



Summary

To: UCC Regional Councils
Re: Process by which Regional Councils will become Affirming Ministries
Date: February 2019
From: Linda Hutchinson, Affirming Ministry Program Coordinator
hutchinl@kingston.net
Cindy Bourgeois, Secretary Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble
cindymbourgeois@gmail.com

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your patience as we have, with the help of the Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble (AUSE) Council, created a process for Regional Councils to become Affirming: a process which we feel will be equitable to those people who were formerly part of Affirming Conferences and Presbyteries and to those for whom becoming Affirming is relatively new. We greatly appreciate those of you who have done much to further the Affirming of the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups in your areas. At this unique time in The United Church of Canada, we, of course, encourage and hope that all Regional Councils will engage in this important justice work.

Immediately following, you will find a summary of our recommendations for Regional Councils engaging in the Affirming Ministry Program. More detail is found in the following pages as outlined in the summary.

Recommendations:

1. That all Regional Councils be strongly urged to undertake the process of becoming Affirming Ministries by fulfilling the "Requirements to declare your Ministry an Affirming Ministry" (with the exception of Requirement C – Inclusive Marriage Policy) as outlined on Pages 3-5.

The "Rationale for All Regional Councils Becoming Affirming Ministries", as part of the Living Apology – Iridesce, is found on Page 6.

2. That the process to become Affirming, undertaken by each Regional Council, be informed by the Regional Council's previous experience with the Affirming Ministry Program and be determined by Affirming Ministry Coordinators in consultation with the Regional Council Executives.

Please see "Recommended Affirming Process for Each Regional Council" Page 7-9.

3. That:

- i) for those Regional Councils deemed appropriate for an Interim Affirming Ministry Status, (see pages 7-9), the process will follow "Interim Affirming Ministry Status Process for new Regional Councils with Affirming Ministry Experience" as outlined on Page 10-11.

- ii) for those Regional Councils deemed appropriate for the regular full process (see page 7-9) they will follow the normal process for becoming an Affirming Ministry.
 - iii) for those Regional Councils where conversation is required (see page 7-9) the process will be determined by mutual agreement between AUSE and the Regional Council Executives.
4. That all Regional Councils in the Affirming Ministry Process, whether a shortened process (Interim Affirming Ministry Status) or the regular process, when preparing their Action Plans (Requirement B), will be informed by suggestions prepared by Affirm United with reference to how they will perform their responsibilities with an Affirming culture as outlined in “Developing Your Action Plan” on pages 12-20. These important proposals from the LGBTQ community are given as concrete ways that Regional Councils can implement, in an Affirming way, their responsibilities as outlined in the document “Responsibilities of the Regional Council” received from Rev. David Allen, Implementation Project Leader for the United Church in November 2018.

We anticipate that, by working together, we can take good advantage of this unique opportunity to contribute to creating something new - Regional Councils that publicly, intentionally and explicitly value and Affirm all of their members.

By joining our collective hearts, voices and resources, we can do this together as witness to a gospel of a compassionate and just society.

Blessings

Linda

Linda Hutchinson
Coordinator of Affirming Ministry Program
hutchinl@kingston.net

Cindy

Cindy Bourgeois
Secretary AUSE Council
cindymbourgeois@gmail.com



Affirming Ministries Program in The United Church of Canada

Affirming Ministry Coordinators:

Liz Carter-Morgan

lizcartermorgan@gmail.com

Jackie Harper

jackie.harper@bell.net

Linda Hutchinson

hutchinl@kingston.net

Before you embark on your journey - please initiate contact with the Affirming Ministry Coordinators (a contact form is online at www.affirmunited.ca).

Requirements to declare your Ministry an Affirming Ministry

In order to become an Affirming Ministry, your ministry (congregation, presbytery, conference, educational institution, outreach ministry, chaplaincy, retreat centre, camp) must go through an **educational/discernment process** that reflects on what it means to be inclusive and evaluates your ministry's openness to the ongoing work of being intentional about how it includes others within the life and work of your ministry. We expect that you will look at a variety of areas that may be barriers to those coming to your community - age, gender, race, ability, class, economic status and, in particular to the Affirming Ministry, sexual orientation and gender identity. The advice we have received from many Affirming Ministries is that this discussion should include as many groups within your ministry as possible – choir, UCW, spirituality groups, youth, children, outreach, etc.

