

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



November 26, 2025 – 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: Farewell and Best Wishes to Francesca Martina

This summer, we were excited to welcome Francesca Martina to our team as our Finance Admin. In her time with us, Francesca brought energy, dedication, and a keen eye for detail to every task she took on. Her contributions have made a meaningful impact, and we are truly grateful for the professionalism and positivity she brought to the role. While we are sad to see her go, we are also happy to share that Francesca has accepted an exciting new position that will allow her to continue growing in her career. Please join us in congratulating her on this well-deserved opportunity. Francesca will remain with us until the end of the year. We thank her for her hard work and wish her every success in the next chapter of her journey. Thank you, Francesca, you will be missed!

NEW: Temporary Stewardship Support Contact

While Vicki Nelson, Community of Faith Stewardship Support staff for Western Canada, is away on medical leave, **Brenna Baker**, a stewardship colleague, will be available for questions or inquiries. Brenna can be reached at bbaker@united-church.ca.

NEW: A Prairie Christmas Eve for Everyone

The Northern Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincy would like to encourage all communities of faith to gather together this Christmas season. Please find [A Prairie Christmas Eve Service here](#) that can be lay-led, and adapted for your own setting. Many blessings to you all as you share the light of Christ's love with your neighbours this season.

NEW: Pastoral Relations Ponderings - [Pastoral Relations Pondering Vol 65](#). Updates from the Pastoral Relations desk.

NEW: Regional Council meeting notes available

The notes from the Living Skies Regional Council Meeting held on **November 6** [have now been posted](#) on the website. They are on the Regional Gathering/Meeting page near the agenda.

NEW: Equipping the Saints- Advent/Christmas Communion

One of the intentions of lay pastoral visiting is to bring a connection to a community of faith to those who are missing it. Join Emily Carr on **Wednesday, December 10 from 1:00-2:00pm on Zoom** to discuss how to extend the communion table to those who can't make it to church. Bring communion elements so we can have communion together. You are also invited to bring extra juice and bread to be blessed and shared with those you visit, especially if you will not be celebrating communion in your church this season. Contact Bev Diebert at bdiebert@united-church.ca to register.

NEW: Giving Tuesday - Advent funding invitation for community ministries

Besides the national Mission and Service fund, that is always an option, 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 move into Advent and prepare to welcome the Christ child, and as we consider gifts to our loved ones, keep these ministries in your heart and consider supporting them. To see who they are and links to more information, see the [Community Ministry and Chaplaincy](#) page on our Living Skies website.

NEW: Are You Missing Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse's Emails?

I promise, I'm not ghosting you! Every so often I send out an email to all ministry personnel in your region — little check ins, updates, reminders and invitations. I understand there may be some who are not receiving them. If this is you: **(1)** check your junk mail and **(2)** your ChurchHub email address needs to be up-to-date for the magic to work.

If you haven't received a message from me in a while (or ever!), just send me a quick email at lfohse@united-church.ca and I'll make sure you're added. I'd love for you to be included — no one should be left standing outside the metaphorical church gathering space wondering where everyone went!

NEW: The GreenSpirit Chaplaincy is almost a year old!

Is your community of faith interested in hosting a GreenSpirit weekend (or a Sunday) focused on ecological spirituality, creation care & creation prayer, and rural spirituality? Contact Shawn Sanford Beck at greenpriest@hotmail.ca for more details ... bookings for 2026 are happening now! (Rural congregations in the Living Skies Region of The United Church of Canada are prioritized, but ecumenical and urban options are also possible.) For more information on the GreenSpirit Chaplaincy, head over here: <https://linktr.ee/greenpriest> and sign up for GreenSpirit news here: <https://mailchi.mp/b5aa445de64c/greenspirit-chaplaincy>

NEW: Arbor Day - May 29, 2026 / Arbor Week - May 25-31

One of the best ways to celebrate creation is to plant a tree or trees. Last year, several congregations engaged in an Arbor Day / Arbor Week Activity. Some used the service supplied for that date or a day of their choosing. A new service will be available early in 2026 for use in whole or part.

The Yellowhead Nature Society has chosen as its **2026 Arbor Week** theme "Plant a Tree for Peace" and that theme will be used for the worship service that will be available.

