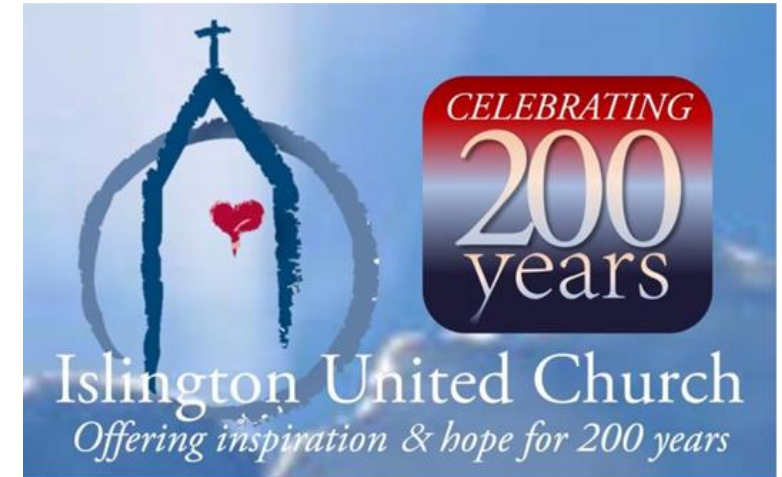




## Walking the Talk Town Hall Agenda - March 7, 2018



Opening Prayer and Agenda Review and Grace	Rev. Maya Landell	6:00
Dinner	Hosted by: Hospitality Committee	6:10
Affirm – Introduction of the Committee	Carrie Chenier	6:45
Affirm – the who, what, when, where, why, how	Debbie Stephens on behalf of Committee	6:50
Guest Speaker	Michiko Bown-Kai	7:15
The Motion / Discussion	Debbie Stephens	7:45
Closing Prayer with Thanks	Isla Grady	8:25

# Let us begin:

## Open Hearts / Open Minds / Open Doors

*As we begin today, we acknowledge the history, spirituality, culture, and stewardship of the land of the Indigenous people of this region, the Mississaugas of the New Credit who are Anishinaabe Ojibwe people.*

*We seek to live in respect, peace, and right relations with them as we live, work, and worship upon their traditional territory.*

*We pray that this time together is successful, productive and blessed. Holy Spirit guide us during our discussions. Give us wisdom concerning the opportunities and challenges that we face. Lord, we give You the glory for all that we accomplish in Jesus name, Amen*



# Grace and Dinner Discussion



# The Committee

Affirming Ministry Program Lead:  
Carrie Chenier

Committee members :  
Maya Landell, Alana Martin, Isla Grady,  
Jack Grady, Carol Smiley, Marilyn DaSilva,  
Virginia Beane, Peggy Sheffield

Town Hall and Listening Circle facilitator:  
Debbie Stephens



# Who is Affirm?



- Affirming congregations are part of a Network within the United Church of Canada
- Affirm commits to inclusivity
  - those of all gender identities
    - gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited individuals, etc.
  - those who are marginalized
  - those who are economically disadvantaged
  - those who are developmentally challenged or have physical disabilities



# What does Affirm do?

- It is more than being welcoming
- It is public, intentional and explicit in its commitment to diversity
  - uses symbols and signs outside and inside church building, web site, printed materials, banners, etc.
  - offers study, education and dialogue such as workshops, partnerships
  - ensures appropriate church policies
  - continues growth and celebration
  - includes Affirm in Mission & Vision statement
- It provides education to promote awareness
- It works to end discrimination against people
- It seeks to make a safe space that is inclusive



# Why Affirm?

- God calls us to be inclusive
- God calls us to love one another equally
- God calls us to live Matthew 22:37
- God calls us to work for justice in the wider church and community
- God calls us to witness without limit or restriction
- God calls us to Action

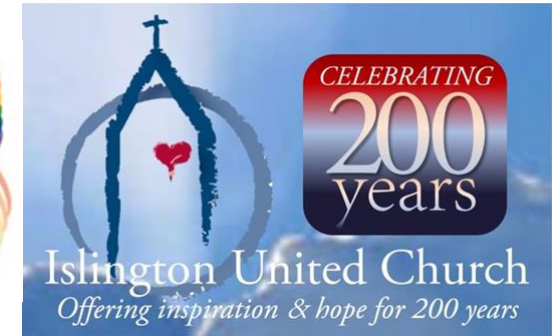


# How do we Affirm?

- There is a process for congregations to commit to Affirm
  - We need to understand and reflect
  - We need to share
  - We need to ask questions
  - We need to listen
  - We need to pray
  - We need to vote
  - We need to act



# What happens next – Action Plan!



1. Council review on need for a standing committee
2. Review all print materials for inclusion of AU/SE logo
3. Create/review changes needed to church property, eg gender-neutral washrooms, accessibility ramps/needs.
4. Committee chairs education
5. Develop/roll out on-going education program
6. Investigate community collaboration to provide support and ministry to marginalized people, e.g. LGBTQ seniors
7. Participate in Pride Month 2018
8. Send two or more participants to the 2018 Conference of Affirm United
9. Intentional participation of marginalized members in worship
10. Annual worship service celebration of being an affirming ministry
11. Collaborate with neighbouring Affirm congregations

# When do we Affirm?

- Congregational meeting on **April 8, 2018** called to vote
- Need 75% of those attending in favour of the motion to become an Affirming Ministry

