

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



March 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 68](#). Updates from the Pastoral Relations desk.

Last Chance - Equipping the Saints: the pastoral care workshop

Join the Equipping the Saints Gathering on **March 18th from 1:00pm-2:30pm** with special guest, Dave Whalley. Dave will share his experience with Pastoral Care among those Experiencing Mental Health and Addictions and their Families. He serves the people of First United Church in Big River Saskatchewan and has dedicated his life and ministry to walking with those on the healing journey; those in and out of the justice system, those experiencing poverty, and those healing from the trauma of colonization and residential schools. Dave walks the talk. This workshop is open to all members of Living Skies Region, lay and ministry personnel. To register, please email Bev Diebert at bdiebert@united-church.ca.

NEW: Return of staff in Living Skies Regional Council

Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, is back from her sabbatical. Along with taking time for relaxation and reflection, she spent time learning more about governance and leadership.

Chantal Winslow, Assistant to Executive Minister and **Julie Graham**, Justice and Communications Minister, have both ended their medical leave and started back to work. Both are grateful for everyone's support and understanding and are glad to be back! **Please be patient** as they transition back to full-time in their busy positions.

NEW: A New Chaplain in Regina

The South Saskatchewan Chaplaincy Board is very pleased to announce Roel Tolentino as the new Chaplain. Roel's calming and compassionate presence will serve this position well. Roel has training and experience in pastoral care and palliative care along with extensive ministering experience. Role will be on-call 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday, and can be reached by cell phone at 1-306-551-7755 or email at rtolentino1224@gmail.com. If you know of someone in a hospital in Regina and would like for them to have a visit, please give Roel a call.

NEW: Update on ADP-KYC Enrollment

About 448 Communities of Faith/Pastoral Charges received requests from **ADP** to engage in a process (**KYC enrollment**) that relates to a government requirement. Some mixed messages have been circulated about the process, requirements and timelines. All Pastoral Charges were to have been sent updated information this past week, including contact information for [where to seek assistance](#). The **March** session of the Treasurer's Webinar on ChurchX [included this](#).

NEW: New Ministry in the Region

Living Skies Regional Council is excited to announce that **Rev. Lindsay Mohn** has accepted the position of Minister for First Third Ministry. Lindsay will work in conjunction with the Growth Department but focus her work with those in the first third of their life.

NEW: Getting to Love Gen Alpha: An online workshop from our friends at First Third Ministry

Join us for a one-hour session to help your community of faith begin discerning its next steps with Gen Alpha (those born after 2010) — through theological reflection, current research, and practical, hope-filled insight. Two sessions will be offered - to register for **Tuesday March 24 at 5 pm CST** [click here](#) or for **Thursday March 26 at 8 pm CST** [click here](#) .

Another workshop to be held on **March 26** is about children's bibles from the Center for Excellence in Christian Education. [Click here for more information](#).

NEW: Faithful Footprints Grants re-open

The Faithful Footprints team invites United Church communities of faith for an informational webinar. The [Faithful Footprints Grant](#) supports United Church communities with funding for building retrofit projects that reduce carbon emissions, and strengthen the long-term sustainability of church buildings. The [2026 funding cycle is now open](#), and we're [hosting an information webinar](#) to help communities learn about the program and how to apply. **Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 from 2:30 – 3:30 PM EST**. Join them to learn about eligibility criteria, the grant application process, and how your United Church communities can access up to \$20,000 in funding to support carbon-reduction building upgrades. Expressions of Interest are being accepted until **April 30th**.

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 (March 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.

Reminder: 2026 Annual Declaration

All ministry personnel (active, voluntary associates, and retired), including candidates, are required to complete the annual declaration before **April 30** in order 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: * Declare whether you have had any criminal charges in the past year; * Attest that you have reviewed the *Creating Safe and Respectful Environments Policy and Procedures*; * 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.

NEW: Save the Date

On **May 23-24**, the Regional Council Executive invites you to join them in a weekend of connection, learning, and fun. A day of worship, learning and opportunities for networking, followed by the Celebration of Ministry service banquet on **Saturday, May 23**, and closing with the Celebration of Ministry worship service on **Sunday, May 24**, all hosted by Grace United Church in Weyburn. Details to follow, but for now, mark the time in your calendar!

The Palestine Land Exercise is on the Move (Saskatchewan)

The Palestine Land Exercise (PLE) is a participatory educational tool that traces the history of Palestinian-Israeli relations up to the current genocide. Based on the format of the Kairos Blanket Exercise, which explores the relationship between the Indigenous peoples and settlers in Canada, PLE simulates the experience of Palestinians. Instead of blankets, large fabric maps are used on which many well-known historical towns and landmarks are marked, as well as places that we hear about in the news today. As participants take on the role of Palestinians and walk on the 'land,' they experience historical events and personal stories dating back over 100 years. The Exercise, along with historical photos, displays and talking circles, provides a forum for participants to become more informed about the situation and to share ideas about working for a just peace. The actual exercise is around an hour, followed a refreshment break and talking circles, making the whole presentation 2.5 – 3 hrs. **Maximum registration is 30.**

PLE Saskatchewan, is a project of the Palestine/Israel Just Peace Ecumenical Network. Sponsored by LSRC, after PLE pilots and a launch in Regina in 2025, our 2 teams are now looking forward to taking PLE around the province. **For more details and information about hosting a presentation in your community:** contact Saskatoon Team: Ursula Wiig, 306-371-9135, ursula.wiig@sasktel.net or Regina Team: Laura Sundberg: icsundberg2004@gmail.com

2. Wider Church Information:**NEW: Toward 2035 national survey: Share Your Voice**

The United Church of Canada invites anyone connected to the life of the church to complete a short survey on **Toward 2035**, the framework introduced in 2025 to guide our shared direction for the next decade. Your responses will help us understand how **Toward 2035** is being received and what supports communities may need. There are no right or wrong answers—just your insight. **Take the survey in English here:** <https://bit.ly/survey2035> (**deadline March 31**).

