

Regional Rambler

Living Skies Regional Council The United Church of Canada



November 4, 2020

1. **Living Skies News:** LSRC Gathering 2020 Reminder Email; Returning to Bi-weekly Ramblers; Unsubscribe at your Peril; Blue Statistical Forms; Entering Advent in a Time of Crisis: Bah Humbug or Hope-Filled Anticipation?; Ministry Personnel Gatherings; Video licensing opportunity! Deadline November 18; Latest webinars from United in Learning, *including congregational finances*; SAVE THE DATE-Living Skies Advent Celebration Concert and How Do We Make Churchy-Stuff go on the Inter-Web?; NSHC-New Chaplain; Clusters and Network Update; ICM-10X10 Art Show is back;
2. **Wider Church Information:** Invite a global speaker to your worship or community of faith!; Stewardship update for November; For the Love of Creation; The United Church supports Mi'kmaq treaty rights; Olive harvest in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; Advent Unwrapped 2020 resources!;
3. **Upcoming Learning Opportunities:** Community of Faith calendar; Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble Kitchen Sink open conversation series; There are No Closets in Tipis; CCS Fridays; SK Peace Conference: Displaced: Upheaval, Hospitality and Justice in the Search for Home; Advent Conversations around the Fire; Queen's House re-opening;
4. **Reminders:** Docket for the Meeting; Updates to the COVID "re-opening" plans library; Continued reflections on racism;

1. Living Skies Regional Council News:

Living Skies Regional Council Gathering 2020 Reminder Email

The link to tonight's Regional Council Gathering was sent out yesterday morning. If you believe you didn't get this email, please check **your Junk Email folder**. If you haven't received them, please contact Bev Diebert at bdiebert@united-church.ca **as soon as possible**. Also, summaries and other information from previous meetings can be found on the [Regional Gathering 2020 webpage](#) of the Living Skies Regional Council website.

Returning to bi-weekly Ramblers

This edition of the Regional Rambler marks the end of the weekly Rambler. Starting on November 18, the Regional Rambler will only be coming out every other week once again.

Unsubscribe at your Peril

Some of the delegates to the Living Skies Regional Council (RC) gathering may be receiving this as their first Regional Rambler. Hopefully, you will find it helpful in reporting back to your congregations about 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, you can NOT be added 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

Entering Advent in a Time of Crisis: Bah Humbug or Hope-Filled Anticipation?

(Ministry personnel only – **Thursday, November 12**, 1-4pm; Licensed Lay Worship Leaders only – **Saturday, November 14**, 9-12pm via Zoom with Marg Janick-Grayston)

The advent season takes us on a journey towards Christmas, the ultimate symbol of hope, love and giving. For many of us it has become a time for family gatherings, big feasts around the table, and the exchange of gifts and hugs. But, with COVID, and distancing, and tiny bubbles of contact in our midst, we may feel more like Ebenezer Scrooge whose response to Christmas was “Bah Humbug” because it lacked meaning for him. With everything that is going on, it may feel harder for us this year to enter this season with hope-filled anticipation. In our time together we will be checking into our “internal weather forecast” to see how we, and the communities of faith we relate to, are entering the Advent Season. Secondly, we will consider why this season overflows with hope from a historical perspective, and where hope is showing up today. Lastly, we will review some research information on the negative and positive effects of faith in a time of crisis, and brainstorm ways to acknowledge people’s struggles, as well as embrace our faith in the most positive of ways to reconnect us with hope. If you would like to register for either of these events, please contact Tracy Murton at tmurton@united-church.ca

Ministry Personnel Gatherings

For the next few weeks, these gatherings will be 90 minutes, beginning with general announcements, small group check-in (10 mins), and a focussed topic. Ministry Personnel are warmly invited to attend any part of the gathering that will be useful. **Tuesdays at 1:00pm**. Click on the date in the [calendar](#) for the Zoom connection information. The schedule is as follows (note the change):

- November 10 – **creative options to connect folks off-line**
- November 12 – pre-Advent retreat with Marg (see above for more info)
- November 17 – creating an online worship component exchange (sermon, prayers, music, children’s time, engaging scripture reading, etc.

Video licensing opportunity! **Deadline November 18**

The United Church has negotiated video licensing agreements that include Paramount, Universal, Alliance Atlantis, New Line Cinema, Miramax, Disney, Veggie Tales and many more! Public Performance Licenses enable your community of faith to show full-length or clips from movies or TV shows for public viewing as a part of things like worship, fundraisers, family nights, youth group events, or educational programs.

If you are interested in showing films or TV shows to a group in your building in any of these circumstances, you need a public performance license. The video licenses being offered here do not apply to live streamed clips. For more information about these licenses, the fee structure, and how to apply, please visit: <http://buyingunited.net/video-licensing> You can also have a look at some [frequently asked questions here](#).

The deadline for this round of applications is November 18th, 2020. We will offer another round of licenses to be available starting part way through next year. For any additional questions, please email or call Alexandra at edge@united-church.ca or 1-800-268-3781 x4157.

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

Gatherings for church treasurers (November 25 and December 2 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](#).

SAVE THE DATE!

Living Skies Advent Celebration Concert

A wonder-filled virtual evening of music & story for the entire UCC family throughout the Region! Connect with friends! Sing joyfully from your own living room! Share in the Spirit of the Christmas season! Even raise some funds for your local ministry or community of faith! That’s a lot of exclamation points! **Sunday, December 13, 2020 at 7pm**
Watch for Ticket Info in the next week or so(!).

Technology in Faith Workshops: “How Do We Make Churchy-Stuff go on the Inter-Web?”

Preparation is underway for a regional library of online-worship resources along with workshops to help support the tech-geeks, the tech-geek-wannabes, and the tech-geek-aphobes throughout the region. Techy stuff can be intimidating, so we want to tailor each workshop to a specific topic and level of tech-confidence. To help with this plan, we need your input:

What are the major questions or needs for your community of faith when it comes to Virtual Church (Worship, Community, Mission, Faith Formation, etc.)?

Please send your responses to Kent at livingskiesyaya@united-church.ca.

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

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) 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.

ICM - 10x10 Art Show is back!

Every year, Integrated Community Ministries, a United Church organization in Saskatoon, holds an original art show of 10” by 10” canvases created by members of Saskatoon’s core neighbourhoods.

Thanks in part to your gifts to Mission and Service, the materials are distributed free of charge to all ages. There’s always a story to accompany the art, describing the artists personal story, their cultural gifts, and their day to day joys and struggles. A silent auction is held at the end of the community art displays, and the winning bid is shared between the artist and ICM.

This year, COVID changed the in-person plan. Instead, you can view all the art in one place and place bids on the canvases too. [Click here to view art and place a bid](#). Please let your community of faith, colleagues, friends and family know. You can also look for updates and featured art on the [10 x10 Facebook page](#) and share the page.

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.

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 to invite a speaker.

Stewardship update for November: around the globe and at home

God's Mission, Our Gifts offers the latest stewardship news and resources. This month, stories include gratitude from Beirut, Lebanon for our gifts; the ongoing struggle for peace within and between some Asian nations; ideas for thank you letters at a time when people may struggle to give; a reminder of other resources, including offering prayers for November that are [here](#). Read the [whole \(short!\) newsletter](#) here. If you or your community of faith want a snapshot of all of our Mission and Service givings and what they support, [click here for the 2019 overview](#).

For the Love of Creation: climate change and sustainability events coming up

The United Church of Canada is part of a national ecumenical effort for Climate Justice called **For the Love of Creation**, joining with over thirty national church and faith based organizations. This effort focuses on theological reflection, local/congregational engagement, and political advocacy. There are a series of events coming up through November to help us engage in different aspects of the often difficult climate change conversation. [Click here for an overview, and to register](#).

More details about *For the Love of Creation*, and many introductory resources, are available here, [on their brand new website](#).

Join us for one or more of the following sessions:

Nov 9th: Advocating for Climate Justice

Nov 16th: Grieving, Healing, and Connecting with Creation (English Only)

Nov 23rd: Creation Care: A Letter of the Faithful

Nov 30th: Climate Action Now!

The United Church supports Mi'kmaq treaty rights

Being the church together means living into the [1986 Apology to Indigenous peoples](#) together, and committing to understanding what it means to be Treaty People today.

Tensions remain very high in Mi'kmaq territory/ Nova Scotia, as the Sipekne'katik First Nation exercises its treaty rights to fish lobster over sometimes violent protest from non-Indigenous fishers. Regional Council 15 is asking for prayers from across the church and helped organize an interfaith leaders' delegation to the area in late October. The national church shares [the prayer and an update here](#).

