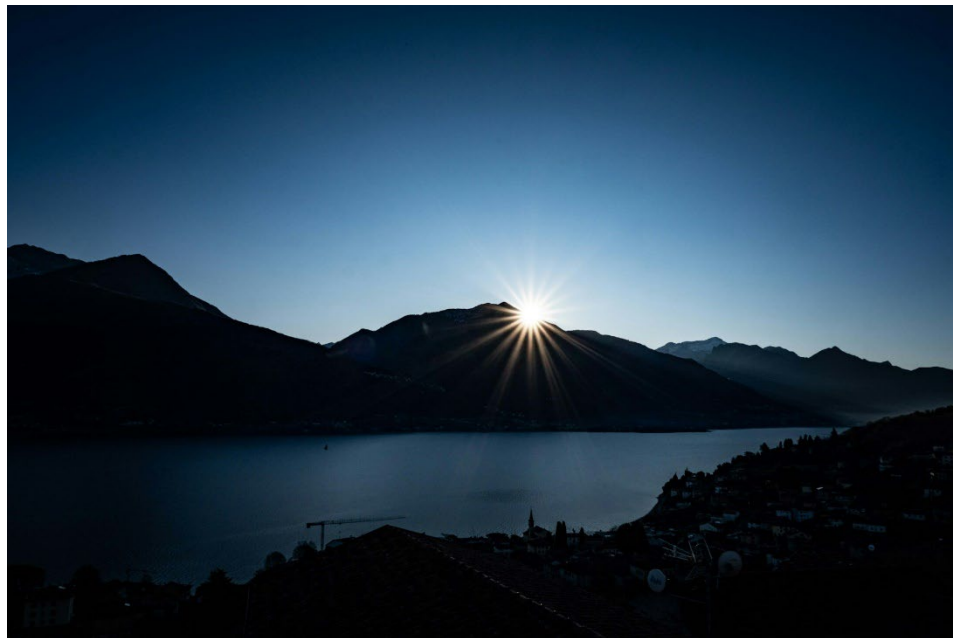




News from the Region: February 19, 2025



Short reminders of our history for this Centennial year

Throughout 2025, we'll be featuring very short stories about United Church history. Thanks to historian Gayle Simonson in Edmonton, we can also offer 100-word history vignettes for use in your own community! [Here are vignettes 1-8](#). (Word format; when you click, the file will save automatically to your Downloads folder.) For our fourth vignette, she writes:

Rev. Astor Schrag, at the time of church union, was minister at an independent Union Church in Vegreville. In 1925, he attended both the final meeting of the Congregational Union of Canada and the inaugural General Council of the United Church in Toronto. His commitment to church unity never wavered and at age 95, he was still leading an ecumenical Bible study. He died in 1978 at 102. A window in Banff's Rundle United Church, dedicated in 1965, commemorates this Congregational leader in the west.

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 music for the 100th anniversary, free to use and enjoy**

Rev Richard Hall of Wingham ON has written to the Regional Councils with a very generous gift: four original songs to be used freely across the church, including scores and sound files. Some are co-authored with past Moderator Walter Farquharson, and all include scores and sound files. Thank you for helping us honour this time, past, present and future, Richard! [Click here for full details](#).

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](#).

Wider Church News & Resources

★ **American full communion partners file lawsuit on the religious freedom to help migrants and immigrants**

February 11 more than two dozen American faith groups filed a lawsuit against the US government for violation of their religious freedom regarding their practices of serving immigrants and immigrant communities. [Click here to read it](#); it's as much sermon as legal language. This push includes our full communion partners, the United Church of

Christ and the Disciples of Christ; most mainline denominations; the Brethren and the Mennonites; the Unitarians; and Reform Jews.

American author and church historian Dr Diana Butler Bass comments, *"Remember: Do not obey in advance. Use your freedoms to their fullest extent. Don't give up before we've pushed back. We do not have to surrender. We have rights."* We continue in prayer as our US siblings in Christ push back against multiple plans to strip Americans and asylum-seekers of their rights.

★ **Webinar – Works in Action: Supporting Anti-Racist Initiatives, February 27, 12 pm EST / 10 pm MT**

The Foundation is hosting webinar *Works in Action: Supporting Anti-Racist Initiatives* on February 27th, 2024 at 12PM EST. This one-hour webinar will showcase projects that engage with anti-racism, with the support of the United Church of Canada Foundation. It will feature a panel of past grant recipients who will share insights into their projects, lessons learned, and experiences working with the Foundation. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about the meaningful work being done! [Registration at this link](#).

- 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.

[And the project now has a brand new website- check it out here!](#)

In Case You Missed It:

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](#).

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.

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

This message is for all 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.

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

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

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

[Ash Wednesday - March 5, 2025](#)

[World Day of Prayer - March 7, 2025](#)

[International Women's Day - March 8, 2025](#)

[Loving Our Neighbours: Worship for Five Sundays of Lent](#) (Stewardship Resources)

[First Sunday in Lent - March 9, 2025](#)

[National Affirming PIE day - March 14, 2025](#)

[Second Sunday in Lent - March 16, 2025](#)

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

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



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