All are welcome!**

It's the most wonderful time of the year

Yes, Advent and Christmas are on the horizon but so is the season of annual report writing. The Committee on Community of Faith Support wants to remind you that your annual report needs to include a number of components, listed in this [collection of best practices](#). This is an important way to tell the story of the ministry happening in your community of faith, and reading it is a way for the Regional Council to offer support and accountability. Remember – your financials need to be reviewed externally, and do not include any personal information (phone numbers and emails). We look forward to reading what you all have been up to in 2024!

2. Wider Church Information:**NEW: Mission and Service/ Stewardship News**

For the latest news and resources about Mission and Service / stewardship support, please see Vicki Nelson's [offerings here](#). Don't forget that the **deadline to transfer 2024 M and S giving is January 15, 2025**. If you have questions on how to do that, please contact us at 1-800-465-3771 or at ms@united-church.ca.

NEW: Last call! Funding for your Centennial events- deadline December 15 for this round

Some financial assistance is available from the United Church Foundations Centennial Granting Fund for 100th Anniversary events. Details for those applications are [available at this link](#), with a deadline of **December 15, 2024** (the next deadline for remaining funds is **March 15, 2025**).

NEW: Gifts with Vision: Christmas gifts of hope

Instead of things, offer community support! Gifts with Vision lets you offer much-needed gifts of support to community initiatives at home and around the world. The current catalogue and website will continue until the end of January 2025! That means there's more time to support your favourites, especially for Christmas giving. [For the remainder of 2024 you can see all the gifts on the website here](#). Thank you for supporting our partners through Gifts with Vision. Your kindness transforms lives, creates hope, and builds brighter futures for communities in need.

NEW: Jewish coalition calls on us to support an arms embargo

On **December 3**, the Jews Say No to Genocide coalition took over the entrance to the Confederation Building on Parliament Hill building to demand the Canadian government implement an immediate arms embargo on Israel. [You can see a brief live interview here](#) - this video doesn't include the beautiful singing the group used.

The call from this coalition mirrors what the United Church and our partners are calling for: a total two way military embargo, including a halt to Canada supplying some of the [small and vital components for the F-35 fighter plane](#) that has been used extensively to bomb Gaza. [Click here for an ongoing action from Arms Embargo Now](#), whose official signatories include our church. Please act for the sake of the children who make up half of all the dead and injured in Gaza. Let's end Canadian complicity.

NEW: Upholding Sacred Obligations: Final Report of the Special Interlocutor on Missing Children and Unmarked Burial Sites On **October 29**, Kimberly Murray released her final report as the Special Interlocutor on Missing Children and Unmarked Burials. Her final report is an Indigenous-led framework for reparations and is [available to download](#). You can also watch an overview of the report's findings, and how they relate to the United Church of Canada, in this 40 Days of Anti-Racism presentation on [An Indigenous-Led Framework on Healing and Reparations](#). This session also features a review of the United Church's [Healing Programs](#) and a brief update on the [Bringing the Children Home](#) initiative. **The Regional Council is planning on a March 1 in-person or hybrid event exploring this important report and the responsibilities of our church. More details to come.**

NEW: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources available now

The 2025 theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU), "Do you believe this?" (John 11:26), takes its cue from the dialogue between Jesus and Martha when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany following the death of their brother Lazarus, as narrated by the evangelist John. As 2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, Christians around the world are called to witness together to this faith in the resurrection, which is for us the source of hope and joy, to be shared with all peoples. **The 2025 resources are now available for download at <https://weekofprayer.ca>**

Saskatchewan connection to the Gaza crisis asks for our help

Gaza is far away, and its suffering is incomprehensible, but Saskatchewan people do have connections. One of those is orthopedic surgeon Dr. Deirdre, originally from SK, who is currently serving with a medical aid organization in southern Gaza despite the immense personal risk. She has shared some heart-wrenching accounts about conditions in the hospital since she arrived in Gaza again in mid-October. **Dr. Deirdre has asked us to plead for the world to take note of the slaughter in North Gaza, and the targeting of hospitals, where many of her Palestinians colleagues are labouring in desperate circumstances while Israel withholds aid and deliberately kills health workers.** We can put our faith into action; we can do something. [Please click here to find action suggestions](#), and please share this brief write up and its link within your community of faith.

3. Upcoming Opportunities:

Please check out our CoF calendar on the LSRC website ***for upcoming local events***. Our [Community of Faith events calendar](#) is open 24/7 for online events, so new events can be added at anytime - *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'.

Strengthening Invitation | United in Prayer

Each **Thursday at 11am Central / 10am Mountain** the Growth Department prays for and with communities of faith in our shared ministry of Strengthening Invitation. Join us on Zoom and pray for others. Register to join us [here](#) Send your prayer request to growth@united-church.ca (you can send a request even if you're not attending)

4. Reminders:**Did you know?**

Printable PDFs of the last few months of the *Regional Rambler* issues are posted on the Living Skies Regional Council website. If you can't find the emailed copy in your inbox, you can likely find it on the website under NEWS & EVENTS > REGIONAL NEWS > REGIONAL NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES.

There, you can also find recent E-Shares, Tracy Murton's Pastoral Relations *Ponderings* and newsletters from Jordan Cantwell, Growth Animator for the Prairie Region. Please share this with other folks who might be interested, but aren't yet subscribed.

Clarity on 100th anniversary package sent to communities of faith

In October, many communities of faith or pastoral charges received communication from Brian Arthur Brown, chair of Friends of the United Church Foundation. The Regional Council notes that you are free to accept or ignore the invitation to plan a worship service, and offers some details on worship related to the United Church's 100th anniversary in 2025. [Please click here to read and share the clarification.](#)