Moderator Richard Bott and Indigenous Ministries Executive Minister Murray Pruden have responded with a [letter to the church](#) that says, in part, that "As a church that has repudiated colonial doctrines and committed itself to Indigenous rights, to the ongoing work of building right relations, and to opposing racism in all of its forms, we cannot remain silent." ([Également disponible en français.](#))

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>

Advent Unwrapped 2020 resources!

Get ready for Christ(mas)! Advent—a holy, four-week countdown to Jesus' birthday—begins on **Sunday, November 29!** 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](#) .

Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble Kitchen Sink open conversation series

Next: November 17 and continuing every second Tuesday. 5:30 to 7:00 pm (Central),

[Full information on the series is here.](#) A variety of conversation topics are offered, all of them a part of becoming and staying LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit-affirming in our church.

There Are No Closets in Tipis: conversation with Jack Saddleback Thursday November 5 2020, 6:30 in SK

Riveting, captivating, real, insightful, grounded, illuminated are just a few words to describe Jack Saddleback's presentation of his life as a Cree Two-Spirit Champion. Many people across the Prairies have experienced Jack's leadership in community and province-wide settings. This event live streams here: <https://youtu.be/Wu2RvFjgcoU> (A collaboration between The United Church of Canada's Indigenous Ministries and Justice Circle, Pacific Mountain Regional Council's Pollinate Ministries and LeaderShift, and the Shining Waters Regional Council.)

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. The sessions:

[November 6: Queer Biblical Interpretation](#): seeing Scripture with new eyes.

[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.

Saskatchewan Peace Conference: Displaced: Upheaval, Hospitality, and Justice in the Search for Home November 7, 10:00am to 4:30pm CST

Sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee SK and open to all, this free day long online conference will explore the realities of refugees, internally displaced persons, and Indigenous peoples around the world and locally. [More details and registration here.](#)

Advent Conversations Around the Fire:

Igniting Sparks of Creative Contemplation on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love an Online Retreat via Zoom Mondays, November 23, 30, December 7 & 14 from 1-5 pm; **Register by November 9th if possible.**

This retreat will begin with everyone gathering around a candle in the comfort of our homes as we share stories, poems, songs, quotes, symbols meditations &/or experiences focusing on the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. Our collaborative conversations will be followed by a couple of hours off line to express our insights on the themes through journaling, story writing, collage or whatever forms of expression the spirit guides each person towards. Further conversations will help us continue reflecting on each advent theme with greater and greater depth, as we create an advent altar, to guide us spiritually through each week. **Registration:** email marg@freeflowwellness.ca.

Facilitation Donation: Suggested range for the 4 sessions 100-\$150; **Supplies:** A candle, matches, a journal, any art supplies that might help you depict the themes creatively, and a story, poem, song, quote, mediation, symbol, or experience that comes to mind that you may wish to share on each of the themes of hope (Nov. 23), peace (Nov. 30), joy (Dec. 7), and love (Dec. 14). **For Full Information:** <https://www.freeflowwellness.ca/retreats>

Queen's House re-opening

Queen's House has re-opened their doors to groups who have arranged to use their facility. For individual retreats or to drop by the centre for personal prayer, please call to inquire about what can be arranged. Our programming formats have significantly changed – while still 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:

Docket for the Regional Council Meeting

The full docket is now posted on the Regional Gathering webpage on the Living Skies Regional Council website. You can get to the Regional Gathering page by going to the [Living Skies Regional Council website](#) and clicking on the Regional Gathering button on the home page or by [clicking here](#) .

Updates to the COVID “re-opening” plans library

Thank you to all communities of faith and ministries who have shared their plans. A small selection representing a range of contexts has been updated here on the [plans page](#).

Continued reflections on racism

As part of the United Church’s striving to be anti-racist, Rev Paul Walfall [offers us a reflection on “social holiness”](#), our collective commitment as a church and Canadians to truly acknowledge the impact of racism. “It needs to be stated again, that when people say that there is systemic racism in Canada it is not a moral judgement against anyone. It is not to suggest that people are not good and caring. It is, however, to soberly acknowledge that, systemically, a Black or an Indigenous person is more likely to be at a disadvantage when dealing with the institutions and policies in our nation.”