

# Regional Rambler

## Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



December 2, 2020

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2. **Wider Church Information:** Indigenous Ministries videos for Advent; Prayer Request: Tigray Region, Ethiopia; National church apologizes for adoption practices; UC upholding human rights in the Philippines; Gifts with Vision catalogue open for your Christmas gifts; FaceBook group to support your live streaming learning curve; Advent Unwrapped 2020 resources!;
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Community of Faith calendar; Latest webinars from United in Learning, *including congregational finances*; CCS Fridays; Goodwill to ALL: A Conversation on Anti-Racism in the Church; Advent's Lament: A Blue Christmas worship gathering; Clinical Pastoral Education Program; Queen's House re-opening;
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### **1. Living Skies Regional Council News:**

#### **Region Council leadership letters**

The Regional Council leadership offers two letters of support as we move into Advent during an extraordinary and difficult year. Rob Reed (Convener of the regional gathering) and Tricia Gerhard (Executive chair) [offer Advent reflections here](#); and the Executive notes [in this letter](#), the latest COVID updates and acknowledges that our continuing COVID journey is difficult even as we can be sure God accompanies us on the way.

#### **Living Skies Advent Celebration Concert – new info**

*"SO THAT OUR JOY MAY BE COMPLETE": AN ADVENT CONCERT CELEBRATION*

**Sunday, December 13, 2020 at 7pm**

Living Skies Regional Council is excited to offer a wonder-filled virtual evening of music and story for the entire UCC family! Co-hosted by **Lorne Calvert & Lindsay Mohn**, the evening features music provided by **Sacred Sounds Worship Band**, a Christmas narrative from **Jim Tenford**, and production support from **Cheri Uthe of Faith Productions**.

Tickets Now Available: <https://form.jotform.com/Regions245/AdventConcertTickets>

**Ticket proceeds go directly to UCC Communities of Faith (congregations) & other UCC Ministries** throughout the Living Skies Region. When you buy your ticket, simply indicate the specific Community of Faith or Ministry that you would like to support.

**Concert Poster** available for download (pdf): <https://livingskiesrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Advent-Concert-Poster-2020-page-001.jpg>

**Concerns/questions about seeing the concert online?** Not sure if Zoom will even work for you? Please don't hesitate to contact Kent at 306-221-5529 or [livingksiesyaya@united-church.ca](mailto:livingksiesyaya@united-church.ca). We'll figure something out together!

**Community Ministries Support - new**

Yesterday was Giving Tuesday, a response to American shopping sprees over Thanksgiving and Canadian shopping for Christmas. It's a chance for each of us to give back to our community. In honour of that, let's remember our Community Ministries – camps, outreach ministries, chaplaincies, and a congregation. Information about Living Skies' Community ministries can be found at:

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/community-ministries/>

**2021 Prayer Cycle - new**

The Prayer Cycle is now posted on the Living Skies Regional Council website under Resources on the Worship page. It can be found under the Prayer heading. [The link to it is here.](#)

**New phone numbers and extensions for two staff - new**

Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy and Program Assistant Jamie McKay have new phone numbers: Jamie: 1-800-268-3781 ext 2040 ; Shannon: 1-800-268-3781 ext 2028

**Especially for Designated Lay Ministers and Diaconal Ministers who have Retired - new**

At the Pastoral Relations Commission meeting last month, a motion was made to extend sacramental privileges for Designated Lay Ministers and Diaconal Ministers who have retired until June 30, 2021. In the new year, the Voluntary Associate Minister policy will be implemented and therefore required in order to renew those privileges after June 30. The policy is found [here](#). If you have questions, please contact Tracy Murton at [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca).

**Premiums conversation follow-up - new**

Last week a number of people gathered with General Council Office staff to raise concerns about the increase to benefits premiums, especially for pensioners. If you are interested in the information shared, please contact Bev Diebert at [bdiebert@united-church.ca](mailto:bdiebert@united-church.ca).

**Changes to governance - new**

There are updated community of faith governance protocols effective until June 20, 2021 from the General Council Sub-Executive who agreed to:

1. temporarily suspend the requirement in section B.5.1 of The Manual for congregations or pastoral charges to hold an annual meeting; and
2. temporarily amend the responsibility of the congregation or pastoral charge to make a decision on their annual draft budget by allowing the governing body of the congregation or pastoral charge to fulfil this responsibility where necessary, and where permitted by the regional council.