Components of the Educational/Discernment Process should include:

- a) Hearing Personal Stories from within your ministry and the community in order to understand the need for this action
- b) Hearing about and discussing the modern theological understanding of scriptures which, for years and still today, are used to discriminate
- c) Hearing from Affirming ministries what impact that decision has had on their ministry. Discussing what it might mean for your ministry.
- d) Hearing about and discussing the social justice aspects of why becoming Affirming is important.

Resources – films, books, seminars - for this process can be found in *Open Hearts*, our resource book on the website.

This educational/discernment process could take up to two years depending on the “culture” of the ministry involved. When the ministry feels that it is ready to make a public declaration of its work to be inclusive, there are several actions to be put in place by your ministry as outlined below. All documents should be communicated to your Affirming Ministry Program Coordinator for approval.

Documentation

A. *A Vision Statement concerning the inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life and work of the Ministry*

Guidelines for writing your statement are listed in *Open Hearts* on the Affirm United web site www.affirmunited.ca. It is a useful process for your Ministry to write its own statement reflecting the particular community you are a part of, the gifts and commitments you bring to the church and world. Your statement might include inclusivity in a variety of areas (class, race, sex, age, ability).

A requirement of the statement is that it should specifically include the full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, in the life and work of the Ministry. This Vision Statement (or revised mission statement) is often agreed upon within the board and taken to a congregational meeting to be voted on by all members of the congregation. *However, it should be sent to the coordinators of the Affirming Ministry Program first beforehand so that it can be preapproved*

B. *A continuing Plan of Action for the Ministry*

This Plan, shared widely during the process with the ministry, might include:

- Ongoing work of your committee to reflect on what areas of inclusion can be further worked on. o Cooperation between this committee and other groups in the ministry to continue the education with new members.
- Ongoing educational events for your Ministry, presbytery, community or other ministries,
- Exploring issues of mission and ministry with people of all sexual orientations and gender identities who live in your community,
- Developing workshops for other ministries within your Presbytery and Conference
- Getting involved with the local AIDS Committee, PFLAG, hospice, etc.

C. *An Inclusive Marriage Policy (for Affirming Ministries that offer marriage services)* A Marriage Policy in which couples of all gender combinations are treated equitably.

D. *A Ministry Voting Requirement*

Once you have sent in your Inclusive Marriage Policy, received approval of your Vision Statement and Plan of Action from your Affirming Ministry Program Coordinator, you must seek approval of your ministry to become an Affirming Ministry through a vote in which we strongly advise a minimum of 75% approval. Remember the goal is to have everybody intentionally inclusive. So we

encourage all who are actively involved in your ministry to participate in the vote (for example in a congregation both official members and adherents).

E. *A commitment to the Affirming Ministry Program nationally by becoming a member of Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble*

Contact the Affirming Ministry Coordinator/s via email to:

- Provide a contact name (with e-mail) to be added to our network list. This contact would receive information and report annually the ongoing work of your Ministry. They also may participate in ongoing discussions between Affirming Ministries.
- Give an annual financial contribution to Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble. There is an annual institutional membership fee of \$100 to assist in advocacy and support (i.e. the Affirming Ministry Program, workshops, conferences, working in partnership with United Church courts), communications (i.e. website, email, conference calls, news releases), and providing resources for the national program (i.e. Open Hearts, Consensus blog). We recognize that some Ministries will be able to contribute more and others less. We ask that you notify our membership coordinator if you are unable to contribute in any given year with a short explanation of circumstances that prevents a contribution.

You are encouraged to visit the Affirm United web site to view “**Consensus**”, an online blog by Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble. You are also encouraged to send members to Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble's Annual Conference and General Meeting each summer (information available on website www.affirmunited.ca).

