

Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble

Annual report 2015



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UNITED | ENSEMBLE

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Minutes: 2015 Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble Annual General Meeting

St Matthew's United Church, Halifax, NS

Attendees: Linda Hutchinson, Julie Graham, B. Collin Smith, Peter Haddow (St. Andrew's UC, North Bay), Rod Desjardins, Jim McAvena (McKillop UC, Lethbridge), Pam Rocker, Bruce Hutchinson, Jen Carter-Morgan, Anne Pirie, Eldon Hay, Anne Hebb, Warren McDougall, Jenni Leslie, Liz Carter-Morgan, Ruth Wood, Anne Wood, Judy Amsbury, Warren Schell (Glen Rhodes UC), John Ross, Michiko Bown-Kai, Lyn Miller, John R. Calhoun, Isobel Raven, Carol Smiley, Ruth Bramham, Cindy Bourgeois, Tracey Smith.

- 1) Opening and Welcoming: Collin Smith, Co-Chair, welcomed those attending the meeting
- 2) Prayer: Warren Schell led in prayer
- 3) Holy Manners/Language Considerations: Collin asked those present to adhere to the Holy Manners and language considerations outlined in the Annual Report.
- 4) Call to Order: Collin called the meeting to order at 9:10 am
- 5) Enabling Motion: **Moved by Jen Carter-Morgan seconded by Eldon Hay that all persons present be invited to participate in the discussions and all non-members be corresponding members of the meeting. Carried**
- 6) Approval of Agenda: **Moved by Judy Amsbury, seconded by Warren Schell that the agenda for the meeting be approved as circulated. Carried**
- 7) Minutes from 2014 AGM: **Moved by Warren McDougall, seconded by Judy Amsbury, that the minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting held on July 13, 2014 be approved as circulated. Carried**
- 8) Reports: **Moved by Anne Hebb, seconded by Linda Hutchinson, that the reports in the printed Annual Report be received. Carried**
 - a) Co-chair report: Collin spoke to the Co-chair report
 - b) Affirming Ministry Program report: Collin expressed appreciation for the work of the Affirming Ministry coordinators. There was a discussion about how many ministries have thought about becoming Affirming. Edmonton Presbytery has a list of Affirming Ministries and those who perform inclusive marriage. Members were encouraged to approach their Presbytery about preparing similar lists.
 - c) Membership report: John spoke to the report in the Annual Report. Individual



memberships are down compared to recent years and John encouraged individuals to join the organization.

d) Merchandise report: no questions

e) Secretary report: no report

f) Transgender conference report: Ruth spoke to the report.

g) General Council Office Liaison report: Michiko Bown-Kai spoke to the General Council Office Report and the major achievements of the year.

i) Communications Report: Julie spoke to the Communications report in the Annual Report. Webinars are planned and are likely to be aired this coming year.

9) Nominating Committee report and elections: Pam explained the open positions in the nominations report, gave background on each candidate, and asked Michiko Bown Kai to address the court as a candidate for Co-chair. The Chair declared nominations open for each position. She called for further nominations for each position open in turn and received no nominations from the floor. The following were appointed by acclamation – **President - Collin Smith, Vice President - Michiko Bown-Kai, and Members at Large - Warren McDougall for a one year term, Serena Patterson for a two year term, and Chris Mann and David Cathcart each for a three year term.**

Moved by Warren Schell, seconded by Ruth Bramham that the Council be authorized to fill the position of Secretary. Carried

The Executive for 2015-2016 will be:

Collin Smith, President

Michiko Bown-Kai, Vice President

TBD, Secretary

Judy Amsbury, Treasurer

10) **Moved by John Calhoun seconded by Isobel Raven that the Council be authorized to select a person to serve as a member at large on the Nominations Committee for 2015. Carried**

11) 2014 Financial Statements: Judy Amsbury presented the financial statements for 2014 and answered questions. **Moved by Judy Amsbury, seconded by Ruth Wood that the financial statements for 2014 be approved as circulated. Carried**

12) 2016 Budget: **Moved by Judy Amsbury, seconded by Liz Carter-Morgan, that the Council be authorized to approve the final Budget for 2016. Carried.** Judy encouraged members to support AU/SE by donating through PAR.



13) New Business

- a) Approval of Reviewer of Financial Statements (Charles Lyall CA): **Moved by Lyn Miller, seconded by John Ross that Charles Lyall C.A. be appointed as Reviewer of the Financial Statements of AU/SE for the 2015 financial year. Carried**
- b) Possible bylaw review for 2016 – no bylaws presented for review.
- c) On behalf of AU/SE, Collin Smith thanked the organizers of this year's conference for their organizational work and for an excellent program.
- d) 2016 conference location: Collin announced that the 2016 Annual Conference will be held in Ottawa hosted by seconded by the Diversity Committee of Ottawa Presbytery.
- e) Collin issued a call for a conference location for 2017. Warren indicated that Five Oaks has issued an open invitation to AU/SE to hold their conference there.

14) News of activities from across the country. Promotion of the idea of ministries cooperating with each other in a region or city. Liz reported that Camrose is in the process of becoming an Affirming Ministry and is participating along with two Lutheran ministries in a growing space for LGBT youth in small city southeast of Edmonton. Linda mentioned Rainbow Sabbath at two locations in Bay of Quinte where there is a potluck meal and potluck worship. Pam talked about the Human Rites Conference in Calgary which was founded by five Affirming Ministries in Calgary – humanrites.ca. The conference will be held around the end of April/beginning of May in 2016. Eldon Hay talked about Maritime Conference and Chignecto Presbytery becoming an Affirming Ministries. Sackville UC is also entering the Affirming Process. Julie encouraged Affirming Ministries to send in their stories. In Peterborough area three new congregations have entered the Affirming process this year; hoping the three churches will join in the pride parade this year. Ruth indicated that three members of Cumber UC attended the BOQ workshop in Bay of Quinte. Ruth encouraged individuals to join UA/SE. Michiko related their church's experience in voting on the Affirming process which fell short of the required percentage. The Affirming committee has continued and brought for a marriage policy, which was approved. The AGM attendees discussed how we can address the statement "We are already welcoming, why do we need to become "affirming" need for a sign on the door to let people know it is safe inside the church, the rainbow symbol indicates the space is safe, the new brochure address this issue as well. Affirming is about being PIE ... public, intentional and explicit. Affirming work is Christian work ... "God has called me to doing this work, will you pray and discern with me about this". Becoming Affirming sends the message to the public that these Christians are publicly welcoming. Concern was raised that International Aids day on December 1 is ignored because of Advent. Eldon Hay noted that over the years things change in how congregations view becoming Affirming often leading them to become Affirming.

15) Recognition of 2014 - 2015 directors. Collin thanked the council for the amazing work they do.



16) Closing Prayer – Collin closed by offering a prayer.

17) Adjourn: the meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.

Pam Rocker, Chair

Bruce Hutchinson, Secretary

Gary Simpson, Camrose United Board chair and Affirming certificate; Brechin United (BC) congregation member Julie Oh at their celebration.



AU/SE co-chairs' report for the 2016 AGM

Michiko Bown-Kai and Collin Smith.

As co-chairs of Affirm United/S'affirmer ensemble (AU/SE), it is truly an honour to work with the wonderful Affirming ministries, and soon to be Affirming ministries, from coast to coast. It is exciting to see the growth of the Affirming movement as we've doubled the number of Affirming ministries in the last few years. And it is not only congregations which are becoming Affirming, but Presbyteries and Conferences, camps and schools, even the United Church General Council Office. We still have a long way to go, but it is inspiring to see so many communities coming together to work towards full inclusion of LGBTIQ2 people and towards embracing diversity.