In other words, if the community of faith that you supervise has not been able to hold an annual meeting in 2020, and if it looks like they will not be able to hold one in the first half of 2021, the governing body can make a decision on the budget. If your community of faith is able to meet online or gather safely in person, it is still optimal to do so, but not required. Further information regarding this decision may be found [here](#).

**Camp News: Updates & Info from UCC Outdoor Ministries - new**

Please watch for regular Camp News from all of our United Church Camp ministries in the coming months. This month includes Reports & Fundraising info from Camp Tapawingo, Lumsden Beach Camp, and Camp Christopher. <https://livingskiesrc.ca/camp-news-updates-info-from-ucc-outdoor-ministries/>

**Regina Anti Poverty Ministry speaks out against SK government removing benefits - new**

Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry advocates by, for and with low income people from all over the province. Since the pandemic began, they have expressed extreme concern that the federal government's income support, CERB, and First Nations income supplements for elders, have resulted in the SK government removing benefits. In effect, the provincial government is worsening both pandemic-related and overall poverty while clawing back these supports, all the while saving money off others' contributions.

"Peter Gilmer of the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry, which advocates for low-income families, said he's troubled that the Saskatchewan government is clawing back social assistance payments when it didn't cost the province anything for people to collect federal CERB money.

"We do see this as the province saving money on the backs of the poorest people in the province," Gilmer said. For the full article, including comparisons with other provinces and concerns from more people, [click here](#).

### **Conflict Resolution Facilitators - new**

The United Church of Canada is seeking applicants to serve as Conflict Resolution Facilitators under the United Church's [Dispute Resolution Policy](#). Watch for more information, including the applicant profile, to be posted on the [Job and Volunteer Opportunities](#) on the national church website.

### **2020 assessments: final reminder!**

Finance administrator Heather Dootoff has [some reminders about assessments](#) (because we all know how much fun we have with year end finances.) It's been a tough year, and for those of you how have already paid your assessments in full: please know that we appreciate that you done so in these very challenging circumstances. Your assessment makes a huge range of ministry in our church possible.

### **Ministry Personnel Gatherings**

For the Advent season, we will spend time together (**Tuesdays at 1:00pm.**) working through the themes of hope (Nov 24), peace (Dec 1), joy (Dec 8) and love (Dec 15). Ministry Personnel are warmly invited to attend any or all gatherings; be sure to have a candle nearby to light together. Click on the date in the [calendar](#) for the Zoom connection information.

### **Reminder to submit any anti racism resource receipts**

Speaking of year end: This is the last call on the Regional Council offer to pay for anti-racism resources for use as study or in your community of faith. Finance administrator Heather Dootoff asks you to send the receipts to her by email if possible **by December 11**: [hdootoff@united-church.ca](mailto:hdootoff@united-church.ca).

What's this about? [Click here to learn more](#).

### **Updated COVID-19 guidelines:**

The provincial government has announced additional guidelines for the whole province, effective Thursday, November 19. You can find a further description of the mandate [here](#). For clarity, here are the implications for communities of faith:

- Masks are required at all times, for all people, in places of worship.
- Private gatherings held in a private dwelling on behalf of church communities (family weddings, baptisms, funerals, study groups, etc.) have a maximum of 5 participants, including ministry personnel.

We will post further updates on the Living Skies Regional Council website and FaceBook page. If you have any questions, please contact Tracy Murton at [tmurton@united-church.ca](mailto:tmurton@united-church.ca).

### **We want to hear about your favourite Tech-stuff:**

**Attention:** *Computer Geeks, Tech Nerds, Web Dorks, and Other-Wonderful-People-Who-Think-Doing-Churchy-Stuff-With-Technology-Is-Actually-Kinda-Cool...*

**Please tell us about your favourite Tech-stuff:**

- **Software, Programs & Tools** for online presentations/worship
- **Websites** for images, music, video, etc
- **Tips & Tricks** for creative online worship & reflections
- **Anything else** that seems church-techy-cool

Also, there's a great new Facebook group that you may find helpful: **Canadian Churches That Live-Stream** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/676613006560597>

Seriously, it just makes sense to pool our knowledge for this stuff, right? We'll have a resource library available to everybody in Living Skies. This is gonna make the other regions so jealous!

Just send your recommendations & favourites to [livingskiesyaya@united-church.ca](mailto:livingskiesyaya@united-church.ca). Thanks!

**Unsubscribe at your Peril**

Hopefully, you are finding the *Rambler* helpful in reporting to your congregations what is going on within Living Skies RC. At the bottom of each Rambler and E-share, there is an *unsubscribe from this list* and *update your preferences* link. Please be aware that if you unsubscribe, the Regional Council office can NOT re-subscribe you to the list again using the same email address.