F. *A Public Celebration*

Once requirements A-E are complete, we expect you to hold a public service of celebration for your ministry, your community and the wider United Church (congregations, presbytery members etc.). Some ministries choose to have their service at an alternate time that allows for wider participation, and some will have it at their regular time with an invitation for other congregations to come and worship with them. It is at this service that you would receive a certificate from Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble to mark this step within your ongoing commitment. Following this celebration, you join the growing list of Affirming Ministries throughout Canada and will be listed on the Affirm United web site, www.affirmunited.ca

Revised November 2018



Rationale for All Regional Councils Becoming Affirming Ministries

As we consider the relationship between Affirm United/S'Affirmer Ensemble (AUSE) and the United Church of Canada (UCC) during this process of moving from Conferences and Presbyteries to Regional Councils, the Living Apology being expressed through Iridesce at GC43 and beyond must be remembered. One of the characteristics of an apology is that corrective action be taken. AUSE believes that a commitment by all Regional Councils to enter the Affirming Ministry Process would be an excellent start to effective corrective action.

AUSE recognizes that we do not speak for all LGBTQ+ people, and AUSE has much work to do with our own relationship with Two Spirit people, but a commitment for all Regional Councils to become Affirming Ministries would be a major step in the right direction for AUSE.

AUSE recognizes that the emerging Regional Councils are each being formed out of their own contexts and their journeys to Affirming Ministries will all be unique. Since certifying Affirming Ministries is the main work of AUSE, we want our Affirming Ministries to be as effective as possible. This is a unique time in the UCC requiring a unique response. AUSE sees the restructuring of the UCC as an opening to deepening our partnership.

We hope that this process helps AUSE and the UCC in joining our collective hearts, voices and resources to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society, both in Canada and around the world.



Recommended Affirming Process for Each Regional Council

Because some Regional Councils have a recent history of engagement with the Affirming Process, AUSE is committed to honouring that history and is committed to an “Interim Affirming Ministry Status” for those Regional Councils. The Interim Affirming Ministry Status will include all the benefits of being an Affirming Ministry such as use of the logo, etc.

We envision nine Regional Councils qualifying for Interim Affirming Ministry Status, five Regional Councils requiring the full process and two Regional Councils requiring conversation with AUSE to determine the process most suitable.

List of Regional Councils and Suggested Affirming Processes

(AM = Affirming Ministry)

Shortened Process with Interim Affirming Status Granted for those Regional Councils with Considerable Affirming Experience

Regional Council 5 – Most of MNWO Conference + may add Keewatin Presbytery from ANCC

AM Experience: MNWO Affirming since 2008; all presbyteries Affirming.

- Voices of Keewatin Presbytery need to be heard if they join.

Regional Council 6 – Canadian Shield - Former Manitou Conference + Algoma Presbytery from London Conference

AM Experience: Manitou Conference Affirming since 2017; London Conference Affirming since 2018; 1 Affirming presbytery - Cambrian Presbytery;

Regional Council 7 – Antler River Watershed Largely former London Conference

AM Experience: London Conference Affirming since 2018; no Affirming presbyteries

Regional Council 8 – Western Ontario Waterways - Part of former London Conference + part of former Hamilton Conference

AM Experience: both conferences Affirming since 2018; no presbyteries Affirming

Regional Council 9 – Horseshoe Falls - Largely former Hamilton Conference

AM Experience: Hamilton Conference Affirming 2018; no Affirming presbyteries

Regional Council 10 – Waaseyaagami-wiikwed/Shining Waters - Largely former Toronto Conference

AM Experience: Toronto Conference Affirming since 2017; 1 Affirming presbytery

Regional Council 11 – East Central Ontario – Most of former Bay of Quinte Conference + 2 pastoral charges from Toronto Conference

AM Experience: Bay of Quinte Conference Affirming since 2013; Toronto Conference Affirming 2017; 3 Affirming presbyteries

Regional Council 14 – Fundy-St. Lawrence - NB + PE from former Maritime Conference

AM Experience: Maritime Conference Affirming since 2015; 1 Affirming presbytery

Regional Council 15 – Dawning Waters - NS from former Maritime Conference

AM Experience: Maritime Conference Affirming 2015; 2 Affirming presbyteries

Regional Councils Requiring the Regular Full Process

Regional Council 1 – Pacific Mountain - Mostly BC Conference

AM Experience: BC Conference not Affirming; 1 Presbytery AM Cariboo May 2018

Regional Council 2 – Northern Spirit - Northern half of AB Conference + NE corner BC + NWT

AM Experience: Conference not Affirming; no Affirming presbyteries

Regional Council 3 – Chinook Winds - southern half AB Conference

AM Experience: Conference not Affirming; 1 presbytery AM Calgary June 2017

Regional Council 13 – Nakonha:ka (Bilingual)

AM Experience: M & O Conference not Affirming; no presbyteries Affirming

Regional Council 16 – First Dawn Eastern Edge - NL

AM Experience: Conference not Affirming. No presbyteries. One Affirming Congregation in Labrador

A Conversation Is Required Between these Regional Councils and AUSE Concerning the Best Process to Choose:

Regional Council 4 – former SK Conf

AM Experience: Conference Affirming in 2012; 1 presbytery Riverbend Presbytery.

- 1) Plains Presbytery of ANCC may join Region as part of new “dual belonging” & their voice needs to be heard and respected
- 2) Intercultural Committee to Regional Council Commission recommended that Regional Council 4 consider entering the Full Process.

Regional Council 12 – Eastern Ontario Outaouais - M & O Conf + 2 Bay of Quinte Conference Presbyteries

AM Experience: M&O Conference not Affirming; Bay of Quinte Affirming (2013);

3 Presbyteries Affirming – 2 from Bay of Quinte, 1 from M&O (Ottawa)



Interim Affirming Ministry Status Process for New Regional Councils with Affirming Ministry Experience

Winter 2019

1. Commissions for Regional Councils, which are currently preparing **Vision Statements**, include the language required for Affirming Ministries – ie: *“the inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life and work of the Ministry”* - Requirement A of *Requirements to declare your Ministry an Affirming Ministry*
2. Commissions of Regional Councils create an individual **Interim Action Plan** for the first year of the Regional Councils’ existence, June 2019-2020, detailing how the region will live out the Affirming culture in their responsibilities and functions. This plan to include for example: planning to offer educational times re diversity and inclusion; setting up an Affirming Group; setting up an Equity Group/Team; attending to language in communications; etc. Interim Action Plans will vary depending on the prior experience of the Regional Councils and their need for education about being Affirming.

JUNE 2019 – FOUNDERS’ MEETINGS OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

1. Regional Council Members vote on the Vision Statement and Interim Action Plan as prepared by the Regional Council Commission, and Regional Council Members vote on joining Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble for an annual fee of \$100.
2. If the vote passes by a minimum of 75%, the Regional Council will have **Interim Affirming Ministry status**, using the logo, etc. for one year.

JUNE 2019 - June 2020 Interim Year

1. During the year, the Regional Council’s Affirming Group (Set up in the Interim Action Plan) plans and implements educational sessions with staff and elected people who are implementing the work of the Regional Council.
2. During the year, the Regional Council’s Affirming Group works with the Interim Action Plan, revising it to ensure that an Affirming culture is in action for all the responsibilities as outlined in the document “Responsibilities of Regional Councils” received from David Allen November 8, 2018.

3. Prior to the second annual meeting of the Regional Council, the Regional Council's Affirming Group prepares a progress report (including educational sessions, etc.) and a Regional Council Ongoing Action Plan to submit to Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble for approval as an Affirming Ministry.
4. Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble approves the progress report and the Ongoing Action Plan, prior to the second annual meeting of the Regional Council.

JUNE 2020 – SECOND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Regional Council will:

1. Adopt the Regional Council's Ongoing Action Plan and any revisions to the Vision Statement with a minimum of 75% of the Regional Council members resulting in permanent Affirming Ministry Status.
2. Hold a celebration service at which time the Affirming Ministry Certificate will be presented.



Developing Your Action Plan

In this section, AUSE Council has included examples of specific tasks required to authentically live into being an Affirming Ministry. These examples are not exhaustive but provide a platform for each Regional Council to live out their Affirming Ministry commitments.

These tasks must be reflected in your Action Plan. AUSE understands that how these requirements are met and worked into your structure will vary from Regional Council to Regional Council.

You will be familiar with this section because it was developed using the Responsibilities of the Regional Council document shared with Affirm United/S'Affirmer Ensemble (AUSE) by David Allen on November 8, 2018. The AUSE specifications are in *Italics*.