This year has been a challenging one for our communities for as much advancement as we have seen for Trans rights, we've also witnessed ugly backlashes against Trans and non-binary people both here in Canada and across the world. We've witnessed the raising of the Pride Flag on Parliament Hill and historic Pride celebrations on First Nations reserves, while we have also suffered with our American friends due to the attacks in Orlando which remind us of the violence our communities have faced over the decades.

In 2015, the United Church of Canada General Council voted to apologize to LGBTIQ2 people for the role the church has played in harm done to our communities. This is a major step forward and Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble is committed to holding the United Church accountable for this

pledge. We are working within our communities across the country to gather our stories so that they can be shared as part of a living apology which needs to be more than just someone reading a statement, but a truly transformative experience which will move both the United Church of Canada and LGBTIQ2 people forward in a new relationship. It is not the role of Affirm United or our members to apologize to ourselves but to ensure that the United Church live up to its promise. We look forward to doing that in the coming months and years.

We would like to thank all the Council members for the amazing work they do month in and out supporting the work of AUSE. We would like to make special mention of council members John Calhoun and Warren McDougal who are stepping down from our council to pursue new opportunities. Their contributions have been invaluable to AUSE and they will both be missed. We wish them both all the best in the next chapters of their lives.

We couldn't do all that we do without the support of the Affirming Ministry Coordinators who work directly with the ministries working towards becoming affirming. This year we welcomed new council members and coordinators who have enriched the working life of AUSE. Mixed with the experience and dedication of our returning council members and coordinators our team is filled with some of the best people to work with across the country. We also wish to thank the wonderful teams who hosted our



conferences and AGMs last year in Halifax and this year in Ottawa. We are so fortunate to have such creative and dedicated volunteers to help create these amazing spaces and experiences.

We would be remiss to not mention the contributions of our Communications Coordinator Julie Graham whose passion, skill, sensitivity, and knowledge has brought us leaps and bounds forward in our ability to do the work that we do. Finally, we'd like to thank the wonderful staff of the United Church General Council Office who do so much to support our work.

We are facing exciting and sometimes extremely challenging times. We are inspired by the resilience, the compassion, and the tenacity of all involved in Affirm United across Canada and are confident that together we will continue into the future the work that our forbearers started and has meant so much to LGBTIQ2 people both inside and outside the United Church of Canada.

Michiko Bown-Kai and Collin Smith, co-chairs of the AU/SE Council.

(Below: Council selfie with staff and Moderator of the United Church in Toronto, February 2016.)



2015 Annual Reports from Affirming Ministries

85 out of a possible 138 Affirming Ministries submitted their reports for 2015, with an additional five ministries promising to submit their report soon (as of June 20, 2016). If those five are received, that will bring the total to 89 reports which is a 65% response rate. *Response rates from previous years have been: 78% in 2012, 42% in 2013, and 71% in 2014.*

Ninety percent of all ministries which became Affirming in 2015 submitted a report this year. In comparison, 53% of ministries that have been affirming for five years or more, did not submit a report. Eight of those older ministries have not submitted a report in the past five years.

Affirming Ministries continue to participate in Pride Parades; hold movie nights; acknowledge special days like the Trans Day of Remembrance (Nov 20) and the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (May 17); support other United Churches considering, or involved in, becoming Affirming; engage with local PFLAG and other LGBTQ+

organizations; and celebrate their Affirming Ministry anniversaries.



Reading through their annual reports continues to be surprising, inspiring and healing. Here are just a few highlights from this past year.

✚ **Maritime Conference** became an Affirming Ministry in October of 2015. Their new Affirming Ministry Committee created a plan of action noting such things as: preparing a list of people in the Conference who might serve as resource to pastoral charges, congregations, presbyteries wanting to know more about the Affirming Ministry process; working with the Conference Staff Committee to help flesh out the ways in which our Conference Staff embody our Affirming Ministry vision in their work and ministry; looking to a variety of ways to publicly proclaim our Affirming Ministry status in our Conference Office Centre, our communications, and media releases; engaging in immediate conversation with

the Conference Ministry Personnel and Education Committee regarding how they will communicate Conference's Affirming Ministry status to Inquirers, Candidates, Applicants for ministry within the Conference; and planning to prepare a list of pastoral charges/ congregations where fully inclusive marriage is already available. (Photo: President Matthew Fillier at the celebration. By Anne Hebb.)



- ✚ **Clifton Pastoral Charge's** Diversity in Action Committee in Nova Scotia, have this past year connected with and visited a local high school, Cobequid Educational Centre, introducing themselves to the students who make up the Gay/Straight Alliance. It was a worthwhile meeting and discussion, and the students were pleased to know other churches in their area were seeking to be inclusive in important ways.
- ✚ In Nova Scotia, one of **Truro Presbytery's** signs of commitment to their mission was the creation of a [Presbytery Hosting Guide](#), which was distributed to all pastoral charges throughout Truro Presbytery. The guide is filled with suggestions of how churches who choose to serve as hosts for Presbytery's monthly meetings might make their space an inclusive and affirming experience for all. It covers such topics as accessibility, gender-neutral washrooms, dietary sensitivities, scent free spaces, and providing child care during meetings... The guide was well received by the court in the winter of 2016, and was implemented almost immediately by all churches who shared hosting duties from February to May 2016.
- ✚ **At West Side United Church in Pentz, Nova Scotia**, a member of the congregation requested that the local town council grant permission to raise the Pride Flag at the beginning of Pride Week in Nova Scotia. The Members of Session offered support to this individual which culminated in the flag being raised in Bridgewater (July 2015). The congregation was advised that this was taking place and invited to attend. This was the first time that the flag had been raised – it was an historic moment. Of the approximately 50 people in attendance for the event about half were from our congregation. The member of our congregation who made the request along with our Ministry Personnel participated in the flag raising; they assisted the town Mayor and several other local dignitaries. It made "[front page news](#)" in the local paper and appeared again at year-end as a "highlight from 2015". This was a very proud moment to witness.
- ✚ **At Summerlea United Church** in Lachine, QC, it was brought up in our Outreach committee that although we were indeed an affirming congregation did anyone else around the neighbourhood realize it? After discussions within the committee and consultation with our minister, we began plans to have two Rainbow Flags permanently installed on the outside of our building. It wasn't until 2016 that our plans came to fruition. After consulting with Scott we decided to have the flags installed just prior to a special Affirming Sunday service that was being planned and to move outside at the close of the service for the dedication of the flags. For the service, in place of the usual sermon, Scott came away from the pulpit to tell his own fraught journey to ordination as a United Church minister (see [The Winding Path that led to Summerlea](#)). The flags are now visible from direction west, south and east.
- ✚ The **Bay of Quinte Conference office** which became Affirming in 2013, established an Equity Committee in 2015 to help them live into their commitment to be an Affirming



Conference. The committee led the executive in an accessibility workshop. The annual conference justice workshop 2016, known as the Fall Advance, will be hosted by the Equity Committee with a theme of "Equity, Justice and Equality: Confronting our Privilege, Confronting our Prejudices."

