

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



February 18, 2026 – 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 67](#). Updates from the Pastoral Relations desk.

Reminder: Ministry Personnel Prayer Gathering – a time to connect

All ministry personnel – active, retired, honorary associates, and candidates in appointment, are warmly invite to a once a month, one hour online gathering on the **4th Tuesday of each month (February 24)**. For details of what to bring and link information, [please see the calendar announcement](#). This is a simple space to pause, breathe, and remember we are not alone in ministry. Come for prayer, community and the gift of communion shared across our regions.

NEW: Temporary Stewardship Support

The Growth Department is pleased to announce that **The Rev. Sarah Giles** has been hired as Interim Community of Faith Stewardship Coordinator serving the Prairie and Mountain Regions, covering the role until **December 31, 2026**. Sarah can be reached at sgiles@united-church.ca or by calling 306-743-2944. She writes – Sharing is caring, and giving is great! Grow your discipleship, start now, don't wait! Check out Sarah's [newsy \(but short\) Stewardship poster](#) for more info!

Faithful Footprints Grants re-open

[Faithful Footprints grants for energy efficiency and reduced fossil fuel use](#) are being re-opened after the long pause. All submissions to be considered for this year need to be in by **April 30th**.

Are you talking about it in your Community of Faith???

We need your help in planning the "in-person" Living Skies Regional Council Meeting for **May 27-30, 2027**. Would you consider placing this item on your Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda. The Agenda item would be whether your community of faith would be open to hosting this event in your community either on your own or with the help of a neighbouring community of faith. All that is needed is a preliminary interest. Final decision would be made later, after consultation with the Living Skies Regional Council Meeting Planning Committee. Contact is Miles Russell at russella@sasktel.net or 306-547-8517. Thanks for your consideration of this important event.

NEW: LIVING SKIES YOUTH RETREAT:

Save the date for **April 24-26** in Prince Albert! Registration will open soon. Grades 7-12.

Reminder: 2026 Annual Declaration

All ministry personnel (active, voluntary associates, and retired), including candidates, are required to complete the annual declaration before **April 30** to remain in compliance with United Church standards for ministry personnel and to maintain eligibility for calls, appointments, and licenses for sacraments and marriages. Access the declaration by logging on to ChurchHub: <https://churchhub.ca/>. Once logged on, you will need to: **1)** Declare whether you have had any criminal charges in the past year; **2)** Attest that you have reviewed the *Creating Safe and Respectful Environments Policy and Procedures*; **3)** Attest that you have reviewed the *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel*. Follow [this link](#) for a guide to assist you in this task or contact Laura Fohse, Vocational Minister, for assistance.

Information regarding Bill C-9

Some communities of faith have been contacted by local MPs regarding Bill C-9. The recommendation from the General Council Office follows:

Our first and overall concern about Bill C-9, known as the Combatting Hate Act, is about its impact on the right to protest. To this end, in late 2025, The United Church of Canada joined a coalition of organizations to amplify the concerns of racialized folks, 2S and LGBTQIA+ communities, and civil liberties organizations, among others. Those concerns remain and are [outlined here](#).

It is clear some Members of Parliament are actively using the removal of the religious text defence to hate crimes charges as a fear-mongering tactic amongst churches, promoting the idea that people may be prosecuted for simply reading scripture. This is false; it misrepresents and grossly exaggerates what the law would do if it were passed.

The United Church of Canada has concerns with Bill C-9's impact on the right to protest, first and foremost. People who are already targeted by hate campaigns, or policed heavily, will feel more vulnerable because of Bill C-9. The debate about religious text not only draws attention away from this larger issue, but also is misinformation or a misinterpretation broadcast by some MPs. The Criminal Code says that **willfully promoting hatred against any identifiable group** is an offence. In Canadian law, for activities to be considered "willful promotion of hatred," it would require much more than simply reading a religious text.

We remain committed to standing against hate speech and acts of hatred.

Stats are interesting and fun!

It's time for the Community of Faith statistic forms to be filled out. These forms can be found on your ChurchHub account. This is the information that informs the annual assessment for your community of faith, and is also an opportunity to be attentive to the trends happening locally. [The instruction booklet is at this link](#). Contact statistics@united-church.ca for further assistance. Stat forms are due **March 2, 2026**.

2. Wider Church Information:**It's back to winter outside, but it sure is nice to be thinking about SUMMER CAMP!**

Watch the dates carefully for the various applications and registrations!

