

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



March 4, 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: Julie is back!

Julie Graham, Justice and Communications Minister, has ended her medical leave and started back to work **March 2**, beginning at quarter time. Julie thanks everyone deeply for their support and understanding over the five months she had to be off and has missed you all. **Please be patient** during this time of transition back to her busy portfolio.

NEW: World Day of Prayer 2026

World Day of Prayer is an international, ecumenical movement which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns and prayers. **For 2026**, a committee of Christian women from Nigeria wrote the service. Included are stories from three women who describe their personal journeys and how their faith in God kept them motivated to persevere. Visit wdpcanada.ca to learn about this 99-year-old tradition of faith and prayer.

World Day of Prayer resources made available throughout Canada by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada.

Check around your community to see where a World Day of Prayer service might be held.

Covenanting announcement - Janelle Shaw and the collaboration between Lafleche-Limerick and Grasslands Pastoral Charges will be held on **Sunday, March 8, 1:30pm** in Glentworth.

NEW: 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.

Reminder: Tuesday Ministry Personnel Gatherings

The online facilitated ministry personnel gatherings for Living Skies will occur **only on the 2nd Tuesday** of the month; this month's gathering is set for **March 10**. The calendar on the website has been updated to the new schedule.

NEW: 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: lcsundberg2004@gmail.com

NEW: Sharing is Caring! So much going on in the Stewardship Department!

Stewardship Seconds (NEW - Update for January-June 2026!) Short, pithy sayings that pack a punch, to help infiltrate stewardship thinking into your community of faith. Add them to newsletters, worship, announcements, webpages, wherever people gather! Find them at the [Stewardship in Worship webpage](#).

Grandmothers Leading with Love In Kenya's Rift Valley, [grandmothers are doing what grandmothers do best](#): loving fiercely. Many are raising their grandchildren while grieving children of their own. Through Mission and Service partnerships, they're sitting down with pastors, sharing their stories, and helping their churches choose compassion over stigma. Change begins with listening — and it's already happening.

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! Email or book time Sarah Giles, Stewardship Support for the Western Regions at sgiles@united-church.ca or [Book time to meet with me](#) . Let me know you've read the newsletter, tell me a good news story out of your church, ask for a great cookie recipe... let's connect! Sarah

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.

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.

2. Wider Church Information:**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 Tapawingo:](#)

[Camp Shagabec:](#)

[Lumsden Beach Camp:](#)

[Camp Woodboia:](#)

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.

Composting is an act of faith.

It requires trust in the hidden work of bugs, microbes and the natural processes of decay to convert old food into nourishment for new life. Lent is a time of preparing ourselves for the new life God offers at Easter. We are invited to look at our lives and communities of faith and ask – What needs to be composted so that we are ready for resurrection? [Click here](#) to read this article by our Growth Animator, Jordan Cantwell.

The Moderator's PIE Day message: now available

Every year, on **March 14th**, The United Church of Canada celebrates National Affirming PIE Day. This year for PIE Day 2026, we celebrate every kind of creator—woodcutters, crocheters, gardeners, and bakers—who help weave connections in our communities. [Access the Moderator's PIE Day video in advance and review release information at this link.](#)

NEW: Short reminders of our history for the Centennial year continue – last one.

Here is the *fifty-second* and last vignette of Gayle Simonson's very short stories about United Church history. Many thanks to Gayle, who offered us 52 100-word history vignettes for us! All 52 vignettes can be found on the Centennial post on the [home page](#) or the [Worship page](#) of the Living Skies website. **Please remember to credit!**

52) As we come to the end of our centennial year, as many churches are closing, the future is uncertain. Our history shows that the United Church has always been working toward the current goals of equity, inclusiveness and diversity but many families no longer consider church a part of their life. Young people are growing up with only images of residential schools as their knowledge of churches. We need to maintain the vision of our founders and make sure that people understand what the United Church stands for. American Parker Palmer has written that, "We must see the world as it is and imagine it as it could be." Now we must find a way to work courageously toward that goal.

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 15minutes **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 (jclarke@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 March 11 to 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.

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.

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**.

LIVING SKIES YOUTH RETREAT:

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

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:

Pastoral Relations Ponderings - [Pastoral Relations Pondering Vol 67](#). Updates from the Pastoral Relations desk.

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)