- ✚ **Four Rivers Presbytery** in Lanark Country (a conservative rural community west of Ottawa, reported on their participation in the Lanark County Pride Parade where they encourage clergy to wear their collars to increase visibility. They are working on a project of assembling contact information for sympathetic or supportive groups within their presbytery, to help build a network.
- ✚ **Castleton-Grafton Pastoral Charge** in Grafton, ON, has worked beyond the social justice orientation noted in other years (senior's housing, 100 Mile diet good food event, and their Heavenly Helpings recycled clothing depot etc.) with their work this year being marked by their refugee sponsorship program that in part flowed out of their Affirm focus. They wrote an article for Affirm United - [Why would a small rural congregation bother with becoming affirming?](#)
- ✚ On Jan 25th, at the AGM of **Dunbarton Fairport United Church**, in Pickering, ON they voted to take a membership in Affirm United and to become an affirming congregation. They passed the mission statement by 97% and the vote to take a membership with Affirm United by 88%. "We met some resistance by some who did not want to take out the membership but felt we could still call ourselves affirming. ...if it was the will of the congregation not to vote to take out the membership we would not in good conscience call ourselves affirming to honor the process and work of Affirm United," wrote Rev. Jeff Doucette. "At one point I was sure the vote would not go through...but during the discussion leading to the vote someone came forward to speak and came out to the entire congregation as transgender and received a thunderous ovation. I am sure that this turned the vote hugely positive. It was one of the most powerful moments of my nearly 20 years in ministry."
- ✚ **Richmond Hill United Church** in Richmond Hill, ON, wrote a letter of support, signed by the Chair of Council, for the passing of the Ontario Legislature Private Members Bill, #77, as presented by Cheri DiNovo, MPP, and an ordained United Church minister. This Bill, "Affirming Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Act" addresses the terrible treatment known as "conversion therapy" where people are supposedly "cured" of their non-heterosexual orientation. This Bill passed.
- ✚ **Parkminster United Church** in Waterloo, ON, are supporting a local Presbyterian Church as they move towards becoming an inclusive place for the LGBTQ community. They began a column called "You've been caught" doing something inclusive. And hosted an evening with speaker, Jessica DelRosso about what it is like being homeless as



a teenager once you have come out to your family. They had a follow up meeting with Jessica to see if she had ideas of what else the church could do.

- ✚ **Churchill Park United Church** in Winnipeg, MB, planned an event in partnership with other Affirming congregations in Winnipeg. After meeting with Gary Paterson and his partner Tim Stevenson they settled on an event focused on increasing their understanding of the transgender community. The event "[Understanding Spirit and Soul](#)" was held May 7, 2016.
- ✚ Members of **Grosvenor Park United Church** in Saskatoon, SK worked the coat check at Divas nightclub to raise money for [Camp Caterpillar](#). Camp Caterpillar is a camp for gender variant children, their siblings and friends as well as children from same sex parents. This camp is held at Camp Tapawingo (a United Church Camp). Our hope is that every United Church Camp will open a time for a Camp Caterpillar across Canada! Our PRIDE parade float won a prize as a float that celebrated same sex marriage. The prize money was donated to camp Caterpillar.
- ✚ **Southminster-Steinhauer United Church in Edmonton, AB**, started the [Rainbow Connections](#) group as a result of a young gay male who wanted a safe place to hold an alcohol free dance for junior and senior high youth that were LGBTQ+. The small group made the decorations, the food and taped some music and with the help of the supportive parents in the congregation who chaperoned and Affirm committee members were available an amazing dance transpired that had 70 kids show up from all across Edmonton. As a result of this success of the first dance there was a dance held in February and another one in May each being more successful than the past. The Rainbow Connections crew had such a great time making the decorations and art for the event that they organized a monthly youth art night which is open to all youth and young at heart not matter what your sexual orientation is. As a bonus some of the LGBTQ+ youth who did not have a church to belong to have started to attend Southminster-Steinhauer United Church.
- ✚ **Deer Park United Church**, Calgary, AB, provided financial support to Camp fYrefly (a 4 day residential style summer leadership retreat for sexual and gender minority youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two-spirited, queer and allied). The congregation joined other United Churches - **Hillhurst, Scarboro, St. Thomas and Wild Rose** - as founding partners of the [Human RITES conference](#) held May 15 to 17, 2015. Deer Park, Hillhurst, **Parkdale, St. Andrew's**, St. Thomas, Wild Rose are the planning team for [YQC \(Young Queer Church\)](#). This is deemed to be a revolutionary program that has a vision of creating an inclusive safe space for LGBTQ youth and young adults (age +16) where identity and faith can be reconciled. The website www.yqcbelong.com has been launched.



✚ The Affirm Group at **Knox United Church** in Parksville, BC, did not meet this past year. However members of the congregation supported other United Church in their process to, and celebration of, becoming Affirming. “Preparing this Annual Report gives me time to reflect on what we need to do next and I think, at this stage, a survey might be in order. If members of the ‘Affirm Group’ were to visit the various Knox committees and conduct an oral survey about what they think being Affirming has meant to them we might be surprised. We think we have many things ‘in place’ in Knox, but as time passes and staff changes, as people leave and new people come, it may be time to remind everyone of what was achieved 3 years ago.”

✚ **Alberni Valley United Church** in Port Alberni, BC, became an Affirming Ministry in 2015 and now provide space for their local PFLAG representative as well as Port Alberni Pride, PFLAG, Wilde Youth etc. to meet. They support Port Alberni Pride events such as the annual BBQ, and have created a gender-neutral washroom. In addition they are exploring opportunities to respond to the “Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action” by including First Nation language, stories and spiritual practice in our Sunday service.

I'd like to close this sharing of highlights with the words from Rev. Susan Ivany at Westminster United Church in Thunder Bay, ON:

✚ It's been a good year at Westminster. We are blessed with members and adherents who share amazing gifts within our faith community and the wider community of Thunder Bay and region.... Last summer, we shared worship with another United Church congregation in Thunder Bay. In July, both congregations worshiped at Westminster, and we all worshiped at the other church in August. The wonderful thing about this sharing is that we are two congregations who, on the face of it, appear to have little in common. We are an Affirming ministry, while the other congregation has historically been more on the traditional end of the theological spectrum.

It turns out each congregation had some biases toward the other. Thankfully, it only took about 10 minutes for all of us to figure out that those old stereotypes about who was “traditional” and who was “liberal” were completely ridiculous. We were simply children of God, drawn together to celebrate God's presence, pray, sing, and hear the gospel. Both congregations agreed that our sharing was entirely successful and we've all made new friends. Neither congregation is of a mind to convert the other – we know we're in this ministry together, and that's reason for celebration and gratitude.

In all our years as an Affirming ministry, this is perhaps the greatest gift we've experienced as a congregation – the clarity of knowing who we are, and even greater clarity in knowing that there is no “us” and “them” – there are simply faithful congregations on different parts of the journey. We understood this before last July, but our summer worship confirmed it in a concrete way. It was quite wonderful.



Being Affirming means we proudly proclaim the inclusive, astounding, love of God. Our life and faith are enriched when we remember Jesus' great hope: that all may be one.

Below is a list of all reports received for 2015:

British Columbia Conference

- Alberni Valley U.C., Port Alberni, BC
- Brechin U.C., Nanaimo, BC
- Comox U.C., Comox, BC
- Knox U.C., Parksville, BC
- Nelson U.C., Nelson, BC
- Salt Spring Island U.C., Salt Spring Island, BC
- Shiloh Sixth Ave U.C., New Westminster, BC
- St. Aidan's U.C., Victoria, BC
- Trinity U.C., Vancouver, BC

Alberta & Northwest Conference

- Deer Park U.C., Calgary, AB
- Garneau U.C., Edmonton, AB
- Hillhurst U.C., Calgary, AB
- Knox U.C., Calgary, AB
- Living Spirit U.C., Calgary, AB
- McDougall U.C., Edmonton, AB
- Mill Woods U.C., Edmonton, AB
- Parkdale U.C., Calgary, AB
- Southminister-Steinhauer U.C., Edmonton, AB
- St. Andrew's U.C. (St. Andrew's Centre), Calgary, AB
- St. Andrew's U.C., Lacombe, AB
- St. Albert U.C., St. Albert, AB
- St. Thomas U.C., Calgary, AB
- Wild Rose U.C., Calgary, AB
- Yellowknife U.C., Yellowknife, NT
- *Report expected to arrive soon:* St. Paul's U.C., Edmonton, AB

Saskatchewan Conference

- Eastside U.C., Regina, SK
- Grosvenor Park U.C., Saskatoon, SK

- St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon, SK
- St. James U.C., Regina, SK
- St. Thomas-Wesley U.C., Saskatoon, SK
- Sunset U.C., Regina, SK
- *Report expected to arrive soon:* Saskatchewan Conference, Regina, SK

Conference of Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario Conference

- Churchill Park U.C., Winnipeg, MB
- Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, Winnipeg, MB
- Immanuel U.C., Winnipeg, MB
- Knox U.C., Fort Frances, ON
- Knox U.C., Brandon, MB
- Minnedosa U.C., Minnedosa, MB
- United Church in Meadowood, Winnipeg, MB
- Selkirk U.C., Selkirk, MB
- St. Andrew's River Heights U.C., Winnipeg, MB
- St. Mary's Road U.C., Winnipeg, MB
- St. Paul's U.C., Thunder Bay, ON
- Transcona Memorial U.C., Winnipeg, MB
- Trinity U.C., Winnipeg, MB
- Westminister U.C., Thunder Bay, ON
- Young U.C., Winnipeg, MB
- *Report expected to arrive soon:* Cambrian Presbytery, Thunder Bay, ON

Manitou Conference

- St. Andrew's U.C., North Bay, ON

London Conference

- First-St. Andrew's U.C., London, ON



• Victoria Avenue U.C., Chatham, ON
Hamilton Conference

- Applewood U.C., Mississauga, ON
- New Vision U.C., Hamilton, ON
- Harcourt Memorial U.C., Guelph, ON
- Parkminster U.C., Waterloo, ON

Toronto Conference

- Applewood U.C., Mississauga, ON
- The Donway Covenant U.C., Toronto, ON
- Dunbarton-Fairport U.C., Pickering, ON
- Eastminster U.C., Toronto, ON
- Fairlawn Avenue U.C., Toronto, ON
- Glen Rhodes U.C., Toronto, ON
- Richmond Hill U.C., Richmond Hill, ON
- Royal York Road U.C., Toronto, ON
- *Report expected to arrive soon:* Grace U.C., Barrie, ON

Bay of Quinte Conference

- Bay of Quinte Conference, Belleville, ON
- Castleton-Grafton Pastoral Charge (Castleton & St. Andrew's UC), Grafton, ON
- Christ U.C., Lyn, ON
- Four Rivers Presbytery, Perth, ON
- Shining Waters Presbytery, Peterborough, ON
- Upper Valley Presbytery, Perth, ON
- St. Andrew's U.C., Peterborough, ON
- St. Mark's U.C., Cannifton, ON
- Sydenham Street U.C., Kingston, ON
- Trinity-St. Andrew's U.C., Brighton, ON
- Trinity U.C., Cobourg, ON
- St. Paul's U.C., Warkworth, ON

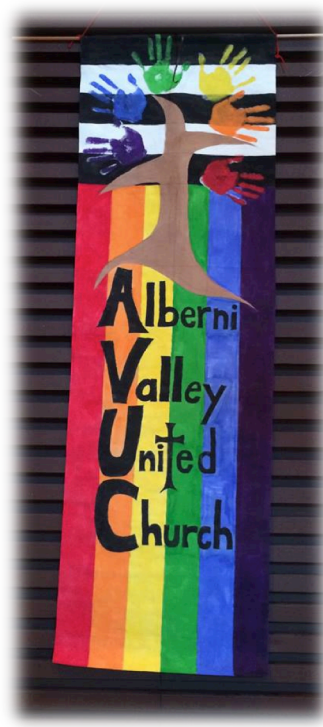
- Peterborough and Area Affirm United, Peterborough, ON
- Port Hope U.C., Port Hope, ON
- St. John's U.C., Marathon, ON

Montreal & Ottawa Conference

- Église unie Saint-Pierre, Québec City, QC
- First U.C., Ottawa, ON
- Summerlea U.C., Lachine, QC
- Beaconsfield U.C./ West Island LGBTQ Centre

Maritime Conference

- Bedford U.C., Bedford, NS
- Maritime Conference, Sackville, NB
- St. Matthew's U.C., Halifax, NS
- West Side U.C., Pentz, NS
- Truro Presbytery, Kemptown, NS
- Kingston Pastoral Charge (Kingston, Margaretville, & Torbrook Mines UC), Kingston, NS
- Clifton Pastoral Charge (Old Barns & Hilden UC), Old Barns, NS
- *Report expected to arrive soon:* Shelburne Pastoral Charge (Trinity & Lower Ohio Union Church), Shelburne, NS



It continues to be an honour and a blessing to collect the reports from Affirming Ministries throughout The United Church of Canada, and to support the work of Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble.



Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Sullivan

Ministry Partnership Animator, and LGBTQ⁺ Justice

Church in Mission/L'Eglise en Mission, The United Church of Canada/L'Eglise Unie du Canada

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"There is room for all, in the shadow of God's wing. There is room for all, sheltered in God's love."

More Voices #62



2015 Affirming Ministry Program Report

Once again, we present a report of a thriving program with a total of 20 ministries having become Affirming between January 1 and December 31, 2015:

Courts of The United Church of Canada:

Maritime Conference in the Atlantic Region	October 23, 2015
Four Rivers Presbytery in Bay of Quinte Conference ON	September 15, 2015
Assiniboine Presbytery in Manitoba Northwest Ontario Conf.	September 19, 2015

Congregations of The United Church of Canada:

Dunbarton-Fairport UC in Pickering ON	March 22, 2015
Fairlawn UC in Toronto ON	April 12, 2015
Grace UC in Barrie ON	June 21, 2015
Knox UC in Fort Frances ON	September 20, 2015
Manor Road UC in Toronto ON	April 26, 2015
Royal York Road UC in Toronto ON	January 11, 2015
St. Mark's Cannifton ON	May 24, 2015
The Donway Covenant UC in Toronto ON	May 24, 2015
Churchill Park UC in Winnipeg MB	February 1, 2015
Selkirk UC in Selkirk MB	June 7, 2015
St. Andrew's River Heights UC in Winnipeg MB	April 12, 2015
Transcona Memorial UC in Winnipeg MB	April 12, 2015
Trinity UC in Winnipeg MB	April 12, 2015
St. Andrew's UC in Calgary AB	February 8, 2015
Alberni Valley UC in Port Alberni BC	July 26, 2015
Brechin UC in Brechin BC	September 27, 2015



National Organization of The United Church of Canada

Diakonia of The United Church of Canada

May 1, 2015

The number of 20 new Affirming Ministries in 2015 is the same number as for the year 2014. The geographic breakdown is:

BC – 2; AB – 1; MB – 6; ON – 9; NB – 1; National Organization – 1.

The total number of Affirming Ministries as of December 31, 2015 was 139, including congregations, presbyteries, conferences, learning centres.

