



**The United Church  
of Canada  
General Council**

# **GC45 Living Skies Regional Council Report**

True Document Date: June 22, 2025

**Origin: Living Skies Regional Council**

## **Geographic Location**

**Living Skies Regional Council is The United Church of Canada in the treaty territories of Saskatchewan.** Living Skies Regional Council (LSRC) of The United Church of Canada has actively embodied its commitment to "Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice" in this last triennium.

## **Deep Spirituality**

In May 2023, LSRC officially became an Affirming Ministry, culminating a three-year journey to publicly, intentionally, and explicitly celebrate Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

The 2024 Regional Meeting centered around the theme "Deep, Bold, Daring," aligning with the United Church's vision. Regional meetings are always a source of inspiration, celebration and learning. We continue to seek ways to gather and be the church in a variety of ways. At this meeting we were particularly blessed to celebrate the Ordination and Commissioning of 15 Designated Lay Ministers who had faithfully served Saskatchewan Conference and Living Skies Regional Council as well as a new ordinand and admission of an ordained minister from another denomination. It was a celebration to remember!

A Centennial event "From Fear to Hope: What is the United Church Called to be?" as well as our retiree gathering and Celebration of Ministry service will take place in May 2025 to help us commemorate and remember our history and look towards our future.

# Bold Discipleship

Nominations continues to be some of the hardest work of the Regional Council. Finding people to serve on the various committees and commissions that resource the work of the regional council is difficult. We have many dedicated volunteers who offer their gifts and talents, and we offer our sincere thanks for all of the work they have done and continue to do.

Justice work is struggling with a reduction in numbers, as many who offer justice leadership have been called to spend more of their time offering leadership in their own communities of faith or others, largely because of a drop in both membership and the number of paid accountable ministers. Nonetheless, the work continues: persistent, creative, and Spirit-ed.

Finding ways to support leaders in our Communities of Faith falls to our support committees: Ministry Personnel Support, Lay Leadership Support and Community of Faith Support. Gatherings for ministers, lay leaders and congregations happen regularly for education, support and collegiality. Maintaining connections and offering support for active ministry personnel as well as our retirees continues to be a priority of the Regional Council.

The Property Commission in Living Skies continues to work with Communities of Faith as they faithfully make decisions about closure, amalgamations, the sale of buildings and distributing assets. This is challenging work as we deal with the grief of losing our community spaces and yet often shows us ways to be the church in new and innovative ways.

## Daring Justice

In 2023 and 2024, both Northern Spirit and Living Skies Affirming Committees spent considerable time educating about proposed, and eventually passed, legislation in Saskatchewan and Alberta targeting gender-diverse people. They have also offered pastoral care space. This is a profound ongoing concern and advocacy needs to continue. Countering this, we continue to see growth in our Affirming movement, especially in rural areas and small towns.

Living Skies has been taking leadership on Israel-Palestine, along with a small group in Prairie to Pine. Commitments have included:

- An innovative “Cooking Under Occupation” webinar series during COVID, with guests live from Palestine showing traditional food preparation and talking about food security in the context of military occupation;
- Multiple community film festivals; Living Skies passing a community proposal calling on the Global Food Security Institute (University of Saskatchewan) to end its academic collaborations with Israeli universities;
- For Easter 2024 a tri-region resource for participating in the Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage
- Fall 2024 resource on the olive harvest’s cultural and economic importance and settler violence. Winter 2025 focus on an arms embargo.
- UC participation in a March 2025 ecumenical meeting with MB’s deputy speaker regarding provincial actions in support of Palestine.
- Long term commitments made to using the Palestine Land Exercise to engage United Church members alongside ecumenical and interfaith partners.

Living Skies Regional Council remains committed to a vision of the church that is spiritually deep, courageously faithful, and justice-centered. Challenges remain — including rural depopulation, post-pandemic fatigue, and systemic inequities — but so too does a vibrant, Spirit-led hope. Together, we will continue to follow Christ into places of possibility, discomfort, and transformation.

## Youth and Young Adults

Living Skies continues the tradition of Saskatchewan Conference of valuing youth and young adult ministry through engagement with our camps, youth events, confirmation events and more.

## Staff

A big thank you to the dedicated staff who resource Living Skies! The staff compliment is: Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Minister; Bev Diebert, Administrative Support; Lindsay Mohn, Youth and Young Adult Minister; Meghan Drabble, Youth and Young adult Animator. Living Skies also shares staff with Northern Spirit and Prairie to Pine: Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister; Julie Graham, Justice and Communications Minister; and, Chantal Winslow, Executive Assistant to the Executive Minister. Currently the Living Skies Archives are served by the archivists from Northern Spirit and Prairie to Pine, Leanne Templeton and Erin

Acland.

Heather Dootoff, Finance Administrator retires at the end of June 2025, we offer thanks for her dedication to this ministry and wish her well in her retirement.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister.

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