Rooted in our [Call and Vision, Toward 2035](#) invites us to imagine and shape the future together. [Towards 2035 resources can be found here](#). Scroll to the end of the page for downloads.

NEW: PIE Day round up and thanks!!

National Affirming PIE Day is in the books, and the creativity across the land was amazing! From karaoke and painting and crocheting lessons, to free pie via university chaplaincies; from handing out tarts at a skating rink to literally standing out in a snowstorm with flags and a “free pie for all” sign: it was a good, affirming day. Many blessings and thanks to all who crafted these creative, life giving spaces of public, intentional, and explicit welcome. Now onwards to hopes for warmer weather and the summer Pride Festival season- while we resume our Lenten commitments that may or may not include pie.

NEW: Living Skies Youth Retreat - April 24-26 in Prince Albert!

Make friends with other youth from across the United Church's Living Skies Region while exploring faith life through worship, song, and interactive theme times. This event is open to youth Grades 7-12. For registration and more details see <https://livingskiesrc.ca/yayac-spring-retreat-2026/>.

It's back to winter outside, but it sure is nice to be thinking about SUMMER CAMP!

Please check out each camp for camp dates and for the various applications and registrations!

Camp Shagabec: Camper registration **opens** on **Friday, March 13**. Volunteer Applications **open now!**

Camp Tapawingo: Camper registration, Staff and Volunteer Applications **open now!** *Early bird pricing!!*

Camp Woodboia: Camper registration, Staff and Volunteer Applications **open now!**

Lumsden Beach Camp: Camper registration, Staff and Volunteer Applications **open now!**

NEW: Update on United Church refugee sponsorship

The ongoing crisis in the Middle East has intensified pressure on our refugee program, driving a sharp rise in inquiries and sponsorships from churches. Our 2026 United Church submission quota has dropped to 50 regular spaces, while the LGBTQIA program remains stable at 75 annual spaces under the current agreement. Federal cuts have also affected Settlement Providing Organizations, reducing access to key newcomer services such as language, literacy, and employment programs. Drastically longer processing times that now average 24–54 months are also a reality. We give thanks for national staff, for the many caring experts in our networks, all communities of faith carrying sponsorships forward, and for all our many community partners who are deeply dedicated to offering safe haven. Above all, we offer prayers and action for the millions who cannot go home. If you are interested in sponsoring or have questions, the General Council is the best place to get answers, but the Regional office and experts can also help you out. Please email Julie at jgraham@united-church.ca and she can put you in touch.

NEW: Aid for the Middle East: a call from United Church partner the Canadian Foodgrains Bank

The headlines say it all, and have for over two years. If you are moved to [offer food aid for the millions in need across the Middle East, see details here](#). The Canadian FoodGrains Bank is a longtime and respected partner of the United Church who also works through a wider Canadian aid coalition. Together, we have trusted partners on the ground, working with communities deeply impacted by war and displacement.

DID YOU KNOW?! The Legacy Planning course is **FREE** until June as part of the UCC's Centennial offer of free fees. This 'on-demand' course Bequests & Estate Planning can be done at your own pace. You won't believe how many times you will say "I wish I'd known that sooner!" when working through these short lessons. Check it out! (You could even donate some money to M&S instead of paying to take the course! Just an idea from Sarah's brain, to your newsletter!) Here is the link to Bequest & Estate planning on ChurchX: [Called to Be the Church: The Journey](#) .

As always – I'd love to chat with you about ways that you are becoming more devoted disciples of Christ through your stewardship programs, or about digging into a stewardship plan!

Be bold, you are called to journey and to be the church. [Book time to meet with Sarah Giles](#) , Stewardship Support for the Western Regions at sgiles@united-church.ca , [Book time to meet with her](#) or check out [our Stewardship Programs on ChurchX!](#)

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.

A Pause for Peace and Justice at Grace-Westminster United Church (Saskatoon)

In these troubling times at home and in our world, let's come together to hear words of hope, justice and empowerment, to be grounded in compassion and radical kindness. Join us at **8pm (SK time)** for 15 minutes **through the month of March 2026** (every Monday to Friday) [on this Zoom link](#). **Everyone welcome.** *This is a community initiative of Grace-Westminster United Church in collaboration with the Oliver & Gruchy Learning Centre, St. Andrew's College (Saskatoon).* For more info, contact Jan Clarke (jlclarke@sasktel.net), Brenda Curtis (c.b.curtis@sasktel.net) or Bernon Lee (bernon.lee@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca).

Things we Tell Ourselves - 7pm to 9pm ET from now until May 20, 2026

The United Church has spent 100 years establishing patterns and ways of doing ministry. Many of us are still doing what was done a generation or two earlier. We want to try new things but don't know where to start. Join us Wednesdays for this ten-week series of learning sessions and workshops that gives participants the chance to see new opportunities, engage with new ideas, meet other lay church leaders and reimagine the church of the future and start building it now. For details and to register, see: [Things We Tell Ourselves](#)

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.

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.**

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)