



News from the Region: April 2, 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](#). And brand new, [here are vignettes 9-17](#). (Word format; when you click, the file will save automatically to your Downloads folder.) For our next vignette, she writes:

"The United Church has been known for its stance on many political issues and a number of ministers have turned to politics. Peter Dawon was serving in ministry in southern Alberta when he won the provincial Little Bow constituency. In 1937, he was named Speaker of the Alberta Legislative Assembly and held that post until his death in 1963. He was the longest-serving Speaker in Alberta history. Ministers elected federally include Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg), Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg), Robert Oliphant (Toronto) and Walter Mclean (Waterloo.) Former moderator Lois Wilson was named to the senate by Prime Minister Jean Chretien in 1998."

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

♥ Athabasca United is pleased to announce a special 100th Anniversary Celebration Service with our Moderator **[The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne](#)**. **Where:** Athabasca United Church, Athabasca. **When:** May 4th 10am – 11:30 am. **After:** Lunch (free will offering) will be offered at Amber Valley Hall along with a brief talk and tour of the Amber Valley Cultural Centre and an opportunity to meet and greet with our Moderator. **RSVP: Attention: FAB Collaboration:** buchurch2021@gmail.com. **Please RSVP by April 20th**. Posters available on request to buchurch2021@gmail.com.

♥ Goodfish United Church welcomes you to commemorate our centennial together. If you feel moved to do so, please bring a food item to share. [Find us with this google maps pin](#). Several people will be staying May 24th and or the 25th at Metis Crossing - please contact Rev Kimberly Roy for directions or with any questions: 780-728-7455.

★ **Proposals to the Regional Council: Deadline May 1**

Northern Spirit meets in person and online May 29-June 1. Voting on proposals will be part of this meeting, as with all Regional meetings. Proposals create policies and other commitments or decisions for the regional council. All communities of faith and members of the Regional Council are invited to consider creating a proposal, but please have a careful look at what they are and how they should be written, [using this template and guiding questions](#). **The deadline to receive them is May 1.**

★ **Federal election resources for people of faith concerned about justice and equity**

Regional and national staff collaborated to offer [a list of resources and some principles for people of faith engaging in the federal election process](#). That includes voting but more than that, this is an invitation to think about the social concerns most important to you, and to work on some key questions and requests for your candidate and for federal parties. We hope this resource helps you bring concerns of justice and equity to our national conversation. It will be updated as we go, as possible.

★ **Regional Council signs on to national letter to federal parties re**

2SLGBTQIA human rights

On the International Transgender Day of Visibility, over 200 trans, queer and allied organizations across Canada have [published an open letter to the leaders of Canada's major federal political parties](#) urging them to uphold equality, freedom and human rights for trans and queer people in Canada. The letter, authored by Queer Momentum, Egale Canada, the Enchanté Network and the Dignity Network of Canada, recognizes the global backlash against 2SLGBTQIA+ equality, and urges party leaders to "reject any effort, however veiled, to roll Canada backwards on equality and human rights for queer and trans people."

Our Regional Council signed on, thanks to fast work from the Affirm Team, and so did many other United Church and other Christian groups. [Sign-ons are still welcome](#) (despite the posted initial deadline) Consider asking your community of faith to do so.

★ Problems with this newsletter landing in spam folders

This might be the definition of a useless reminder, because if this newsletter joins the many others that have landed in your spam folder recently, you won't be able to see it in your inbox! We and others across the church have been having huge problems with our mass mail sender, Mail Chimp, being designated as spam by email providers. Are we frustrated? You bet. It's always a good idea to check your spam folder often, as many wrong fish can be caught in the net when your email provider updates their filters. Move the newsletter from your spam folder to your inbox; right-clicking might also bring up options like "always allow emails from...." You can also add the email that's sending the newsletters to your contacts: northernspirit@united-church.ca. Though this doesn't always help, it's worth a try. Thanks for your patience, and if your weekly newsletter is missing, you know where to check. Please contact the office if you need some help.

May is PAR Month!

Communities of faith all over Canada will be promoting consistent monthly giving through PAR all month long. Your community of faith should get involved!

PAR makes both giving and receiving simple for donors and communities of faith. If you haven't promoted your PAR program recently, or are not currently accepting automatic monthly donations, May is your month to grow generosity in your congregation.

There are resources—like letter templates, flyers and even a sermon—in the **Downloads** section of [this website](#). You can also reach out to your stewardship support person Vicki Nelson via [email](#).

Celebrate 100 Years with Colour!!!

Are you looking for quality children's content for use during your worship services, as part of Sunday school, or to send home with families? To celebrate the United Church's centennial year, a series of children's activity pages have been created. As of February 2025, 6 pages are available featuring a history of a United Church leader with accompanying colouring page. Start off a series focused on the Centennial with the Happy Birthday United Church activity page. Once children have created their works of

art, parents can use the QR code on each activity page to submit photos of finished artwork to share with the wider church! The activity pages and more great content are available in the Centennial Toolkit.

[Get the Toolkit!](#) / [Aussi disponible en français](#)

Artwork by Alexander (age 5, Ontario) and Arebelle (age 10, Saskatchewan).

Wider Church News & Resources

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

★ Important search the landfill update and prayer for the families

On Prairie to Pine Regional Council's website there are [updates and prayers about the ongoing search of Prairie Green landfill](#). Please use and share these. Also included is a reminder about the upcoming **Red Dress Day May 5**, and **Moosehide Day May 12**. Your community of faith is invited to honour these days, both of which focus on ending violence that continues to be a terrible lived reality for so many- including families who had to fight for the landfill search, and carry the grief of lost loved ones.

