

Duncan United Affirm Celebration Day



On Sunday, May 16, 2021 Duncan United Church officially became an Affirming Ministry! We were joined by Sylvan United Church in Mill Bay, Brechin United Church in Nanaimo, and Bloor St. United Church in Toronto with more than 100 people attending via Vimeo and Zoom. We chose May 16th to celebrate to connect with the May 17<sup>th</sup> International day against homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia. Our celebration preparations began with the rainbow banner, created by Amy Hamilton a member of Duncan United, being brought up from the children's space and a few hours later our Minister, Keith Simmonds had the banner hanging from the rafters! Then the Affirm United Banner arrived from Hinton Alberta where it had been part of their recent celebration. The youth painted welcoming rainbow art carefully placed by our child and youth coordinator, Sarah Prestwich. Rocks that had been painted in a variety of pride colors that were part of our Community Pride event that took place October 20, 2019 were also added to the table. The rainbow candles were added to the table from our Lenten series in 2019.

Our special guest, Rev. Katherine Brittain from Sylvan United shared with us we are only at the beginning of our Ministry and there is still much work to do to be Public, Intentional, and Explicit as we live into what affirming means; I am welcome, I am safe, I am loved here not in spite of who I am but because of who I am. Then Rev. Brittain presented our certificate from Affirm United to Michelle Creedy who accepted on behalf of Duncan United. Duncan United is now one of nine Affirming Ministries on Vancouver Island! Connie Masson, our music director, talked about her experience understanding pronouns and how we still are on a journey to become embracing and shared the song "show us how to love".

Michelle Creedy shared with us as the 5 minute theologian that we are all learning together. As each person is different we need to be curious about one another and be gentle with each other. Sometimes we will fall short and that is ok. Michelle then presented a Braille plaque she created with the words Seeking Justice Love Kindness to Sarah Prestwich who accepted on behalf of Duncan United.

After a three year journey to become an Affirming Ministry, we now begin our journey to be affirming. To live into the promise and responsibility so every child of God is welcome, safe, loved, and embraced.

To view our complete worship service and celebration join the link below;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkMzJaiktDY>