



News from the Region: February 5, 2025



Short reminders of our history for this Centennial year

Throughout 2025, we'll be featuring very short stories about United Church history. Many thanks to Gayle Simonson, a lay member of the United Church at Southminster Steinhauer in Edmonton, an experienced history researcher, and a writer who has written for historical journals and UCC publications. She is a key volunteer in the United Church archives for both Northern Spirit and Chinook Winds. Gayle's generosity means that we'll have frequent reminders of our history with a focus on ordinary people. For our third vignette, she writes:

The first moderator to be elected by the General Council was Rev. George Pidgeon, who had been the last moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and had been a strong supporter of church union. A strong believer in ecumenism, he helped to found both the Canadian Council of Churches (1945) and the World Council of Churches (1946.)

News of interest to the people of the Northern Spirit Region.

If you have news or events to share, please write a short description, with a clear headline and a link to more information, and send it to northernspirit@united-church.ca.

★ Add your local events to our Northern Spirit events calendar! ★
[Click here to view upcoming events](#). And [click here to submit your event](#).

Family News

♥ ***Covenanting:*** The covenanting service between Rev. Shane Goldie and St. Andrew's United Church, Spruce Grove, will be held **Sunday, February 23, 2025**. The service will be a part of our regular service time, which starts at 10:00 a.m. We will be providing a light lunch after the service to which all are invited. Come and share with us as we take this next step on our covenantal journey in faith.

★ **New video on treaty learning and the proposed AB curriculum**

The Being Good relations Network invites you to have a look at this [recording of a rich discussion with Dr Pat Makokis and educator Hayley Christen](#), focused on taking action on Treaty understandings, and how current AB curriculum plans undermine those understandings. There is much we can do, from continuing to refuse to let the government off the hook, to thinking about how we all learn about and support Treaty relationships, all the year long. Dr Pat offers us truth and hope through her Treaty education series and the Treaty walks she has organised. [Click here for the video](#).

★ **Affirming Committee retreat Feb 20-22 in St Albert: come discern if you want to be part of the Affirming Committee!**

This committee supports the Regional Council in its Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Affirming commitments, supports Affirming and Affirming- curious ministries, advises other parts of Northern Spirit's governance, connects with community partners, and will be exploring how "Affirming" can better embrace disabilities rights and identities. All this, and it's a great group! The committee is short on membership beyond the Edmonton area and Lloydminster. It really needs wider community perspectives, and greater racial and ethnocultural and age diversity. Might you be interested in joining this working committee and/ or coming to the retreat? Expenses are covered. Get in touch and we'll talk about the retreat, or other ways of discerning! Contact chair Mickey Wilson: revmickeywilson@gmail.com.

Rescind legislation targeting transgender people: Northern Spirit Executive letter to the AB government

The Regional Executive and the Affirming Committee have written a letter to the premier and relevant ministers calling for immediate rescinding of Bills 26, 27, and 29.

These greatly limit transgender, Two Spirit, and gender diverse children and youth's access to appropriate medical care, sports, and correct naming, and greatly reduces all students' access to sexual health education everywhere in Alberta. It is possible that BC and NWT teams travelling to AB for tournaments will also be affected. Please [read the letter and download the PDF here](#).

And over to you: action for people and communities of faith on AB bills 26, 27, and 29

This is your invitation to express your concerns about Alberta's Bills 26, 27, and 29 and their impacts on transgender children, youth, and loved ones. Following the lead of the letter from the Executive and the Affirming Committee, you are invited to write or call in your own response as a person of faith and a community of faith. [Click here for resources for letter writing, and links to further resources from Alberta groups](#).

While this legislation will have less immediate impact on our members in NWT and BC, it's possible those travelling to AB for health needs and children's sports will see an impact. And above all, this legislation targets some of the most vulnerable people in Canada. It is a concern for all Canadians.

Questions? Want to discuss this further? That's welcome too. Please contact [the Affirming Committee](#) via staff support Julie Graham, jgraham@united-church.ca and she will pass you on directly to the committee. We don't post their personal emails for privacy reasons.

Wider Church News & Resources

★ All the latest **national news** is here, in the **February edition of E-ssentials**. [Click here to read](#).

Here from the beginning: the story of Black people in the United Church project

Whatever your ethnic or racial background, you're invited to support a Centennial story-telling project focused on the lives and contributions of Black people in the United Church of Canada. This exhibition celebrating Black individuals' remarkable contributions and experiences within the church amplifies these voices and showcases their incredible impact on our faith, history, and community. *Here from the beginning / Ici depuis le début: Celebrating the history of The United Church of Canada through the lens of Black people is the overall project, and it has two related parts:*

Telling the stories of individuals we want to honour.

A travelling historical exhibit.

[Click here for details and a shareable poster](#).

In Case You Missed It:

New Staff Phone Numbers

The United Church Staff phone system has changed!

Adam Hall's new phone number: 1-587-407-0329

Northern Spirit Office / Chloe Burns' new phone number: 1-587-407-0330

These numbers are already set up and in service. The former 1-800 numbers will not work after today, January 15. Please spread the word and save our new phone numbers! Many of the tri-Regional and National staff numbers are changing as well: [all staff contact information is available on the website](#).

Updates from your Executive:

Centennial: That the NSRC Executive will be doing our Centennial reflections and celebrations in the midst of our in person annual meeting. Everyone in the region is invited to mark the Centennial in their own location and partner with neighbours for any other events. No one is tasked with coordinating other events but please use the Newsletter and website to promote your events and ideas.

Annual Meetings dates established into the future: The tri-region staff proposed, and the Executive agreed, that dates be established for our Regional Council's in-person annual meeting occur once every three years for the last weekend in May whenever possible (excepting when Pentecost falls on that weekend, etc). Celebrations of ministries worship services will be held in person every year. Online annual meetings will be held in November, with one night for learning and discussing if there are proposals put forward, and one night for business. The agenda for online annual meetings will be restricted to necessary business. Additional spaces and gatherings can be planned separately addressing other pieces (education, support, etc).

2025 AGM: **Save the date** for the 2025 in-person Regional Annual Meeting, which will be held **May 29 - June 1**, at Riverbend United Church, Edmonton.

Reminder re Annual Meetings for Communities of Faith with Pastoral Charge Supervisors

For Communities of faith who have appointed Supervisors, those supervisors must be present (either in person, via technology, or phone) during the entire duration of your Annual Meeting. Because of that, it is absolutely imperative that you reach out to your supervisors and discuss the time, date, and location of your annual meetings prior to determining the date and announcing those dates publicly. [Please click here to read the full letter from the Community of Faith Support Committee](#).

Annual Declaration Reminder: A Message from Vocational Minister, Laura Fohse...

This message is for alllll ministry personnel (including candidates in an appointment and voluntary associate ministers) - GUESS WHAT?! Its that wonderful time of the year when you get to dust off your criminal record check, visit ChurchHub and complete your annual declaration!

First time doing this? Forget what you did last year? NO PROBLEM! I'm here to help. This link... [How to Complete the Annual Declaration](#)... is a handy dandy info sheet that will explain the whole process to you. BUT if you find this confusing (or would just like to chat with me), feel free to email me lfouhse@united-church.ca. So why not visit ChurchHub now while your excitement is peaked?

Worship Resources:

See United Church [Worship Resources](#) for upcoming Sundays and special celebrations.

[Fifth after Epiphany - February 9, 2025](#)

[Black History Month 2 - February 9, 2025](#)

[Sixth after Epiphany - February 16, 2025](#)

[Black History Month 3 - February 16, 2025](#)

[Black History Month 4 - February 23, 2025](#)

[Seventh after Epiphany - February 23, 2025](#)

[Transfiguration Sunday - March 2, 2025](#)

* [Click here to access Northern Spirit's 2025 Prayer Cycle](#)

● [Click here to access past Newsletter issues](#)



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