Mission and ministry

1. Providing on-going leadership training for ministry personnel and lay persons.
 - a. *AUSE wants to see mechanisms in place that will ensure on-going leadership training is Affirming.*
 - i. *You can use an Intercultural Lens Resource Guide for every meeting and event.*
 1. Document can be found at <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/intercultural-lens.pdf>
 2. Contact Adele Halliday at the General Council (GC) for more information.
 - b. *“Celebrating Gender Diversity” at <http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/trans-kit.pdf> on the UCC website is another useful resource.*
2. Providing funding partnerships with United Church educational and leadership training centres and camps as determined regionally.
 - a. *Develop bursaries for Two Spirit and LGBTQ+, disabled folk, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.*

- b. Prioritize educational and leadership training centres and camps which are Affirming.*
- 3. Support emerging new ministries
 - a. AUSE wants to see mechanisms in place that will ensure emerging new ministries are Affirming.*
 - i. For many new ministries this could start with their mission and vision statements as well as their action plan.*
 - ii. Ministries that are demonstrably transphobic, ableist, racist, and homophobic would not be supported.*
 - b. Regional Councils should prioritize new ministries that resist transphobia, ableism, racism, and homophobia.*
- 4. Support communities of faith in their life and work
 - a. A staff person be designated whose job description includes networking and relationship building with AUSE.*
- 5. Promoting articulation of mission and ministry
 - a. Any articulation must lift up your Affirming commitments within an Affirming theology.*
- 6. Joining our collective hearts, voices and resources to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society, both in Canada and around the world
 - a. You need to interpret this statement in a manner that lifts up your Affirming commitments within an Affirming theology.*
- 7. Engaging in local regional national and global initiatives and partnerships (community, ecumenical and interfaith) for ministry, mission and justice work.
 - a. Partners should be Affirming.*
 - i. When this is culturally challenging develop resources to help these conversations*
 - b. Develop and share resources (with assistance from GC) to assist ecumenical work.*
- 8. Engaging in ministry with children, youth and young adults
 - a. Develop resources (with assistance from GC) to assist conversations with classroom/curriculum.*

- b. When planning events, animate “Celebrating Gender Diversity (bathroom policies, registration, spaces etc).*
- c. Create and/or find images that reflect the full diversity of human families and individuals that can be used by communities of faith.*

9. Honouring and living into intercultural ministry and mission

- a. AUSE understands our partnership with the UCC as part of the intercultural ministry and mission of the Regional Council.*
- b. This is a place where our work would intersect with folks from different social locations facing similar obstacles.*
 - i. We must enter this work in a spirit of allyship and solidarity.*
- c. Engage the Affirming process.*
- d. Make sure Affirming issues are part of this or they are addressed explicitly elsewhere.*
- e. Set up an Equity Group.*

10. Living in covenant with Mother Earth and All my Relations in Earth community

- a. We believe this refers to a commitment to Reconciliation, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and now the Calls to the Church. At GC43, a panel discussed: “How does the wider, non-Indigenous church live out apologies in covenant with each other and all of creation?” If so:*
 - i. AUSE confesses that we have a lot work to do with our own relationship to Indigenous peoples.*
 - ii. Take great care to ensure that we don’t participate in settler/colonialism through queer theory and queer settler values.*
 - iii. Keep in conversation with TRC.*
 - iv. In community with all of creation, keep in mind intersectionality of the situation.*
 - v. Acknowledge queerness in nature.*
 - vi. Resist narratives that oppose LGBTQ affirmation, multiculturalism and environmentalism.*

11. Recruitment and discernment of persons for ministry.

- a. Intentionally recruit Two Spirit, LGBTQ, BIPOC and Disabled folks. of differing ages for ministry.*
- b. Ensure that discernment is appropriate to social location of candidates.*
- c. Create mentorship so persons with marginalized identities can contact and seek support and learning.*
- d. Intentionally reach out to people who are geographically isolated.*
- e. Include inclusive imagery in materials.*

12. Accompaniment and supervision of persons in the ministry preparation process

- a. Must be sensitive to the differing needs and lived experiences of ministry personnel.*
- b. Appropriate Mentorship should be available.*
- c. All supervisors should be trained and assessed with respect to understanding marginalized people.*
 - i. Specific training applied to specific situation.*
 - 1. For example, if a trans person is placed in a position, their supervisor should be properly trained and assessed to accompany trans persons.*

