To access a link in this newsletter, please press CTRL + mouse click on the highlighted link.

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| [View this newsletter in your browser](https://mailchi.mp/2e56a98c912a/january-2021-news-information?e=492a91ea67)Next Deadline for submissions: February 10 (February 16 Issue) |

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| ***Q***: How many of your leadership know about the Regional Council's Facebook,YouTube channel, website and newsletters??***A***: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_fill in the number\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |

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| **REGIONAL COUNCIL OFFICE NEWS** |

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| **United Fresh Start** |

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| Does your church have a relatively ‘new to you’ minister? The Human Resources Commissions of our regional councils want to help new pastoral relationships get off to a healthy beginning by inviting you and your minister to take part in the [United Fresh Start](https://www.unitedfreshstart.ca/) program. There are over 20 modules of resources to support learning together. A couple of the core modules – ‘Transitions’ and ‘Entering a New System’ – plus one called ‘Habits, Norms and Expectations’ will be offered this winter and spring by Zoom. We invite you to register a group from your community of faith, including your minister, for these modules. ***We invite you to register a group from your community of faith, including your minister, for these modules.***

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| MODULE & Registration |             DATE |   TIME |
| [Transitions](https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/ufs22) | Tuesday, February 9 | 7 - 9 pm |
| [Transitions](https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/ufs22) | Saturday, February 20 | 9 - 11 am |
| [Entering A New System](https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/ufs07) | Tuesday, March 2 | 7 - 9 pm |
| [Entering A New System](https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/ufs07) | Saturday, March 20 | 9 - 11 am |
| [Habits, Norms, Expectations](https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/ufs12) | Tuesday, April 6 | 7 - 9 pm |
| [Habits, Norms, Expectations](https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/ufs12) | Saturday, April 24 | 9 - 11 am |
| [Family Systems](https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/ufs10) | Tuesday, May 4 | 7 - 9 pm |

We have facilitators prepared to offer modules of United Fresh Start to individual congregations as well. If you are interested in this, please contact Diane Blanchard, Minister, Pastoral Relations, for a list of UFS facilitators. The schedule above is offered without charge. Engaging a facilitator for your community of faith alone has a suggested fee of $221 per module, negotiated with and payable to the facilitator. |

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| **Good Things To Know ... from the Covenant Commission** |

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| **Annual Meetings and Reports**Resources and updates for congregational annual meetings and reports can now be found on the regional council website in Congregational Support Toolkit #11. This includes the amendment for postponing the annual meeting until after June 30 if necessary, and allowing the governing body to approve the draft budget until such time as a meeting can be held safely. For those serving in elected positions, their term will continue until the nominating report can be approved by the congregation at the annual meeting. The governing body may fill vacancies, if required, until a congregational meeting can be held. The Covenant Commission encourages congregations to seek ways to hold the annual meeting at its normal time if at all possible. This may be by zoom or telephone conference. This is a regular part of the life of the congregation, and an important opportunity to engage members and adherents in the decision-making process. The resource “How to Hold Meetings in a Pandemic” is available on the website under the Covid-19 resources. Best practices include keeping the meeting simple, focusing on approving the annual report, budget and nominating report and possibly using the polling option on zoom for voting. This is also a great opportunity to recognize those in your congregation who have done an amazing job adapting, learning and continuing to support your shared mission and ministry throughout the pandemic. Even if you decide to postpone your annual meeting, please prepare the annual report at the normal time so that it is ready and available. **Collaborative Ministry**A new handbook outlining ways communities of faith can partner to share ministry personnel, programs, buildings and more is now available. If your congregation is considering part-time ministry this is the time to explore this option.**Helping You Stay Connected**Thanks to imagination, flexibility, determination and technology congregations have been doing an amazing job of providing meaningful worship, social connection and administration throughout the pandemic. However, one of the greatest concerns continues to be reaching those without access to the internet. For those interested, there are options available to help meet this need. For a monthly fee, your congregation can upload your worship service or message as an audio file. Members can then phone in at any time to listen to the recording. The phone number remains the same for as long as you have your account. There are several providers of this service available in Canada for you to consider, such as [Sermonbyphone](https://sermonbyphone.com/). For those using Zoom, you may want to check out the Facebook group called “[Zoom Faith](https://www.facebook.com/groups/zoomfaith)”. This group discusses and shares best practices for using zoom for worship, provides peer support, and ideas for making the most of this platform. We also encourage you to share your insight and ideas on our regional council Facebook page as neighbours helping neighbours. And for those interested in learning more about livestreaming worship, Edge has put together a great range of resources that can be found on their website <https://edge-ucc.ca/covid-19/category/live-streaming/>. Thanks be to God for the many ways we can stay connected and the people who are working to make it happen. |