**Blue Statistical Forms**

In this unprecedented time, to calculate your average weekly attendance for your 2020 annual statistical submission, please add the number of people in in-person worship to the on-line count and report that number. While the on-line count might be inflated by people coming into and out of a stream/broadcast, there doesn't appear to be any way to take that into account. For Year Book purposes, the column will be marked with an asterisk and a footnote added to indicate why the figures might be significantly different from other years. Should you have any questions, please contact [statistics@united-church.ca](mailto:statistics@united-church.ca)

**2. Wider Church Information:**

*Our world seems smaller and more confined since COVID began. May these stories help widen it, and help us see where our prayers and actions from home can support those we may never meet in person, but with whom we are part of the Body of Christ. Most of the ministry and resources you see here is supported by our Mission and Service givings.*

**Indigenous Ministries videos for Advent - new**

Murray Pruden, executive minister, offers us an invitation to brief weekly reflections as we journey together for Advent. Find them on [Indigenous Ministries' Facebook page](#). [Here's the Advent 1 reflection](#).

**Prayer Request: Tigray Region, Ethiopia - new**

The United Church of Canada joins Mission & Service partners the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) in prayers and appeals for an end to [growing tensions and violence in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia](#). The United Church of Canada is contributing through the ACT Alliance Africa Regional response to the needs of people affected by the conflict. We pray for a peaceful resolution of this conflict so that all people in Ethiopia can live in peace with justice. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

**National church apologizes for adoption practices - new**

The United Church of Canada [has issued an apology](#) for its role in separating mothers and their babies in maternity homes it operated from the end of World War II to 1980. "Women told us that they felt, pressured, coerced, or forced to give up their babies and the church recognizes it participated in the culture of shame that surrounded unmarried mothers at that time," says the Rev. Daniel Hayward, chairperson of the church's Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee that recommended the apology. [Please read the full story here](#).

**United Church support for petition: upholding human rights in the Philippines - new**

The United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines have a long and rich history of partnership, shared ministry, and justice advocacy. Filipino communities and organizations in our church and across Canada have long been involved in human rights advocacy, and now the [International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines](#) and [Mining Watch Canada](#) are asking for the United Church's support for human rights in the Philippines. [Click here for more background and the Parliamentary petition link](#).

**Gifts with Vision catalogue open for your Christmas gifts**

The United Church's Gifts with Vision offers us alternative gifts that empower communities and don't add more "things" to a world awash with them. Consider this for Christmas or birthdays this year. [Have a look at the many inspiring options here](#).

**Facebook group to support your live streaming learning curve**

If you live stream your service, or are thinking of moving things online, and you want a place to share ideas, check out this Facebook group! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/676613006560597/>

**Advent Unwrapped 2020 resources!**

Advent—a holy, four-week countdown to Jesus’ birthday—began last **Sunday**. Get ready to make room for Christ and the radical, countercultural messages that Christ brings. Throughout the season, videos, prayers, family resources, and reflections on this page will introduce and explore the Christmas story. For more worship resources visit our [Advent and Christmas worship pages](#). Follow our [Advent Unwrapped Facebook page](#) for regular updates on all kinds of resources.

**3. Upcoming Learning Opportunities****Community of Faith Calendar**

Reminder: 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](#).

**Latest webinars from United in Learning, including congregational finances**

Gatherings for church treasurers (**tonight** at 7pm ET / 4pm PT), a series on preaching the big questions, and racial justice training: all this and more at United in Learning, the United Church’s continuing education and engagement service. [See the summary here](#).

**CCS Fridays**

In this era of pandemic and disruption we’re bringing back the Friday gatherings and taking them online. We will be hosting conversations to help us all to 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. Sessions are free but you must register. Visit the page for the event you’re interested in and find the “register” link. **This week’s session is** [December 4: Apocalyptic Christmas](#): A theological exploration of what the apocalypse might have to do with Christmas in a pandemic.

Tentative 2021 dates: January 8, February 12, and March 12.

**Goodwill To ALL: A Conversation on Anti-Racism in the Church, Dec 3, 10, 17, and 20<sup>th</sup> at 8:30PM in SK.**

**new** All welcome to a Thursday evening Advent series focused on full inclusion, with a focus on anti-racism! Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/141591450631129/>

Register here for free, and see the overall program:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYpfu2rqTgjH9CoU9I4iOy9AYbd078eY6qj>

**Advent's Lament: A Blue Christmas worship gathering – December 9, 6:30pm Central. - **new****

As we mark one year of changed life because of Covid-19, we would like to offer a denominational-wide service of Lament for Advent. [Click here for full details](#).