Camp Tapawingo:

Camper Registration - **open with early bird pricing**

Staff Application - **Open!**

Volunteer Application - **Open!**

Camp Shagabec:

Camper Registration - **Friday March 13**

Staff Application - **Open due March 27**

Volunteer Application - **Open!**

Lumsden Beach Camp:Camper Registration: **Open!**Staff and LIT Application - **Watch for postings and dates.**Volunteer Application - **Open!****Camp Woodboia:****Watch for info and dates!****NEW: Upcoming workshops with Credence & Co.**

Credence and Conrad Grebel's Conflict Management Certificate Program launched a new congregational webinar series. The first webinar focused on discernment and decision-making. Click [here](#) for additional webinars coming up in **February and March.**

NEW: Toward 2035 Strategy Resources Now Available

[Toward 2035 \(T2035\)](#) is a hopeful, church-wide strategy designed to guide us toward a future that is resilient, inspired, and diverse. This strategy is grounded in the truth of our emerging reality and compelled by our continued call to discipleship. To include people in the pews in this vital conversation, a [new resource page](#) has been developed. Please use these resources in your communities and share them widely.

NEW: Opportunities to serve the national church

General Council is seeking people to serve on a range of committee and task groups. If you know someone who should be considered, or if you want to lend your own unique talents to the church, let us know. Diversity—in terms of racial and ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, geographical location, vocation or economic status—makes us strong, as the church is committed to proactively address inequities and historic patterns of exclusion. [Click here for a summary of General Council openings.](#)

Short reminders of our history for the Centennial year continue

As we leave the Centennial year, here is another of Gayle's Simonson'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 *forty-ninth sketch*, she writes:

NEW: Prior to union, though women could not be ordained, both Methodists and Presbyterians offered women training as deaconesses. These women then served in a variety of roles with the focus of diaconal ministry being education, service and pastoral care and could include international postings. Early on, because of the high immigration in western Canada, many school homes were established to assist young people. These women often functioned as ordained ministers but could not perform baptisms or marriages. Until 1960, they had to quit if they married. Today both men and women train in diaconal ministry and that training is centred at the Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg.

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 near to them.

NEW: CCS Friday: (Centre for Christian Studies)

Join us **Friday, February 27, 1:00pm**, for an online conversation with Paul Douglas Walfall, organizer of the "Here From the Beginning" exhibit highlighting the contribution of Black people to the history of the United Church. [Register for a zoom link here](#)

NEW: Buds and Shoots: Groaning towards New Creation

A Contemplative Gathering on **March 20, 2026, 10 to 11 AM** (Sask time)

[Please join using this link.](#) An Offering of the Oliver & Gruchy Learning Centre (of St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon) in Collaboration with GreenSpirit Chaplaincy, and the Living Skies, Prairie to Pine, and Northern Spirit Regions of the United Church of Canada.

The Great Exhale: A Gentle Pause for Faithful Souls - A retreat for clergy

All active ministry personnel (currently in, or searching for, a call or appointment) from Prairie to Pine, Living Skies, and Northern Spirit Regional Councils are warmly invited to **The Great Exhale**, a retreat for rest, renewal, and connection, held **May 5–6** at **Star of the North Retreat Centre** in St. Albert, Alberta.

Designed with spaciousness in mind, this retreat offers time to rest, reflect, pray, laugh, walk, and simply breathe—alongside worship and shared learning. The retreat will be facilitated by **Rev. Jordan Cantwell**, with gentle sessions focused on listening deeply, reconnecting with God, and renewing imagination for ministry.

Flexible registration options are available to support accessibility. More information can be found on the registration form. **Registration deadline is March 15.** Click [here to register](#)

Contact Laura Fohse, Vocational Minister for more information.

NEW: Shared Way, Shared Witness: A Gathering on Ministry for a Collaborative Church in

Montreal, **May 19–22, 2026.** This three day gathering for lay and ordained leaders in the Anglican and United Churches of Canada focuses on developing the skills, relationships, and theological imagination needed for collaborative ministry in a rapidly changing church. Together, we will explore two central questions: What is the church for, now? and What ministry do we need to sustain a vital Christian presence in communities across Canada? Through keynote presentations, workshops, and structured conversations, participants will engage emerging models of church and ministry that move beyond the colonial, Christendom patterns we have inherited.

More information is available at www.sharedway.ca. **Early registration deadline: March 20.**

NEW: Learning on Purpose:

The Centre for Christian Studies' transformative two-week leadership development course is coming to the Five Oaks Retreat Centre in Paris, ON, **June 15-26, 2026.** Whether you are discerning a call to ministry, starting a program of diaconal formation, building your skills for lay leadership, connecting your community engagement and your faith, or just trying to figure out what your purpose is, Learning on Purpose is for you. For more information, [visit here](#) .

4. Reminders:**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)