The number of ministries in the Affirming Ministry process was 90 at the end of December 2015. Ministries proceed at different rates through their process for various reasons – change in pastoral relations in a congregation, need to take more time due to the culture/experience of the ministry, and hesitancy/need encouragement to proceed, etc.

A summary of the numbers for the past 6 years:

Year	# in process	# of celebrations
2010	36 (first time named)	6
2011	50	2
2012	68	10
2013	80	17
2014	91	20
2015	90	20

Coordinators for the Affirming Ministry Program:

- ❖ January 1 to July 31, 2015, Anne Hebb, Linda Hutchinson, and Brian Mitchell-Walker provided coordination/oversight for this program in Quebec & the Atlantic Region, Ontario, and Western Canada respectively.
- ❖ August 1 to December 31, 2015, following Anne's retirement from the program, Linda had oversight responsibilities for Quebec and the Atlantic Region as well as Ontario and assumed the tasks of "keeping lists" up to date, printing certificates for new Affirming Ministries, and keeping an eye on the whole program. Brian continued to oversee the western region of Canada.
- ❖ Throughout the fall months, AUSE Communications and Marketing Coordinator advertised for candidates for the position of Coordinator : one to replace Anne Hebb in the east, and one to eventually replace Brian Mitchell-Walker who indicated that he would like to step down. No new coordinator was in place by December 31, 2015.



It was with regret that we accepted Anne's leaving the coordinators' team, which worked well and compatibly together. Anne had provided dedicated service for 7 years with wisdom, good humour and dedication. We are ever grateful for her service. A tribute to Anne was included in the 2014 Annual Report, which was presented to the Annual Meeting in August 2015, at the time of Anne's retirement.

Resources:

- Open Hearts found at <http://ause.ca/wp-content/pdf/OpenHearts.pdf> is our main resource
- "Requirements for Becoming an Affirming Ministry" (replacing Criteria on page 8 in Open Hearts) is found at <http://affirmunited.ause.ca/affirming-ministry-requirements>
- Other excellent resources for study and education, exercises, etc. are found on the AU/SE website, www.ause.ca

Gratitude:

We are very grateful for:

- the support given to this program by Julie Graham, Communications and Marketing Coordinator . . . wonderful publicity for the Affirming Ministry Program, great follow-up with pictures/news of celebrations and exciting ideas to further our work with United Church Ministries.
- the support given to this program by Jordan Sullivan of the General Council Office in collecting annual reports from Affirming Ministries, sending on this information to our Communications and Marketing Coordinator and the Affirming Ministry Coordinators, and for his general knowledge and wisdom which we often seek.
- the action groups and Affirming Ministries in various regions of the country who promote our program, offer workshops, speak and coach local ministries through the process.
- all those ministries in The United Church of Canada who are willing to take on the challenge of offering radical hospitality for all of God's people and to do so publically.

We end with a word from a new Affirming Ministry in 2015 – following their positive vote of 83%

*" please pass on the good news to the Affirm United team.
Thanks so much for all your wisdom over the last year and
letting me bend your ear so long! We'll let you know
our plans for our service of celebration . . . "*

Report respectfully submitted by Linda Hutchinson and Brian Mitchell-Walker on behalf of the Affirming Ministry Program.



Interim Report from Affirming Ministry Program: Jan 1 to June 27, 2016

From: Affirming Ministry Program Coordinators – Liz Carter-Morgan, Shaun Fryday, Linda Hutchinson, and Brian Mitchell-Walker (Written by Linda Hutchinson)

New Affirming Ministries (January 1 to June 27, 2016): Date of Celebration

New Vision United Church in Hamilton ON	Jan. 31, 2016
Trinity-Clifton Pastoral Charge in Charlottetown, PE	Feb. 14, 2016
McClure UC in Saskatoon SK	Feb. 28, 2016
Camrose UC in Camrose AB	Mar. 6, 2016
George Street UC in Peterborough ON	Sun. Apr. 3, 2016
Trinity UC in Peterborough ON	Sun. Apr. 10, 2016
St. Paul's UC in Boissevain MB	Sun. Apr. 10, 2016
Bay of Quinte Conference UCW	Wed. Apr. 13, 2016
Leaside UC in Toronto ON	Sun. Apr. 24, 2016
Meewasin Valley UC in Saskatoon SK	Sun. Apr. 24, 2016
Central UC in Moncton NB	Thurs. Apr. 28, 2016
Westminster UC in Whitby ON	Sun. May 15, 2016
Northwest Barrie UC in Barrie ON	Sun. June 5, 2016
Lansing UC in Toronto ON	Sun. June 5, 2016
Trinity UC in Ottawa ON	Sun. June 5, 2016
Barton Stone UC in Hamilton ON	Sun. June 12, 2016

Total number of Affirming Ministries, as of June 27, 2016 is 155, as follows:

NL 1; PEI 1; NB 2; NS 12; PQ 7; ON 65; MB 19; SK 11; AB 21; BC 14;
NWT 1; National 1 (Diakonia of UCC)

Total number of new Affirming Ministries in 2016 (Jan 1 to June 27) is 16.

Celebrations Pending:

	<i>Date of Celebration</i>
St. Paul's UC in Bowmanville ON	Sun. Sept. 18, 2016
St. Andrew's Wesley UC in Vancouver BC	tba
Wilmot UC in Fredericton NB	Sun. Oct. 2, 2016
Birchcliff Bluffs UC in Toronto	Sun. Nov. 13, 2016
Chignecto Presbtery, NS & NB	tba

Total number of ministries in the Affirming Process as of June 27, 2016 is 101.

Two new Coordinators are now participating in the Affirming Ministry Program:

In April, following approval of AU/SE Council at the end of March, Liz Carter-Morgan, from Camrose AB and Shaun Fryday from Beaconsfield PQ, became



coordinators for Western Canada and Quebec/Atlantic Region of Canada respectively. Linda Hutchinson continues as coordinator of Ontario. Liz and Shaun have gradually worked into the process by picking up new ministries as they register for the Affirming process. Linda and Brian Mitchell-Walker will continue with ministries already in the process for the time being. Eventually Brian will step down from working with ministries in the west.

This program is blessed to have Liz and Shaun, both ministering in Affirming Ministries themselves, to be taking on this important work. Thank you, Liz and Shaun.

Significant Stories:

Watch for amazing stories and great pictures of Affirming Celebrations and other activities in Affirming Ministries on Facebook and in our Affirming Ministries Newsletters THANKS TO JULIE – our Marketing Coordinator!

Conclusion:

It is a pleasure for us to have the opportunity to work with so many enthusiastic, committed people in the Affirming Ministry Program. We are grateful and our hearts are warmed when we hear the many stories of amazing Affirming journeys.



**Central
United
Church,
Moncton NB:
congregation
members and
Maritime
Conference
reps celebrate.**



Expression of Appreciation to Brian Mitchell-Walker

There are some people who are gifted with a spirit of generosity and passion for things that really matter; people who continue to offer themselves to other people, organizations, and causes which are working for a better society for all of God's people and creation. There are people who do so with cheerfulness and commitment beyond what most can imagine.

Brian Mitchell-Walker is one of those special people and we express our sincere appreciation to him as he once more moves out of a volunteer position of responsibility in Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble.