13. Celebrating retirements

14. Encouraging and supporting ministry personnel towards health, joy and excellence in ministry practice.

- a. Must be sensitive to the differing needs and lived experiences of ministry personnel.*
- b. Pay close attention to mental health.*
- c. Ensure that the EAP is properly trained.*
 - i. For example, does Morneau Shepell have experience working with LGBTQ persons.*

15. Promoting and fostering direct dialogue between communities of faith and the denominational council councils.

- a. Foster dialogue that reflects your Affirming commitments within an Affirming theology.*

Governance and shared services

1. Recognizing a new community of faith by entering into a covenantal relationship with it
 - a. Promote the Affirming process to new communities of faith.*
 - b. Connect them to Affirming Ministries that are in the region.*
 - c. Track Affirming Ministries and what is happening in their area.*
2. Living in a covenantal relationship with each community of faith, with mutual responsibilities for the life and mission of the community of faith, and fulfilling its responsibilities under the covenant
 - a. Communities of faith whose life and mission are running counter to the UCC theology of inclusion should be challenged.*
3. Living in a covenantal relationship with **ministry personnel**
 - a. Mechanisms must be in place that acknowledge and celebrate Two-Spirit, LGBTQ+, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BICOP), Disabled People.*
 - i. A roster of trained/approved mentors in place in advance of issues arising.*
 - ii. Regional Council staff person assigned to ensure this.*
 - iii. Consider appointing an Ombudsman or other equivalent neutral appointee to consider issues that arise.*
 - iv. A team of people in place to offer pastoral care with all marginalized groups represented in the team.*
 - v. Information re benefits, including any funding available to LGBTQ when issues arise.*
 - b. Openness to learnings and realities from outside the church context.*
4. Providing support, advice and services to **communities of faith** in human resource matters.
 - a. Mechanisms must be in place to assist communities of faith when issues arise with ministry personnel and/or other staff.*
 - i. Education/preparation of community of faith members for calling/hiring people from marginalized communities.*
 - 1. Include suggestions for how this might be delivered*

- ii. Support for M & P Committees specifically re calling/hiring people from marginalized communities.*
 - iii. Intentional support/education for reintegration of personnel after a problem re marginalization has been resolved.*
 - iv. Intentional education for members of a community of faith if the relationship with personnel is not resolved. Be proactive to prevent repeat occurrences.*
 - v. Planned and informed pastoral care available for community of faith members.*
 - b. Openness to learnings and realities from outside the church context.*
 - c. Regional Council Liaisons must be trained in intercultural sensitivities to encourage and equip communities of faith to call and support Two Spirit, LGBTQ+, BIPOC and Disabled persons.*
- 5. Providing support, advice and services to communities of faith in dealing with congregational property
 - a. Ensure that building users adhere to the inclusive values of the United Church and AUSE.*
 - b. When selling property encourage sales to organizations that reflect the inclusive values of the United Church and AUSE.*
 - c. Encourage churches that are closing to consider legacy donation to AUSE.*
- 6. Managing regional archives
- 7. Administering policy set by the denominational council, and setting appropriate regional policy
 - a. Appropriate regional policy should be in keeping with the inclusive values of the United Church and AUSE.*
 - b. Make sure it's not discriminatory.*
- 8. Buying, selling, leasing and renovating community of faith property in cooperation with communities of faith, and distributing any proceeds within denominational guidelines
 - a. Ensure that building users adhere to the inclusive values of the United Church and AUSE.*
 - b. When selling property encourage sales to organizations that reflect the inclusive values of the United Church and AUSE.*

- c. Encourage closing churches to consider legacy donation to AUSE.*
- 9. Buying, selling, leasing and renovating regional property, and distributing any proceeds within denominational guidelines
 - a. Ensure that building users adhere to the inclusive values of the United Church and AUSE.*
 - b. When selling property encourage sales to organizations that reflect the inclusive values of the United Church and AUSE.*
 - c. Encourage closing churches to consider legacy donation to AUSE.*
- 10. Receiving, dealing with, and forwarding on proposals from communities of faith to the denominational council based on denominational policy
 - a. Proposal committees need to be properly trained, not discriminatory and must conform to the values of an Affirming ministry.*
- 11. Setting and maintaining its annual budget including revenue from the denominational assessment and setting any additional regional assessment for any additional services the regional council wishes to undertake
 - a. Make sure the budget reflects their Affirming status. For example, money for training mentors and supervisors who are working with marginalized people.*
 - b. Money for training of members of the Regional Council.*
- 12. Participating in determining priorities for mission and ministry work through Mission & Service
 - a. Requires an Affirming lens which ensures that partners don't conflict with Affirming values.*
- 13. Meeting at least annually as the entire regional council or through its executive
 - a. Feedback process allowing people to speak to safety and discrimination.*
 - b. Ensure that any meeting space be accessible to all marginalized communities.*
 - c. Appoint Equity Monitors who will speak for the marginalized.*
- 14. Ordination and commissioning of members of the order of ministry
 - a. Is this referring to the actual ceremony only or does it refer to the entire process of ordination and commissioning? If it is the whole process, then care must be taken to live up to your Affirming commitments within an Affirming theology.*