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| **EVENTS** |

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| **February is Black History (or African Heritage) Month in Canada** |

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| This is a time to honour the contributions and struggles of peoples of African descent. How do you (and your congregation) plan to mark it? The United Church has many [worship resources](https://united-church.ca/worship-special-days/black-history-month-1?mc_cid=fa569b4863&mc_eid=1807891ded) for each week, including new blog posts, prayers and a new Black History Month service for 2021.This year, to accompany the blog posts, we will also be sharing video interviews of the writers, which we hope will enrich your experience. |

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| **Black History Month: A Personal Story** |

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| Forty years ago, my sister-in-law, a wise woman, was bemoaning people's fascination with her darling baby boys. She was responding to the attention people gave and the delight they took in her biracial sons because my sister-in-law realized that would change, that it would become fear and disrespect as they grew into men. I should have paid more attention! Then I would have been less taken aback at how the world's fascination with my toddler son changed as he grew into a six foot plus tall man whom the world sees as black. Many of us have been paying more attention to race thanks to Black Lives Matter. As a white, middle-class, educated Canadian who lives in a biracial family and who is committed to racial justice, I still trip over my privilege and participate in racist systems. I would like to think I am not racist but I could not claim that I am an anti-racist and the world needs us to be anti-racists. The United Church of Canada recognized this at the October meeting of the recalled General Council and made a commitment to work towards becoming an anti-racist denomination. The Executive of our regional council pledged to engage the topic of Black Lives Matter over this year.How will you and your community of faith participate in this effort? Please check out Black History Month resources on www.united-church.ca. Share news of what you found helpful.Let's help each other become anti-racist.Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa |

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| **Discerner’s Prepare: Annual Explorer’s Weekend ImmersionFebruary 4 - 5, 2021 Online** |

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| Are you feeling a call to engage your faith more deeply? Are you curious how a theological degree may influence the course of your life? Then be an Explorer! Over the course of this weekend you will be able to 'tour' the school, meet the principal, attend community worship, sit in on a class, attend the G. Peter Kay lecture (Amy-Jill Levine), spend time with the Directors of Denominational Foundation, learn some Theology 10% and have a panel discussion with some Theological Field Education & Capstone students.Please contact Julie Lees for more information and to register. |

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| In related news:The Montreal Diocesan Theological College and the United Theological College are entering into a strategic alliance. [Read the announcement](https://mcusercontent.com/ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b/files/f0af0d28-040b-42e9-b528-ed4c913218c9/UTC_DIOPressRelease.pdf), includes FAQs. |

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| **A Taste of Palestine: Taste Food, Hear Stories, Make Change! February 16, February 23 and March 9** |

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| A three-part event: with Live Cooking with Fatma and Claire from Palestine (Zoom) Find out [more about the cooks](https://unjppi.org/taste-of-palestine.html). Cooking Demo that you can follow along & enjoy the flavours.**February 16, 9:30 am** - Fatma Nawaja from the village of Susiya in the South Hebron Hills cooks in her village which is currently under demolitionorders.**February 23, 9:30 am** - Claire Anastas, a Palesinian Christian, lives in Bethlehem in the shadow of the wall. Join her as she cooks mansaf.**March 9, 9:30 am** - Learn about the work of United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine IsraelDownload and [share the poster](https://mcusercontent.com/ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b/files/f0d95ab1-4966-41e2-8507-e83d54248a57/TasteofPalestine.pdf). Click here to [register by Zoom](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEkf-igqzoiHNF9kLQNabHBvGHZmoxTUAAH). |

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| **Affirm United / S’affirmer EnsembleTuesday, February 16 - 7 - 8:30 pm** |

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| Download the [Affirm United / S’affirmer Ensemble newsletter](https://mcusercontent.com/ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b/files/3f83f5f4-059a-4455-863c-52ae1569d070/Affirm.pdf) which includes notice of the first of the Kitchen Sink series for 2021, Pancakes and P.I.E. with host Pam Rocker. Packed with many more notices! |

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| **Centre for Christian StudiesFriday, February 12 - 12:00 to 1:00 CST** |