In September 2016, Brian will step down from being the Coordinator for the Affirming Ministry Program in western Canada after four years working with Anne Hebb, Linda Hutchinson and latterly Liz Carter-Morgan and Shaun Fryday. In this position, Brian has coached all four of us as we took on the task of accompanying United Church ministries through the Affirming process. He has brought wisdom and gentleness to his accompaniment work with numerous ministries – congregations, presbyteries, Conferences, learning centres, etc. – as they have educated themselves in the complex matters of offering radical hospitality to all marginalized people, particularly people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Brian's depth of experience in the Affirming Ministry Program and United Church work, such as chairing the General Council Gender Justice, Racial Justice Committee, has been a wonderful asset. This has been especially true as we refine the evolving "Requirements" for becoming an Affirming Ministry into comprehensive, clear steps that a ministry must take in order to have the privilege of calling themselves an Affirming Ministry within The United Church of Canada and using the Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble logo. Brian has also worked with Anne and Linda to update our main resource, *Open Hearts*, soon to appear as a revised edition on the AU/SE website.

Brian's depth of experience in the Affirming Ministry Program also included a previous stint at being a Coordinator when he took over the position from Ron Coughlin. At that time, there were about 5 ministries becoming Affirming per year. In 2015, we had 20 ministries achieving that status in the one year alone!

With his expertise in websites, Brian first developed and now manages the Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble website.

For a period of two years prior to becoming an Affirming Ministry Program Coordinator for the second time, Brian offered his leadership skills



to co-chair the Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble's Council.

Sounds a bit like recycling and in this case, as is the case with good recycling, this proved to be of great benefit to the organization and hopefully gratifying to Brian. Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble has benefitted many times over from

Brian's generous participation, commitment and leadership. As he steps away – again – we offer thanks and blessings, confident in the knowledge that Brian will be with us in spirit and at the end of a phone call for advice or information!
Thank you, Brian!

-- Linda Hutchinson



Brian at work, presenting McClure United, Saskatoon, with their Affirming certificate.



General Council Office Annual Report 2015

Jordan Sullivan, LGBTQ+ Justice, Church in Mission (CIM), General Council Office

1. General Council Office Staffing Changes

- a. **LGBTQ+ Justice:** At the end of August in 2015 the 18-month contract with Michiko Bown-Kai came to an end. We were very sad to see Michiko's position end, and also for the inability to hire new staff to pick up the work of LGBTQ+ Justice. During the fall of 2015 and early winter 2015-2016 Adele Halliday addressed issues related to the work of LGBTQ+ Justice. By late winter 2016 the work of LGBTQ+ Justice had been added to Jordan Sullivan's portfolio.

2. Follow-Up from the Trans Gender Diversity Task Group (2009-2011)

- a. **Health Spending Account (HAS) for Benefit Members re: Transitioning:** As a result of the recommendations made by the task group to GCE in 2011, the May 2015 issue of *Connex* announced that financial support was being extended to members who are transgender and are transitioning. *Note: As of January 1, 2016 it was approved to extend coverage to dependents.* Members can be compensated for eligible medical expenses incurred during the transitioning process until completion or the \$20,000 lifetime maximum is reached. In 2015 only one United Church employee created a Health Spending Account and is benefiting from the coverage through Greenshield. Staff are very much aware that the eligible medical expenses are extremely limited, especially for male-to-female trans people. We know that much work needs to be done as the church finds itself limited by the Canada Revenue Agencies very strict definitions of how financial support for transitioning gender is managed. For more information on the Health Spending Account, contact Margaret Kowalczyk (Benefits Specialist) at ministryandemployment@united-church.ca.
- b. **General Council Office Bathroom Policy:** Michiko began the work of creating a bathroom policy at the General Council Office. It was hoped to implement the plans in 2015, but this was delayed with researching the cost of building a gender-neutral bathroom. Jordan and Adele followed up on this, pushing for the implementation of the policies Michiko created.
- c. **Celebrating Gender Diversity Kit:** Before completing their contract, Michiko Bown-Kai created a new resource (building on the kit originally created by the task group) entitled "Celebrating Gender Diversity: A Tool Kit on Gender Identity



and Trans Experiences for Communities of Faith.” The resource was posted online in November of 2015. *Note: Michiko voluntarily provided two new additional resources for the kit which were posted in an updated version in March of 2016.* This resource is available to download at <http://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/gender-and-orientation%20> (see ‘Downloads’ at bottom of page).

3. Gender Identity Webinar Series

- a. On December 3, 2015 a webinar entitled “**Celebrating Gender Diversity: Five Stories**” was held through the EDGE Network. 91 people registered for this webinar, with 62 joining for the live webinar. The free webinar was created to help raise awareness of the lived experience of trans and genderqueer people in the United Church of Canada, and to deepen the personal ministry and/or the mission of affirming ministries, by listening to and learning from the experience of trans people of faith. Speakers included: Cindy Bourgeois, Rita O’Link, Jordan Sullivan, Evan Smith, and Michiko Bown-Kai. This webinar was recorded and is available to view at no cost at <http://edge.united-church.ca/e-commerce/store/products/celebrating-gender-diversity-five-stories/>. Since Dec 3 a total of 108 people have downloaded access to view the recorded webinar.
- b. Additional webinars on gender identity to be held throughout 2016

Staff Contact: Jordan L. Sullivan

Lead Staff: LGBTQ+ Justice

[Jordan’s work also includes: Lead Staff, Poverty in Canada; Ministry Partnership Animator for camping, campus, and community ministries; Editor of the *United Action for Justice* e-newsletter, Church in Mission NEWS, and *At the Heart of Justice* blog; and Program Assistant for the work of Racial Justice & Gender Justice]

Church in Mission/L’Église en Mission

The United Church of Canada/L’Église Unie du Canada

1-800-268-3781 ext. 4151 jsulliva@united-church.ca



Dunbarton-Fairport United, ON, at Pride 2015.



Communications report

This report covers July 2015- June 2016.

The communications and marketing position includes ten hours work per week. It's an honour to be Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble's sole staff, and this work would be impossible without major support from our Council and from General Council staff at the United Church of Canada—and without you, our members and supporters.

Priorities: Improved contact management; consistent social media presence across more platforms; good photo management and use; more widespread promotion of the Affirming Ministry program; promoting better awareness of the vital ministry and work carried out for Affirming ministries; new website features and an updated template.

New Affirming ministries

The number of new ministries is a real highlight; please see the 2015 and interim 2016 reports from Affirming ministry coordinators for details. The album on our Facebook page shows just a few of the excellent photos we received from new ministries and celebrations. Further in this report you'll see the excellent media work that resulted from these celebrations and from work offered by existing ministries. It's been a pleasure to be in contact with the many people who took leadership roles in accompanying their ministries through the Affirming process.

Thanks to support from Jordan Sullivan, in June 2016 all new Affirming ministries began receiving a letter from the Moderator for inclusion in their celebration.

Existing Affirming ministries

The work carried out by Affirming ministries is diverse, creative, and an essential part of respect for the dignity and rights of gender and sexual minorities. If you want an excellent overview, see the report compiled by Jordan Sullivan, included in this annual report.

Last year, we added a new site section featuring Affirming ministries in action. These peer-to-peer stories are designed to highlight the creative work of Affirming ministries and inspire others. Please take a moment to enjoy them.

<http://affirmunited.ause.ca/category/affirming-ministries-in-action/>



Affirming ministry mapping

The United Church of Canada has a great new feature that allows website visitors to use an Affirming ministries filter when locating congregations. Many thanks to Jordan Sullivan, Bill Gillard, and many others for making this happen.

<http://www.united-church.ca/search/locator>

Media

We will likely have a short "At a Glance" story in the September *Observer*, focused on the sheer number of new Affirming ministries, including our record-tying seven new ministries in April. We are currently working on the possibility of a longer *Observer* piece but its status is uncertain.