★ Jubilee campaign for debt cancellation- and hope

Jubilee 2025 is a global ecumenical initiative that builds on the transformative success of Jubilee 2000, which canceled \$100 billion of debt for 36 low-income countries. The Global South and Indigenous communities face a devastating debt crisis, with many nations spending more on debt repayments than on healthcare, education or climate action. With other groups, [KAIIROS is mobilizing communities of faith and conscience](#) to demand:

- * **Debt cancellation** for unjust and unsustainable debts.
- * **Global financial reform** to prevent future crises.
- * **A debt resolution framework within the United Nations** that is transparent, binding and fair.

★ Survey on social isolation and loneliness and the role of Christian communities

[Cardus](#), a Canadian non-partisan and Christian think tank, is conducting a national survey on the issue of social isolation and loneliness and the role of Christian communities. Specifically, we are looking to hear from Christian church leaders from across the country on this topic. We are asking one member of the leadership team of each congregation — whether a pastor or designated leader — to complete the survey **by April 12, 2025**. It should only take 15 minutes to complete and is conducted online. More information and the links to respond to the survey can be [accessed online here](#). The survey is available in both English and French and should only take approximately 15 minutes of your time.

★ **GreenSpirit Chaplaincy** is up and running!

GreenSpirit is an outreach ministry available to anyone exploring or practicing ecological spirituality. We strive to help foster and deepen the connection to the Spirit, to Mother Earth, and to all our relations (human and more-than-human). A great way to participate is through a **GreenSpirit Grove**: a weekly hour of earthen bible study, sacred teachings, and spiritual support. [More information about this new ministry](#) / [Join us on facebook](#) / Contact Shawn Sanford Beck at greenpriest@hotmail.ca.

Mission and Service is looking for volunteers!

Why be a Mission and Service volunteer? You might be able to do **a Little or a Lot**: You really want to dig into a big project to help the United Church, and you have the time to do it – or you're super busy, but you have a few minutes for Mission and Service. As a volunteer, if you can do just a little bit, you can share Mission and Service stories in your community of faith each week. If you can do a lot, you can create surveys, test new resources, or share opportunities for promoting Mission and Service (and whatever you do, we'll provide the resources you need!) Contact us today and learn more about how you can help! Mission and Service Volunteer Program, The United Church of Canada: ms@united-church.ca / 1-800-465-3771.

In Case You Missed It:

March Executive Update:

The Executive of NSRC met online and in person, Wednesday March 12th. The main theme of this meeting became "if we want to do something, let's do it big and bold!" We were inspired after hearing about NSRC Commissions and committees working hard to connect with communities of faith and ministers in different ways, reviewed as always our financial picture, the business that may need to come to the in person meeting in May 2025, as well as heard about themes arising for General Council 45's conversations.

We are excited to announce that we empowered the staff, along with Executive members, to develop a new staff position to focus on our ministry of serving those under 30 (called First Third Ministry). We are very grateful for the legacy funds from Alberta Northwest Conference and Presbyteries that will help in funding these new roles. More to come at our Annual Meeting in May 2025!

Tech help is at hand for online education at United in Learning!

For excellent online education about all things church and world, head over to United in Learning and to many other groups on Church X, our online learning platform. Because you need a one-time free account, and because technology is... touchy (to be polite), UiL has now introduced a help line. "This covers Zoom meeting challenges, course registration challenges, account problems, or questions that you may ordinarily direct to our email conedu@united-church.ca (which you can still use). If the matter is urgent, call back! Likely we just missed it on our phones. Keep this number handy!" **United in Learning Toll-Free Help Line: 1 888 531 4111**

Israel breaks ceasefire agreement with immense civilian casualties; resources on Palestine for federal election

The United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) speaks out against this terrible violence: "In the early hours of March 18 Israel attacked Gaza with planes, drones, helicopters and tank fire, killing over 400 unarmed civilians....this massive attack is unconscionable. We urge the Canadian government to condemn this breaking of a negotiated ceasefire and the murder of the unprotected civilian population of Gaza. May God have mercy on the souls of the dead and ensure justice for those who kill, provide armaments or stay silent."

UNJPPI has also endorsed a five-point call for justice and peace in Palestine and Israel, focused on the anticipated federal election campaign. All five points and their accompanying education materials are in keeping with United Church policy and with actions our partners in Palestine and Israel have asked us to take. We have a voice, and we have choices. Please take a careful look at www.votepalestine.ca.

New General Council website and library

General Council (the national church) has created [a new national home base](#) for: Public documents for all meetings of the General Council, plus summaries of the work of General Council Executive. The new site replaces the old General Council 44 site, and is the new home for our upcoming General Council 45 and all church policies and decisions, in a format that should allow much easier searching and sharing than the previous website. These are still being transferred over, so some documents are not yet available.

Worship Resources:

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

[Fifth Sunday in Lent - April 6, 2025](#)
[Palm/Passion Sunday - April 13, 2025](#)
[Good Friday - April 18, 2025](#)
[Easter/Resurrection Sunday - April 20, 2025](#)
[Earth Sunday - April 20, 2025](#)
[Second Sunday of Easter - April 27, 2025](#)
[Camping Sunday - April 27, 2025](#)
[Third Sunday of Easter - May 4, 2025](#)
[Mental Health Sunday - May 4, 2025](#)
[Asian Heritage Month 1 - May 4, 2025](#)
[Fourth Sunday of Easter - May 11, 2025](#)
[Asian Heritage Month 2 - May 11, 2025](#)
[Christian Family Sunday - May 11, 2025](#)

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

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



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