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| This is your chance to join the Centre for Christian Studies virtually for an hour to explore timely topics of theology, life, and faith. It is open to laypeople and clergy.On February 12 from 12:00 to 1:00 CST we will look at **Zoom Tips for Annual Meetings**. We will review the basics of how to use Zoom, go over the nitty gritty of hosting a virtual annual meeting and have a chance to share tips and favourite features. The workshop is free but you must [register in advance](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEucOurrT0sH9Ll5LeO5bYPOxkbZ9zWTHvz) by clicking on the workshop name and filling in the form.If you have questions, email info@ccsonline.ca.            https://mcusercontent.com/ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b/images/0301725b-8e52-4f38-a3fb-7f10b1e93d07.png |

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| **MISSION & SERVICE** |

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| **Sign up for God’s Mission, Our Gifts** |

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| Signing up for this [e-newsletter](https://united-church.ca/e-newsletters) is the only way to get news about grants, stewardship, Mission & Service stories, Minutes for Mission and amazing generosity!Sign up for the [Gifts with Vision catalogue](https://giftswithvision.ca/) as well and help save and transform lives! |

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| **Residential School Survivor Answers the Call to Ministry** |

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| Deb Anderson-Pratt was ordained as a minister last fall. She shares her [personal story](https://united-church.ca/stories/residential-school-survivor-answers-call-ministry?mc_cid=1507c08385&mc_eid=1807891ded) of struggle with religion and her dream of a safe place. Growing up, Deb would never have imagined that she'd become a minister. A Cree/Saulteaux residential school survivor, Deb disliked the church for many years.Photo credit: Kent Stewart |

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| Mission & Service through The Healing Fund supports the Sandy-Salteaux Spiritual Centre in Manitoba, where both Indigenous and Christian spiritual beliefs are respected, shared, and understood. |

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| **RESOURCES** |

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| **Innovation Grants (for that wild idea for 2021!)** |

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| Thinking about a brand-new idea but not sure if it's a good enough, or something worth pursuing? That’s exactly what **Innovation Grants** are for! You get between $500 and $5,000 to explore a new idea; it could be a garden, a program, something online, a new partnership, an idea that came from a community partner, or something that you have been thinking about for a while, but never found a good time to start. [Learn more](https://www.united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/embracing-spirit/innovation-grants?mc_cid=8b2b22dfba&mc_eid=1807891ded&utm_source=E-Newsletters&utm_campaign=8b2b22dfba-ETS_171011_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_53a49c9e28-8b2b22dfba-188942713).Already have an idea that's ready for the next level? [Check out these grants](https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/embracing-spirit/how-grow-your-idea?utm_source=E-Newsletters&utm_campaign=8b2b22dfba-ETS_171011_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_53a49c9e28-8b2b22dfba-188942713&mc_cid=8b2b22dfba&mc_eid=1807891ded) that will help to take that idea and grow it.Either way, we’d love to hear what you're up to and it's easy to reach us! Just [book a time](https://calendly.com/carlaleon/30min?utm_source=E-Newsletters&utm_campaign=8b2b22dfba-ETS_171011_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_53a49c9e28-8b2b22dfba-188942713&mc_cid=8b2b22dfba&mc_eid=1807891ded&month=2020-10) with us, or email us. April 15 is the next deadline for applications. |

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| **2021 Video License Applications Still Open** |

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| For more information about these licenses, the fee structure, and how to apply, please visit [buyingunited.net](http://buyingunited.net/video-licensing). Learn more about what the license offers and answers to some [frequently asked questions](http://buyingunited.net/video-license-faq).For more information email or call Alexandra at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 4157. |

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| **United in Learning has much to Offer YOU** |

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| The following are some of the [webinars](https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars) on offer:* Congregational Finances During the Pandemic
* Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders
* Licensed Lay Worship Leader Training
* Racial Justice Workshop
* Faith on the Move - an online journey through Lent
* Discernment for Ministry -- Webinar Series
* Pension Information Seminar

To name a few. |

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| **Grand River Bookstore** |

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| [Download this flyer](https://mcusercontent.com/ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b/files/54e28f94-f25c-453d-9486-e25f5f4a7ced/GrandRiverBookstore.pdf) from the Bookstore at Five Oaks. They are offering the Lenten Study Guide by Julie McGonegal ‘**Faith on the Move**’, ‘**Bible with or without Jesus – How Jews and Christians read the same stories differently**’ by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler and more … including **Zoom Book Displays**, and **Zoom Book Studies.** |

