

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada

December 10, 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:

From the Regional Council Office:

Today's Rambler will be the **last newsletter of 2025**. The Rambler will resume on **January 7, 2026** with a News version. The **Living Skies Regional Council Office will be closed** from **December 15 to January 2, 2026, inclusive**. If you have an emergency, please contact Tracy Murton at tmurton@united-church.ca or 1-306-988-0672 and leave a message. To learn of other staff's plans, please see their bounce back messages. Also, the **mail forwarding service** through Canada Post will be stop at the end of December. Please make sure the address you have for the regional office is **423 Main St. N., Moose Jaw, SK S6H 0W5** (mail sent to the Athabasca St. E. address won't be forwarded). *Please let everyone in your community of faith know!!*

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 (today) 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. To register, email bdiebert@united-church.ca.

NEW: It's a wrap on Living Skies Confirmation Retreat 2025!

HUGE thanks to our hosts at Biggar United Church and Dale Worrall, to our Regional Council Chairperson Rev. Piotr Strzelecki who slept over, to Josh Bell who shared his extensive wider church experience, and to the intrepid Church Sleepover Queen herself, Meghan Drabble.

Being part of a **region-wide confirmation class** means connecting with other youth in the wider church for the learning modules, and then being confirmed in your own home congregation. Our next confirmation class will be held in **spring of 2027** - please contact Lindsay at livingskiesyaya@united-church.ca for more information if you have youth who may be interested in participating!

NEW: Financial administration update

As announced in November, we bid a fond farewell to Francesca Martina who will complete her time serving as the Financial Administrator on **December 31**. We are grateful for her passion and energy among us and wish her the very best in her new position. Moving forward, the work will be covered in a variety of ways. From **January to March**, we welcome back Heather Dootoff from retirement who will be looking after year-end and the audits. In a permanent part-time position as Financial Administrator starting **January 1**, we welcome Rob Smith from Pinawa, who currently serves as the chair of the Prairie Candidacy Board and has functioned as the treasurer at Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. Stay tuned in January for further details regarding the submission of expenses and ways to contact these two staff members. *Welcome aboard!*

NEW: A word or two of gratitude

On behalf of the *Committee on Community of Faith Support*, a heart-felt thank you to all who participated in our online opportunities for connection last month. While not the same as meeting in person, conversation over Zoom helped to answer questions and build relationships. We know that the triennial Self-Assessment tool contained many questions (75, in fact), and that not all were relevant. Meant to replace pastoral oversight visits, the goal was simply to spark conversation locally, inspire vision, and provide a glimpse into communities of faith large and small, rural and urban. The opening question about where your community of faith has been a beacon of hope, life and love has highlighted many beautiful and inspiring ways people are engaging in the practice of faith around the Regional Council with generosity and integrity. The Committee is busily reading and will respond to questions or requests for assistance as soon as they are able.

NEW: Amnesty International Saskatoon Presents: *The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza*

Thursday December 11, 7 – 8:30 pm at McClure United Church (4025 Taylor St. E. Saskatoon S7H 5N7). Please enter at the east door and we will gather in the church sanctuary. For those unable to attend in person, please register for Zoom session: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85342090137>. We will hear about the situation on the ground in Gaza. **Dr Deirdre Nunan** is an orthopaedic surgeon will speak of the two years she has spent providing trauma medical treatment at Nasser Hospital in Gaza City. **Dr Maurice Labelle** is associate professor of History at the University of Saskatchewan and director of the USask's International Studies program. He will explore the history of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A Question & Answer will follow. Refreshments will be served. Our co-sponsor is the Saskatoon Refugee Coalition.

Basic Income Guaranteed (BIG) in PEI

For those of you who are unfamiliar with BIG, it is an unconditional cash transfer from government to individuals to enable everyone to meet their basic needs, participate in society and live with dignity, regardless of work status. The federal government doesn't want to support the PEI BIG Demonstration Proposal. All PEI political parties have agreed to see this demonstration to the end, despite who is in power, *which is unprecedented!* They need federal money along with the provincial funding (already in place) to make this work.

Here is a link to Coalition Canada (<https://basicincomecoalition.ca/en/>) which has more information and a link to the petition (e-6772). **The petition will close on January 2, 2026.** When you get to the petition, scroll down to the bottom of the page to sign. To learn more about BIG, check out this 3 min video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlwyTtPY0vY>

The Ministry Personnel Gatherings held on **Tuesday afternoons** and the monthly **Prayer Gatherings** usually held the **4th Tuesday** of the month, have been **cancelled** for the rest of **December**. Please join again when they resume on **Tuesday, January 6, 2026**.

Prayer Cycle for 2026

The **2026** 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](#).

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.

This year's Advent Unwrapped resources are now available

Check out this years' Advent Unwrapped resources, including a Longest Night Service, "Making things Right." You can download it (and other Advent materials) from the [Advent Unwrapped page](#) of The United Church of Canada website.