Below are the or newspaper articles logged for late 2015 and 2016 so far, all but one focused on new Affirming ministries. Trinity-Clifton Pastoral Charge, the first Affirming ministry on PEI, [made CBC news](#). Local radio and TV are far harder to track, so this figure is likely low.

Social media

Our Facebook group has grown by 50% to 760 members in the past year, and our Facebook page has grown to over 500 people since it began in May 2015. The group in particular is seeing much more engagement, and has hosted some excellent conversations. A better Twitter presence and an Instagram presence are both continued needs.

Website: www.ause.ca

The site is now up to date in both languages. We now have a full suite of bilingual online forms for the newsletter, membership renewal, registration, and whatever else we need. For the first time, all annual conference registration and payment can be done online via our own site. This is a huge improvement, and it was a

Media links

[Knox \(Fort Frances, ON\) to be 'Affirming Ministry'](#)

[Church embraces atmosphere of radical welcoming: Oak Bay United Church hosts its open house this weekend.](#)

[Trinity Clifton United Church fully welcomes LGBT community;](#)
Charlottetown's Trinity Clifton United Church now designated an 'Affirming Ministry'

["Welcome home, welcome home."](#)
(Regina SK story on Council member Cindy Bourgeois)

[Everyone 'means everyone' at Trinity United Church \(Charlottetown\)](#)

[Trinity United Church becomes affirming ministry](#)

[United Church opens doors to all in official ceremony](#) (Camrose, AB)

[United Church officially affirmed](#) (Camrose, AB)

[United Church Women group receiving "affirming ministry" status](#) Bay of Quinte Conference United Church Women

[Two more Peterborough churches being recognized for commitment to inclusivity](#)

[Understanding Spirit & Soul: Church embraces transgender community](#) (Winnipeg)



pleasure to work on this project with the very knowledgeable and code-proficient Brian Mitchell-Walker.

We have dropped our project for mapping new Affirming ministries, as the United Church now has this feature (above). Our new priority is an events calendar, as well as an improved resources page and work on a refreshed visual template.

Newsletter

The regular *Consensus* newsletter is sent out bimonthly, with special notices sent in between. These have included callouts for the annual conference; celebrating the number of new Affirming ministries; and a statement mourning the mass murder of our kin in Orlando. Whenever possible we feature French articles and links; thanks to Jim Hodgson at the General Council office, we are also featuring more global partners. All articles are posted to www.ause.ca

New subscribers are low in number, which also reflects the reality that most newsletter subscribers are representing groups or communities, not individuals. Nonetheless, a jump in subscribers would be very helpful. **I welcome any efforts to encourage people and ministries to sign up for our free, no-membership-required newsletter.**

Banner stand 2

Our official banner stand has been travelling the country from the Rockies to Charlottetown since January, largely due to the work of Judy Amsbury. It was also present at General Council in Corner Brook NL (left).



The banner stand has helped our name and logo be featured in some excellent photos, and to be a formal part of Affirming ministry celebrations. A second, bilingual French/ English banner stand is now complete, and will generally be used Ontario and points east.

We need volunteers to help send out and track the banners. Is this something you could offer?



Special project: Gifts with Vision application/ M&S

With Jordan Sullivan's and Collin and Judy's support I submitted a proposal for including AU/SE's work in this innovative United Church fundraising project, which encourages direct donations to community ministries. (<https://giftswithvision.ca/>)

We have also been invited to write a "Minute for Mission" for 2017. M&S thank you wording for our annual grant of up to \$2,000 has now been added to <http://affirmunited.ause.ca/donate/>

Thank you

Everyone who sends in photos, stories, ideas, and questions contributes to Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble's capacity to tell its story. I want to offer particular thanks to Jordan Sullivan, Jordan has a job description that spans the waterfront and the globe, yet he always finds time for AU/SE and my many questions. I also thank Michiko Bown-Kai for their work during their time at the General Council office, and for the important storytelling Jordan and Michiko have facilitated through national webinars.

On the AU/SE side of the relationship, Council members Judy Amsbury, John Calhoun, Michiko Bown-Kai and Collin Smith are all wise and vital leaders and supports in this work. Affirming ministry coordinators Linda Hutchinson and Brian Mitchell-Walker have been a constant, steady presence whose guidance of ministries in the Affirming process is life-giving to both these ministries and me. I'm grateful for their generosity and patience. And it's always a pleasure to talk nerdy code and form fields with webminder Brian Mitchell-Walker.

When working away in my Saskatoon/ Treaty Six home office, I am deeply grateful for the web of committed and gifted people and communities who hold our movement together. Thank you for this opportunity to work with you all!

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Graham

*(Right: Trinity-Clifton
pastoral charge in
Charlottetown celebrates!)*



Leaside United Church, Toronto, after their Affirming celebration.



Nominations report 2016

Position	Incumbent	Recommended For Slate	Term Expires
President	Collin Smith	Collin Smith	2017
Vice President	Michiko Bown-Kai	Michiko Bown-Kai	2018
Treasurer	Judy Amsbury	Judy Amsbury	2017
Secretary	Cindy Bourgeois	Cindy Bourgeois	2018
Member At Large (MAL) #1	Warren McDougall	Rachel Lauren Clark	2016
MAL #2	Jenni Leslie	Jenni Leslie	2016 (2019)
MAL #3	Marco Ste. Marie	Marco Ste. Marie	2016 (2019)
MAL #4	Jennifer Carter - Morgan	Jennifer Carter - Morgan	2016 (2019)
MAL #5	Chris Mann	Chris Mann	2018
MAL #6	David Cathcart	David Cathcart	2018
MAL #7	Serena Patterson	Serena Patterson	2018
MAL #8	John Calhoun	MAL #8 needed	2016
Nominating Committee Member	Pam Rocker	Pam Rocker	



Membership Statistics as of June 30, 2016

Last Membership	Individuals	Affirming Ministries	Other Org's
2016	132	129	10
2015	51	12	6
Total of above	181	141	16
Year ago total	180	132	11
2014	24	4	6
2013	32	0	0
Complimentary	11	1	17
Conference & merchandise	54	0	0
Other contacts	4	2	36
Total this group	125	7	59
Total of all above	306	148	75
Year ago total	298	133	79
2012 & before	91	0	4
Year ago	83	0	3
Grand total	397	148	79
Year ago total	381	133	82

Notes:

- "Last membership" is the most recent year paid or a waiver of membership granted.
- Individuals have been sent tax receipts since charitable status was achieved.
- In November 2015, individuals and non-Affirming organizations that did not have 2015 memberships were asked for renewals; those who did so were given 2016 memberships.
- Affirming Ministries were sent invoices for their memberships in March 2015.
- Many "Other Organizations" with paid memberships are ministries on the journey to Affirming; they are not invoiced but are asked for membership renewals.
- "Complimentary": Individuals are Council members (past or current) or other volunteers with no record of paid membership. The Other Organizations are conferences and General Council (8), educational institutions and retreat centres (6), church-related



press (2) and local LGBT group (1); they are not considered members. The Affirming Ministry (1) is the Peterborough Area group, which is a member.

- Other Contacts are a new category mostly of email addresses, many prospective Affirming Ministries, and new Affirming Ministries not yet paid.
- Conference attendees and merchandise buyers are not considered members.
- "Year ago" numbers reflect the same number of years as the current. For example, the first "total of above" for "year ago" is for 2015 and 2014.
- The 2012 and before listings remain on the database but will rarely be used for mailing.
- Receipts, invoices and most other membership correspondence in 2015 were bilingual.

John R. Calhoun
Membership Coordinator

Below: St Andrew's River Heights Affirming celebration: each colour remaining itself while creating something new and beautiful. (Photo: Karen Lumley).