15. Recognition of Designated Lay Ministers

- a. Is this referring to the actual ceremony only or does it refer to the entire process of recognition? If it is the whole process, then care must be taken to live up to your Affirming commitments within an Affirming theology.*

16. Licensing of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

- a. Is this referring to the actual ceremony only or does it refer to the entire process of the licensing? If it is the whole process then care must be taken to live up to your Affirming commitments within an Affirming theology.*

17. Celebrations of admissions and readmissions

- a. Is this referring to the actual ceremony only or does it refer to the entire process of admissions and readmissions? If it is the whole process then care must be taken to live up to your Affirming commitments within an Affirming theology.*

18. Cooperating with communities of faith in recruiting, choosing, calling, appointing and covenanting with ministry personnel and communities of faith, and in ending calls and appointments/covenants with ministry personnel and other staff

- a. Mechanisms must be in place that assist ministry personnel and other staff facing oppression through discrimination.*
 - i. Communities of faith should be encouraged and equipped to call ministry personnel and other staff facing oppression through discrimination.*
 - 1. Education/preparation of community of faith members for calling/hiring people from marginalized communities. – give suggestions for how this might be delivered*
 - ii. An Ombudsperson position must be considered and if it is not appropriate then an alternative must be presented in detail (see 3.a.iii in Governance and Shared Services).*
 - iii. Regional Council Liaisons must be trained in intercultural sensitivities to encourage and equip Communities of faith to call and support Two Spirit, LGBTQ, BIPOC and Disabled persons.*
- b. Encourage appropriate communities of faith to identify themselves open to calling Two Spirit, LGBTQ, BIPOC and Disabled persons when posting positions.*

19. Assisting with informal conflict resolution processes.

- a. Social location of those involved must be considered with a commitment to equity.*

- i. A staff person trained in sensitivities with marginalized people should assist with this.*
20. Maintaining the roll of ministry personnel and informing the office of vocation of those ministry personnel in good standing
21. Electing members to serve on denominational council
 - a. The action plan should include specific procedures that will honour difference.*
 - b. Ensure that Two-Spirit, LGBTQ+, non-binary, BIPOC, and disabled persons be given equitable opportunity.*
 - c. Work with communities of faith to ensure these values of honouring difference and equitable opportunity.*
22. Receiving, dealing with, and forwarding on proposals from members of the community of faith to the denominational council communities of faith
 - a. A system be developed to ensure proposals are consistent with the values of honouring difference and equitable opportunity befitting an Affirming Ministry.*
 - b. "Celebrating Gender Diversity" should inform the assessment of proposals.*
23. Assuming control of a community of faith in extraordinary circumstances where the community of faith is unable or refuses to meet its responsibilities or acts outside of denominational policies
24. Serving, supporting and providing oversight when necessary of camps and incorporated ministries in the region.
 - a. Support outdoor ministries/camps in the Affirming Ministry pilot project that has been started.*
 - b. Encourage outdoor ministries/camps to enter the Affirming Ministry process.*
 - c. "Celebrating Gender Diversity" should be used as a resource.*
 - d. "Intercultural Lens Resource Guide" should be used as a resource.*
25. Reviewing and periodically auditing the self-assessments of communities of faith in light of the covenant between the community of faith and the regional council
 - a. Include specific questions to reflect an equitable approach in keeping with an Affirming mandate.*
26. Ensuring compliance with the policies and polity of The United Church of Canada and reviewing any relevant records

27. Through staff, supporting the regional council in meeting its responsibilities