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| **Faith On The Move - an online journey through Lent: Daily Reflections on Hope & Change** |

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| Are you aching for a community of friends to walk through Lent with this year? Yearning for a few wise souls to share the risky, surprised-filled adventure and explore the places that will challenge you and stretch you to your limit?Find out more at [United-In-Learning](https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/369-faith-on-the-move?mc_cid=cf8bf00541&mc_eid=1807891ded). This year's Lenten book is full of reflections on hope and change to help us cherish the complex stories of the Bible. It's good to read by itself; it's even more exciting to read together with others! We'll meet every Tuesday at 1:00 pm:* February 23
* March 2
* March 9
* March 16
* March 23
* March 30
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| **Looking for Regional Council Prayer Cycles?** |

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| You found the list of ministries and community of faith prayer cycles. They are found on [www.prayercycles.ca](https://www.prayercycles.ca/). Wayne Irwin took on this task after the former Hamilton Conference ended and has expanded it. Let's live out our God-given mandate, “to pray for one another,” by providing regular, confidential prayer support that connects us to the total ministry of the community of faith.Contact prayer@churchwebcanada.ca with your questions. |

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| **Palestinian Speaker for your Worship Service** |

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| If your faith community is already doing online worship because of COVID-19, but you miss having special sermons and discovering new things then enrich your Sunday experience with a sermon from the perspective of a Palestinian Christian guest speaker?Sign up for ***Encounter***, a virtual liturgy program that gives you early access to sermons, special prayers, and music by Palestinian faith leaders. The sermon will correspond to the common lectionary, and will be 8-10 minutes in length and sent 2-3 weeks in advance as YouTube and Zoom videos.More information on the program [found here](https://friendsofsabeel.ca/featured/encounter-the-holy-land/). |

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| **SOCIAL JUSTICE** |

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| **URGENT ACTION NEEDED:Israel Must Provide Vaccines to Palestinians** |

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| [Voice your concern](https://mcusercontent.com/ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b/files/35997470-b679-4f29-9dd8-f688e87f8ab5/UNJPPIAction.pdf) about Palestinians' lack of access to Covid-19 vaccines. |

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| **United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel** |

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| Go to the [UNJPPI website](https://www.unjppi.org/index.html) to find out about the latest news and activities. We talk about Apartheid, Air B&Bs, Advocacy Letters, Children’s Rights, Canada’s New Foreign Minister and current Campaigns.[Sign up](https://us6.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7f4ab9a5a57204972eba6a8cf&id=3ebd6591af) to receive the United Network for Justice & Peace in Palestine & Israel newsletter to your Inbox. We welcome your questions and requests for more information by email. |

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| **World Premiere of United As One** |

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| https://mcusercontent.com/f61273749cb51631850ac8b12/video_thumbnails_new/b4fcaa8f9820bff15ad8ae18a721938d.png |
| 23 young, talented Palestine refugees release a message of hope and unity for the world through a song composed in collaboration with a group of international songwriters and musicians.  |

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| They are all members of the 2018/2019 Agency-wide Student Parliament representing the voices of over half a million Palestine refugee girls and boys studying in more than 700 schools operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. |

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| **LOCAL NEWS** |

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| **Seeking Music Director** |

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| [Streetsville United Church](https://www.streetsvilleunited.ca/2020/12/director-of-music-search/), a vibrant suburban congregation is seeking a [Director of Music](https://mcusercontent.com/f61273749cb51631850ac8b12/files/491c767d-bda6-4889-bb8b-d79abcf02544/Director_of_Music.pdf). |

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| The Horseshoe Falls Regional Council newsletter welcomes submissions of upcoming events, regional news and educational opportunities. This is also the place to keep up-to-date on information from the regional office. Check out the https://mcusercontent.com/3430c44e426848fe31d8afb4b/images/cab77de6-f20d-465d-bca4-5af8cefd0b43.png page and the https://mcusercontent.com/3430c44e426848fe31d8afb4b/images/114af828-242c-42b9-a93f-07bc3a02816b.png channel! |

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| ****Supports, Connects, Empowers********Communities of Faith**** Horseshoe Falls Regional CouncilThe United Church of Canada |

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| [SUBSCRIBE!](https://mailchi.mp/a6c74df63026/horseshoe-falls-regional-council-newsletter-sign-up) |

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