Financial statements

Previous year comparison: 2015 balance sheet and profit/ loss

	<u>Jan - Dec 15</u>	<u>Jan - Dec 14</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>
Income			
4000 · Memberships			
4010 · Affirming Ministries	13,100	12,100	1,000
4030 · Individual /Households	3,905	4,040	(135)
4050 · Institutional	<u>500</u>	<u>900</u>	<u>(400)</u>
Total 4000 · Memberships	17,505	17,040	465
4100 · Donations			
4160 · Other - non receiptable	682	198	484
4110 · Individual receiptable	8,725	5,739	2,986
4130 · PAR	2,465	3,385	(920)
4140 · Donations from other charities/	<u>716</u>	<u>970</u>	<u>(254)</u>
Total 4100 · Donations	12,588	10,292	2,296
4200 · UCC Grant	1,700	1,700	
4500 · Annual Conference			
4510 · Annual Conference Surplus	<u>2,075</u>	<u> </u>	<u>2,075</u>
Total 4500 · Annual Conference	2,075		2,075
4700 · Merchandise Sales	484	2,129	(1,645)
4800 · Other Income	<u>0</u>	<u> </u>	<u>0</u>
Total Income	34,352	31,161	3,191
Expense			
VOID CHEQUE			
6000 · Education/Research			
6020 · Gifts to Qualfied Donees	1,038		1,038
6010 · Annual Conference Expense	1,000	977	23
6050 · Affirming Ministries - Expense	1,248	1,788	(540)
6080 · Other Educational Initiatives	<u>50</u>	<u>2,186</u>	<u>(2,136)</u>



Total 6000 · Education/Research	3,336	4,951	(1,615)
6200 · Communications/Promo/Networking			
6295 · MARKETING COORDINATOR- OTHER	1,818		1,818
6290 · MARKETING COORDINATOR SERVICES	6,080	1,390	4,690
6030 · Website	3,774	1,735	2,039
6230 · Observer/Classified Ads	814	709	105
6240 · Aujourd'hui Credo		200	(200)
6250 · Translation	853		853
6260 · Print Materials	<u>958</u>	<u></u>	<u>958</u>
Total 6200 · Communications/Promo/Networking	14,297	4,034	10,263
6300 · AU Council			
6310 · Winter Meeting- Other	363		363
6315 Winter Meeting Travel	4,540	6,218	(1,678)
6330 · Summer Meeting & AGM-Other	402	61	341
6345 Summer Mtg & AGM Travel	6,749	6,425	324
6350 · Teleconference Meetings	<u>305</u>	<u>374</u>	<u>(69)</u>
Total 6300 · AU Council	12,359	13,078	(719)
6400 · Merchandise Costs	148	1,633	(1,485)
6500 · Administration			
6540 · Member/Donor Relations	602	534	68
6630 · Industry Canada		30	(30)
6535 · PAR service fees /Bank charges	190	208	(18)
6520 · Postage	114	100	14
6515 · Post Box Rental	194	194	
6610 · Accounting	299	319	(20)
6650 · Directors Liability Insurance	788	788	
6510 · Office supplies	<u>132</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>12</u>
Total 6500 · Administration	<u>2,319</u>	<u>2,293</u>	<u>26</u>
Total Expense	<u>32,459</u>	<u>25,989</u>	<u>6,470</u>
Net Income	<u><u>1,893</u></u>	<u><u>5,172</u></u>	<u><u>(3,279)</u></u>



Statement of operations: Budget vs actual, 2015

	<u>Jan - Dec 15</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>
Income			
4000 · Memberships			
4010 · Affirming Ministries	13,100	14,300	(1,200)
4030 · Individual /Households	3,905	4,000	(95)
4050 · Institutional	500	500	
4000 · Memberships - Other			
Total 4000 · Memberships	<u>17,505</u>	<u>18,800</u>	<u>(1,295)</u>
4100 · Donations			
4160 · Other - non receiptable	682		
4110 · Individual receiptable	8,725	4,000	4,725
4130 · PAR	2,465	4,000	(1,535)
4140 · Donations from other charities/	716	500	216
Total 4100 · Donations	<u>12,588</u>	<u>8,500</u>	<u>4,088</u>
4200 · UCC Grant	1,700	1,700	
4500 · Annual Conference			
4510 · Annual Conference Surplus	2,075		
Total 4500 · Annual Conference	<u>2,075</u>		
4700 · Merchandise Sales	484	2,000	(1,516)
4800 · Other Income	0		
Total Income	<u>34,352</u>	<u>31,000</u>	<u>3,352</u>
Expense			
VOID CHEQUE			
6000 · Education/Research			
6020 · Gifts to Qualfied Donees	1,038		
6010 · Annual Conference Expense	1,000	1,000	
6050 · Affirming Ministries - Expense	1,248	2,000	(752)
6080 · Other Educational Initiatives	50	2,000	(1,950)
Total 6000 · Education/Research	<u>3,336</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>(1,664)</u>
6200 · Communications/Promo/Networking			



6295 · MARKETING COORDINATOR- OTHER	1,818	2,000	(182)
6290 · MARKETING COORDINATOR SERVICES	6,080	11,000	(4,920)
6030 · Website	3,774	3,000	774
6210 · Consensus			
6230 · Observer/Classified Ads	814	900	(86)
6240 · Aujourd'hui Credo		200	(200)
6250 · Translation	853	500	353
6260 · Print Materials	958	500	458
6280 · Canadian & Intl Networking		2,500	(2,500)
Total 6200 · Communications/Promo/Networking	14,297	20,600	(6,303)
6300 · AU Council			
6310 · Winter Meeting- Other	363		
6315 Winter Meeting Travel	4,540	7,200	(2,660)
6330 · Summer Meeting & AGM-Other	402		
6345 Summer Mtg & AGM Travel	6,749	7,000	(251)
6350 · Teleconference Meetings	305	200	105
Total 6300 · AU Council	12,359	14,400	(2,041)
6400 · Merchandise Costs	148	500	(352)
6500 · Administration			
6540 · Member/Donor Relations	602	500	102
6535 · PAR service fees /Bank charges	190	150	40
6520 · Postage	114	100	14
6515 · Post Box Rental	194	200	(6)
6610 · Accounting	299	350	(51)
6650 · Directors Liability Insurance	788	850	(62)
6510 · Office supplies	132	100	32
Total 6500 · Administration	2,319	2,250	69
Total Expense	32,459	42,750	(10,291)
Net Income	1,893	(11,750)	13,643



NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Year Ending Dec 31, 2015

ITEM	BUDGET	ACTUAL	
Donations Individual	5,000	8,725	Single Contribution \$3,250 JC
Conference Surplus	-0-	2,075	Maritime Conf. Grant \$2,500
Gifts to Qualified Donees	-0-	1,038	Bedford UC Youth Project
Affirming Ministries Exp	2,000	1,248	Linda H. Travel to AGM
			Other travel re Cert. Present.
Marketing Co-ord -Other	2,000	1,818	Travel to AGM and GC 42
Website	3,000	3,774	Contract Hours & Software
Translation	500	853	\$400 for Newsletter & Banner
Print Materials	958	500	Banner & 1000 AM Flyers - Design, print



Auditor's Note

Charles Lyall
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NOTICE TO READER

On the basis of information provided by management, I have compiled the balance sheet of Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble, as at December 31, 2015 and the statements of operations and equity for the year then ended.

I have not performed an audit or review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, I express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Toronto, Ontario
June 8, 2016


ACCOUNTANT