## **Listening Circle** – **March 11, 2018** you are invited!

- Share stories
- Help us reflect and consider questions without judgment
- Provide an opportunity to deepen conversation around tough issues
- Provide an opportunity to listen, discern, share and be heard in a safe place
- Provide an opportunity to hear/learn a new language
- Prepare us to vote

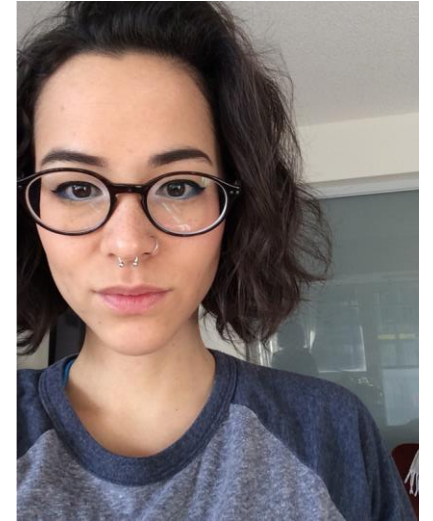


## Guest Speaker

**Michiko Bown-Kai** (they/them) is a queer person of colour who currently lives in the traditional territories of Huron-Wendat, Petun, Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the New Credit Indigenous peoples, often referred to as Toronto.

They are a recent graduate of Emmanuel College's Masters of Divinity program and now engaged in local congregational ministry at East End United.

Outside of ministry, Michiko's passions include highland dance and befriending as many dogs as possible.





# A motion to be approved (draft)

THAT:

- Islington United Church become a member of Affirm United/S’Affirmer Ensemble (AU/SE), a network of ministries engaging in community growth, solidarity, reflection that seeks to go beyond issues of gender diversity and sexual orientation to work for justice and inclusion of all, and in doing so;
  - commits to paying an annual membership fee of \$100;
  - adopts the Affirming Vision Statement;
  - adopts the revised Marriage Policy;
  - adopts the reworded Mission Statement.
- Motion made by:
- Seconded by:
- Discussion .....

# Affirming Mission Statement (proposed)



- Islington United Church, in keeping with its mission of open hearts, open minds, open doors, is committed to a ministry that is welcoming, inviting and affirming of all peoples.
- We journey together in faith as people of every age, sex, gender, race, sexual identity, mental or physical disability, family status, economic or cultural background.
- We commit ourselves anew to live and share our faith boldly so that no one needs to fear they are separated from God's steadfast love in Christ.
- We will counter injustice which violates a person's right to respect, dignity and to fair and equitable treatment in human society, by word and action.
- We celebrate the richness this diversity brings, even as it challenges us to be ready to walk with Christ down roads we have not yet explored.
- We shall build the community and world we believe God calls us to create, together and unafraid.



# Affirming Marriage Policy (proposed)

- The United Church of Canada and therefore by extension, Islington United Church, believes that it is God’s intention for human relationships that they be “faithful, just, loving, health giving, healing and sustaining of community and self”.
- This applies to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The United Church affirms that marriage is a lifelong commitment between two people regardless of gender and that marriage vows should be made with an intention of permanence.
- This policy applies to all people who believe in Jesus Christ and want to live faithful to his way.

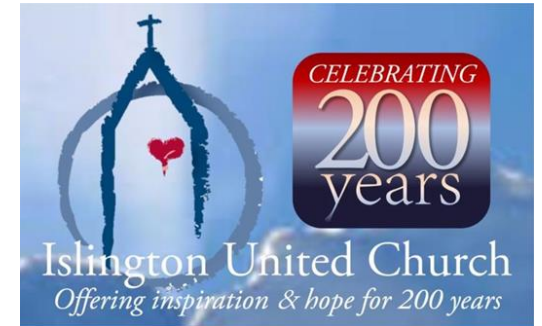
# Mission Statement

## Our Mission Statement:

- To be an open, friendly and caring church where people of all ages are invited to discover, explore and develop their spirituality in Christ's name.

## Current Working Mission Statement: (proposed)

- To be an open, friendly and caring church where all people are invited to discover, explore and develop their spirituality in Christ's name regardless of age, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical or mental ability, and to participate fully in the life and work of the congregation.





# A motion to be approved (draft)

THAT:

- Islington United Church become a member of Affirm United/S’Affirmer Ensemble (AU/SE), a network of ministries engaging in community growth, solidarity, reflection that seeks to go beyond issues of gender diversity and sexual orientation to work for justice and inclusion of all, and in doing so;
  - commits to paying an annual membership fee of \$100;
  - adopts the Affirming Vision Statement;
  - adopts the revised Marriage Policy;
  - adopts the reworded Mission Statement.
  
- **Vote on April 8, 2018!**





# Want to talk?



- If you have questions, want to attend a Listening Circle (March 11), or want to talk further with a member of the committee, contact:

Affirming Ministry Program Lead – Carrie Chenier

Committee members – Maya Landell, Alana Martin, Isla Grady, Jack Grady, Carol Smiley, Marilyn DaSilva, Virginia Beane, Peggy Sheffield and Listening Circle facilitator, Debbie Stephens

# Thank you

- Thank you for learning more about Affirm, for reflecting, for inquiring, for preparing, for growing, and for celebrating
- Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