**Clinical Pastoral Education Program - **new****

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is training in the art and skills of spiritual and religious care that is person-centered, honors religious differences, and evokes the spiritual capacities, resilience, and resources of people in times of medical and/or spiritual transition. Employing an adult education model, CPE integrates personal learning goals with practice-based goals. CPE provides in-depth training for persons who desire a learning environment where feedback from peers, teachers, and interdisciplinary colleagues enhances skills and develops increased self-awareness. Course instruction will be ‘Zoom - based’ and clinical internship hours will be required in an Emmanuel Care Health Care Facility. The course begins mid-January and ends in April 2021 and is approximately 30 hours per week. This program is sponsored by Emmanuel Care and hosted by Santa Maria’s Senior’s Citizen’s Home, Regina. Instructors: Brian Walton, Certified Educator Supervisor and Francis Maza, Provisional Educator Supervisor. For more information and/or to apply contact Francis Maza at Emmanuel Care [f.maza@emmanuelcare.ca](mailto:f.maza@emmanuelcare.ca) or call 306-249-5865

### Queen's House re-opening

Queen's House has re-opened their doors to groups who have arranged to use our facility – and would love to see you. For individual retreats or dropping by the centre for personal prayer, please call us to inquire about what can be arranged.

Our programming formats have significantly changed – while they will be offering occasional programs in-person at the retreat centre, following all safety protocols, much of our programming will be offered through Zoom. To see Queen's House programming, please see their [Our Programs page](#).

## 4. Reminders:

**The work of the pastoral relations and support committees – [Pastoral Relations Ponderings Vol 19](#)**

### Invite a global speaker to your worship or community of faith!

[People in Partnership](#) invites you to learn more about the work and mission of partners around the world by inviting an individual to come and share their stories with United Church of Canada communities of faith. Find out more about these [pilgrims, companions, co-workers and learners here](#). Although speakers are grouped by region, many are available to present and share remotely with your community of faith online. Please contact [pip@united-church.ca](mailto:pip@united-church.ca) to invite a speaker.

### Olive harvest in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: short video

As Canada settles into winter, the Middle East also prepares for the close of the growing season. The annual olive harvest is a deeply significant time, culturally, economically, and spiritually. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, it is also a time of great tension and violence. Olive groves are frequently targeted by extremist Israeli settlers who are living in the Occupied Territories in defiance of international law. The World Council of Church offers this short video about the struggles facing Palestinian farmers: <https://youtu.be/d2Nk3a3DcHo>

### NSHC – New Chaplain

We are so blessed to have Rev Emily Carr as the new North Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplain. She covers Royal University Hospital, City Hospital, St Paul's, and Parkridge in the city of Saskatoon. **Please** phone if you know of someone in hospital needing pastoral care: 306-227-8707.

If you wish to support the work of the North Chaplaincy donations can be sent to: The Treasurer, 1345 East Centre, Saskatoon SK S7J 3A8

### St. Andrew's College new Recruitment Officer

St. Andrew's College has just hired a new Recruitment Officer. The Rev. Shawn Sanford Beck took up the post shortly after Thanksgiving, and is looking forward to conversing with folks in each of the Prairie Regions (and beyond). If you know of anyone in your community of faith who might benefit from and contribute to theological education, please help connect them to Shawn. He can be reached at [shawn.sanfordbeck@usask.ca](mailto:shawn.sanfordbeck@usask.ca) or 306 441 6367. Here is a youtube video of introduction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4e9TXm5fTI4>

### Clusters and Networks update (and reminder of \$\$!)

We know more online meetings may be the last thing on your mind. But just in case: If you are considering starting a new Network or Cluster, or if you've already been gathering, please take a moment to make sure that the Regional Council knows you're meeting.

If your Cluster or Network is open to new members (and we hope it is) please make sure you're listed. Please contact your Regional office (at the bottom of this newsletter) or Julie Graham ([jgraham@united-church.ca](mailto:jgraham@united-church.ca)) to make sure we have contact information and a short description. And remember: there is money in the Regional budget to support your work. Maybe you want to offer to pay for event registrations or resources. Maybe you want to submit receipts for a get together lunch over Zoom to support a sense of community. Don't let funding worries get in the way! Questions about this? Contact the office.