Planting trees or shrubs is an activity that can involve big plans or very small activities for individuals and small groups. It is a great opportunity to involve persons of all ages and circumstances. Between now and Arbor Week we'll offer activities to consider. To chat about possibilities, contact Walter Farquharson -306-744-2214 or farq.blueheron@sasktel.net.

NEW: Sabbatical Announcement

Shannon McCarthy is pleased to share she will be taking a sabbatical from **December 1, 2025 to March 2, 2026**. This period of intentional time away will allow her to focus on learning, renewal, and development that will directly support the ongoing work of our Regional Councils and our movement *Toward 2035*.

Purpose and Focus of the Sabbatical: The primary focus of my sabbatical will be on governance strategies that support Regional Council Executives in fully living into the *Toward 2035* initiatives and their mandate as Regional Councils. Much of our current work leans toward maintaining what has been, rather than equipping ourselves to anticipate the future and prepare for the larger challenges facing the Regional Councils and the United Church as a whole. Regional Councils are still discerning their identity and role within the denomination's evolving structure, and I hope this time will help strengthen our collective clarity and confidence.

This sabbatical will include time for reading, reflection, and renewal, allowing me to develop my leadership skills and focus more deeply on strategic thinking. Building on the Change Management course I have already completed, I will work to deepen my understanding of strategic planning so that I can better support the Regional Councils in naming their mission and vision and establishing practical strategies to live them out.

In addition, this time will help me sharpen my supervisory skills so I can better support our staff team with the resources, guidance, and confidence they need to participate in the transformative work ahead as we move toward *Toward 2035*.

Expected Outcomes: By the end of this sabbatical period, my goals are to:

- Develop, with the Regional Council Chairs, a clear plan for how the Executives will function moving forward, including a method for evaluating progress each year.
- Work with the Executives to create strategic plans for all three Regional Councils that are aligned with the GCO Strategic Plan and our Regional Council visions.

I am grateful for the support and understanding of colleagues and our staff team during this period. I look forward to returning with renewed energy, clearer strategies, and strengthened tools to support the important work ahead.

Coverage: The Pastoral Relations Ministers will be acting Executive Minister for their respective Regional Councils while I am away. My Executive Assistant, Chantal Winslow will direct any other enquiry's to where they need to go. Tracy Murton – Living Skies; Judy Hare – Prairie to Pine; Adam Hall – Northern Spirit

Preparing for guests with joyful anticipation this Advent

Advent is fast approaching! As we start to dust off decorations, and plan Christmas activities, it is the perfect time to consider how we can be fostering a culture of invitation in our churches. Just as we wait expectantly for the arrival of two weary travelers to Bethlehem, we can also prepare our own hearts to offer welcome to the stranger.

Click [here](#) for some resources focused on cultivating invitation during the four weeks of Advent.

Posture of a Porter: Mini-Devotional for Advent

Discover what an ancient monastic rule can teach us about welcoming newcomers with this mini devotional, available as a [Word Doc](#) or printable [PDF booklet](#). This packet also comes with an accompanying [art piece](#). Use any and all of this resource in your own spiritual practice, with a group (including leadership teams) or as part of worship (this includes the right to reproduce the artwork with accompanying credit: Aaron Miechkota, 2025).

2. Wider Church Information:

Last opportunity - Engagement on Anti-Racism 2025 – **Tonight - Nov 26, 2025, 6:00 p.m. ET**

Please join us for this last evening! Weekly Wednesday events are opportunities to delve deeply into anti-racism work: **Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time**. To learn more and to register, visit [CHURCHx](https://www.united-church.ca/CHURCHx).

Updated: Short reminders of our history for this Centennial year continue

Here is one of Gayle's very short stories about United Church history. Many thanks to Gayle, who offers us these 100-word history vignettes for use in your own community! **Please remember to credit!** For our *thirtieth-fifth vignette*, she writes:

NEW: In 1926, when Principal Riddell of Wesley College in Winnipeg, (Methodist before union) felt senior students were encouraging "unwholesome conduct" by organizing a dance following their graduation dinner at the Fort Garry Hotel, he called it an "informal event" and dissociated it from the college. By 1931, faculty had agreed to allow one hour of dancing per week. Further west, theological colleges were less lenient. By 1940, neither St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon nor St. Stephen's College in Edmonton allowed school events to include dancing. Late in 1941, the St. Stephen's board decided that allowing dancing "would not be in the best interest of our theological college and might set a precedent that would be difficult for the church through the province to justify, particularly at the present time."