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:

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 *thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth vignette*, she writes:

NEW: Though computers have made it easier, long-distance theological education is not a new phenomenon. In 1911, the extramural program at Edmonton's Presbyterian Robertson College was supervised by minister Arthur Barnard. Since many students worked in isolated areas across the four western provinces and travel was difficult, it opened an opportunity for many to continue their studies with reading assignments and essays. Barnard's wife Florence must have been well educated in theology too as Barnard was blind and she read all the essays to him. After union, he continued to work with St. Stephen's College, teaching church history and homiletics while still heading the extramural program. The college honoured him with an honorary Doctor of Divinity in 1925. He retired in 1937.

NEW: "Here from the Beginning" is an exhibit "celebrating the history of the United Church of Canada through the lens of black people." The planning committee considers it a step in the church's journey to be an intercultural and anti-racist church. Several display panels describe some of the early experiences, both positive and negative, of black people in Canada and in the church. Others focus on individuals, both professionals and laity, who have contributed over the years to the church of today. In August, the display began a year-long cross-country tour. It was expected to be in the four western provinces June-August, 2026.

NEW: Resource Now Available: Moderator's [Christmas Message](#)

If you missed the send out from the GC Communications team, the Moderator's [Christmas Message for 2025 and related instructions are here](#).

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](#) 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'.

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.

NEW: "An Invitation to Pilgrimage through Imagination" A Living Skies Region Contemplative Gathering. St. Andrew's College (in partnership with leaders from the Living Skies Regional Council, Northern Spirit Regional Council, and GreenSpirit Chaplaincy) invites you to our next contemplative gathering, to be held on **Friday, January 9, 2026 at 09:45AM on Zoom**. Come spend 40 minutes or so in quiet contemplation, centered on the ancient practice of lectio divina. [Join us via zoom right here](#). Meeting ID: 890 9407 4776 / Passcode: 453650 ***All are welcome ... and invite a friend!***

NEW: Godly Play Core Training 2026 - Get ready to enter the stories of our faith

Via Zoom (**9:00 am to 12:30 pm PT**) **January 10 & 24, February 7, 21 & 28, March 14, 2026.**

Through an action/reflection model of learning you will learn more about creating sacred space, building and working in community, nurturing spiritual development, using silence, story and play to make meaning. All learning takes place in a prayerful and playful atmosphere with creative and experienced Godly Play trainers. **Cost:** \$350 CDN to register for all sessions. **Space is limited to 12 people.** [See here for more information or to register](#).

Spiritual Practice learning circle [January 13 to February 19 \(Tues and Thurs](#), online.)

A six-week online course from the Centre for Christian Studies for anyone who wants to explore spiritual practice in the Christian tradition and nurture the spirituality of their congregation. For more information, visit <https://ccsonline.ca/program/courses-and-circles/sc05-spiritual-practice/>

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026 - Free resources available now

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling" (Eph 4: 4) Download the entire kit, including the International theme materials, and special resources developed for Canada [found here](#). The WPCU is traditionally observed from **January 18 to 25**. [Weekofprayer.ca](#) is a project of the Canadian Council of Churches, the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, and the Centre canadien d'œcuménisme.

NEW: An Invitation to Wonder - *Online Discernment Weekend February 20–22, 2026*

Is something stirring in you? A wondering about ministry — what it is, how it looks, and whether it might be calling your name? Join us for *An Invitation to Wonder*, a gentle online retreat for people exploring a call to ministry in The United Church of Canada.

While our original hope was to gather in person, we will now be offering this retreat online via Zoom, allowing participation from near and far. Instead of full days on screen, the weekend will unfold in intentional blocks of time, with room for group exploration and personal discernment woven throughout. *This is not a commitment. This is not a decision-point.* This is simply space to listen - to your heart, your questions, and the Spirit moving within you.

[Click here to register](#). **Deadline for registration** is **Saturday, January 31**.

All are welcome — youth, young adults, mid-lifers, elders, lifelong United Church folks, newcomers, seekers, and those simply curious. If something is nudging in you... come and wonder with us.

4. Reminders:

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.

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

Reminder: Treasurers

Treasurers and Liaisons with ADP payroll service are reminded to complete the data required for **2026 salary changes**. The 2026 Minimum Salary Schedule is available online through: [Minimum Salaries for Ministry Personnel \(2026\)](#). This includes the **pulpit supply rate** for visiting ministers.

The increases to the salaries of ministry personnel **are not automatically made by ADP**. General Council Office staff do not update ADP with minimum salary data. Your pastoral charge ADP administrator must update the minister's salary in TeamPay or inform ADP of the new salary amount for the pay period beginning **January 1**.

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
to all in Living Skies Regional Council*