3. Upcoming Opportunities:

Community of Faith Calendar

Please check out our CoF calendar for upcoming local events. Watch for other upcoming events to be added. Our [Community of Faith events calendar](https://www.united-church.ca/CommunityofFaithEventsCalendar) 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'.

Weekly events:

- ***Online Bible study - Wednesdays at 1 pm (SK time)** Contact jcantwell@united-church.ca for more information. Click here to join: <https://bit.ly/41Vh93V> *New participants always welcome!*
- ***Strengthening Invitation** - the Growth Department prays for and with communities of faith each **Thursday at 11a-m Central / 10am Mountain** 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)
- ***Ministry Personnel Gatherings - Tuesdays at 1:00pm on Zoom**. Connection info is in the calendar.

NEW: A Message from Messy Church Canada:

Thank you for all you do in sharing God's love! Advent, Christmas, New Year's, Epiphany – they all come so quickly at this time of year! It can be overwhelming to do all the planning and preparation! The Messy Church Canada Team wants to support you! Let's connect, share ideas, and pray for and with one another on **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**. There are 2 time options for gathering on ZOOM. *You are welcome at one or both!* **1:00 p.m. Central time** (Saskatchewan, Manitoba, NW Ontario, and some of the North) **And an evening session: 7:00 p.m. Central time**. Here's the link for **BOTH sessions**: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/4098204079>. Meetings will be on the **first Wednesday of the month** (the next one is **January 7, 2026 with 2 times** options) We look forward to seeing you! Carol Fletcher, on behalf of the Messy Church Canada team

NEW: Miracles of Advent: Light in a Divided World

On **Thursday, December 4, at 7:00 pm** (Saskatchewan time), bring a candle and join the Canadian Council of Churches on Zoom for *Miracles of Advent: Light in a Divided World*. In 45 minutes, you'll hear three short stories your support makes possible, light a candle of hope with friends across traditions, and learn how you can help form young leaders and strengthen ministries serving neighbours in need. Bring a candle! (Or a phone light, if needed.)

[Register here](#) . We look forward to sharing this holy season with you!

NEW: CCS Friday – Microaggressions

Centre for Christian Studies invites you to join them on **Friday December 12 (noon Central)** for a free hour-long online discussion with Samantha Miller and James Obi from the UCC's Indigenous and Racialized Youth Scholars program about their research. [Register here](#) . They are both doing research into racial microaggressions, in society and in church, and their impact on identity.

CCS Fridays: Online conversations help us 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.

4. Reminders:

Christmas comes early: An Advent Gift for Living Skies Communities of Faith

We never tire of the story. Each Advent, we set out the beloved figures of the creche and are invited again into the mystery of incarnation. In this small group study and worship series, we look more closely at the figures and what they reveal about the human journey of faith, the bigger picture of Love, and the Divine Longing at the heart of Christmas.

Alongside four study sessions, you'll also receive complete Advent worship services—rich with liturgy, Advent candle-lighting, all-ages activities, Scripture, reflections, prayers, and music suggestions. Together, they invite us to approach the creche with fresh wonder, to notice who is present (and who is missing), and to be shaped by Love that is already here and still arriving.

This series is provided by **Prayer Bench** and offered as a gift to leaders and communities of faith through a Regional License **purchased by Living Skies Regional Council**. You can [sign up for this resource here](#).

Preparing a records transfer for the archives?

We're nearly ready for you! Please reach out to the archivists, Erin Acland and Leanne Templeton, to discuss your plans for transferring records. ***All transfers require an appointment!** The best way to reach us is via email at Livingskiesarchives@united-church.ca

It's been a long time waiting for the Living Skies Regional Council Archives to reestablish itself. We have a new home in the basement of Grace-Westminster United Church, Saskatoon, and a Young Canada Works Intern currently on site. While we wait for the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan to fix their elevators and send us Living Skies boxes, we want to connect with community members that have been patiently holding onto records.

- ***Please do not drop off records without an appointment.**
- Contact the archives to receive forms and guides.
- Schedule a transfer date.
- Ask us any questions about your record-keeping system.