

Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



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Co-Chair Report 2022

Yet another amazing year on the books, and we couldn't be more grateful to have done it with you. As co-chairs, we are really proud of our organization, our ministries, and most importantly- our community. We are combatting hate, building safe spaces, affirming, and celebrating each other. As an organization, we have much to celebrate and uplift the from this year:

- We have seen support from across Turtle Island for ministries who have faced vandalism, hatred, and protests. We have seen those same ministries persevere, stay strong, and continue to live into our PIE framework.
- We celebrated another successful PIE Day on March 14th, in partnership still with Affirming Connections.
- We have hired our first ever Executive Director, Alix Dolson, and have been on boarding her to the work and values of our organization.
- We have reinstated the AU/SE Awards, and have added a Student Bursary for Post-Secondary Students.
- We helped facilitate a working group, partnered with the General Council Office of The United Church of Canada, following up on the Iridesce Project Final Report. This working group led to a report sent back to General Secretary Michael Blair. He then proposed a work plan (and the General Council Executive approved) that The United Church of Canada
 - o Address sustainability and support for ministries that want to be fully inclusive
 - o Create and support opportunities for recognizing advocates within the church
 - o Support 2S-LGBTQIA+ clergy
 - o Offer an official apology through intentional action

We continue to be proud and inspired by the many ways Affirming Ministries and communities across the country find new and energizing ways to live into the vision of Affirming. There are worships, curriculums, songs, events, workshops, and more popping up all across Turtle Island. We are humbled by all that goes on among our people, and we encourage you to keep creating, building, and combatting hate at its source.

We want to take a moment to thank our incredible staff and volunteers. Our volunteers and staff are spectacular, and we would not be where we are without them. Our Affirming Ministry Coordinators, Banner Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, Communications Coordinator, and Executive Director have been working tirelessly alongside our council to keep things moving forward in the fight for 2S-LGBTQIA+ justice within and beyond the church.

As we move up and beyond, we are certain that our team and communities are what make AU/SE as successful as we are. Our work is meaningful because YOU make it meaningful. We look forward to another busy, beautiful, bright, and brilliant year (how's that for an alliteration!).

Many thanks, and blessings to each one of you.

Julian Munro (they/them) and Brent Alexander (he/him) - Co-chairs – AUSE



2022 Affirming Ministry Program Annual Report

In 1988, the decision was made by the General Council that sexual orientation (and later gender identity was added) would be no barrier to membership in The United Church of Canada and hence to candidacy for ministry. However, by 1992 there was little change in hiring/employing practices of United Church ministers who openly identified in the 2SLGBTQ+ communities. So Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble, developed the Affirming Ministry Program which was designed to provide congregations with the opportunity for education, discernment and commitment regarding becoming radically inclusive of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in all aspects of the life and work of their ministry. Over the 30+ years since, the program has been refined and updated. As seen in the numbers in this report, the interest in the program has increased. Amazingly, participation in the program continued in spite of the challenges of the COVID pandemic, which began March 2020. People found ways to do this important justice work, a need which is becoming increasingly more crucial with discrimination currently resurging.

A total of 27 new ministries, listed below, have become Affirming between January 1 and December 31, 2022 for a total of 292. This is still just 10.4% of all UCC communities of faith. A complete list of Affirming Ministries can be found on the Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble website <http://affirmunited.ause.ca/find-a-ministry>

A breakdown of the new Affirming Ministries into communities of faith and other ministries follows:

<i>New Affirming Ministries (Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2022) - 27</i>	<i>Date of Celebration</i>
First UC in Fort Saskatchewan, Fort Saskatchewan AB	Jan 9-22
First UC in Swift Current SK	Feb 6-22
Spirit of Hope UC in Edmonton AB	Feb 13-22
First Metropolitan UC in Victoria BC	Mar 13-22
St. James UC in St. John's NL	Mar 13-22
Lawrence Park Community Church in North York ON	May 1-22
Southminster UC in Ottawa ON	May 1-22
Barrhaven UC in Ottawa ON	May 15-22
Orchard Valley in New Minas NS	June 5-22
Pacific Mountain Regional Council	June 11-22
Quispamsis UC in Quispamsis NB	June 12-22
St Andrew's UC in Toronto ON	June 12-22
Humbercrest UC in Toronto ON	June 12-22
Westminster UC in The Pas MB	June 19-22
Kingsview UC in Oshawa ON	June 19-22
Enniskillen Tyrone UC in Bowmanville ON	June 26-22
North Bramalea UC in Brampton ON	June 26-22
Penninsula UC in Surrey BC	Aug 7-22
Beacon UC in Yarmouth NS	Sep 18-22



St. George & St. Andrew UC in Annapolis Royal NS	Sep 22-22
Dublin Street UC in Guelph ON	Sep 25-22
Georgian Shores UC in Owen Sound ON	Sep 25-22
Wesley UC in St. Andrew's NB	Sep 25-22
Claremont UC in Claremont ON	Sep 25-22
Northminster UC in Peterborough ON	Oct 2-22
Thornhill UC in Thornhill ON	Oct 16-22
Trinity UC in Prince George BC	Oct 30-22

The number of 27 new Affirming Ministries in 2022 is a decrease of 7 from 34 for the year 2021 (a catch-up year because of COVID pandemic). The geographic breakdown for new ministries in 2022 is:

BC-3; AB-2; SK-1; MB-1; ON-13; NB-2; NS-3; NL-1; Regional Council-1.

The total number of Affirming Ministries as of December 31, 2022 was 292, including communities of faith, regional councils, a regional UCW, learning centres, one university chaplaincy and one assisted living facility.

Types of Ministries:

Regional Councils 9; Regional UCW 1; Educational Institutions 4; Educational Centres 2; Chapter (Peterborough ON) 1; National Organization 1; University Chaplaincy 1; Assisted Living Facility 1; Communities of Faith 272.

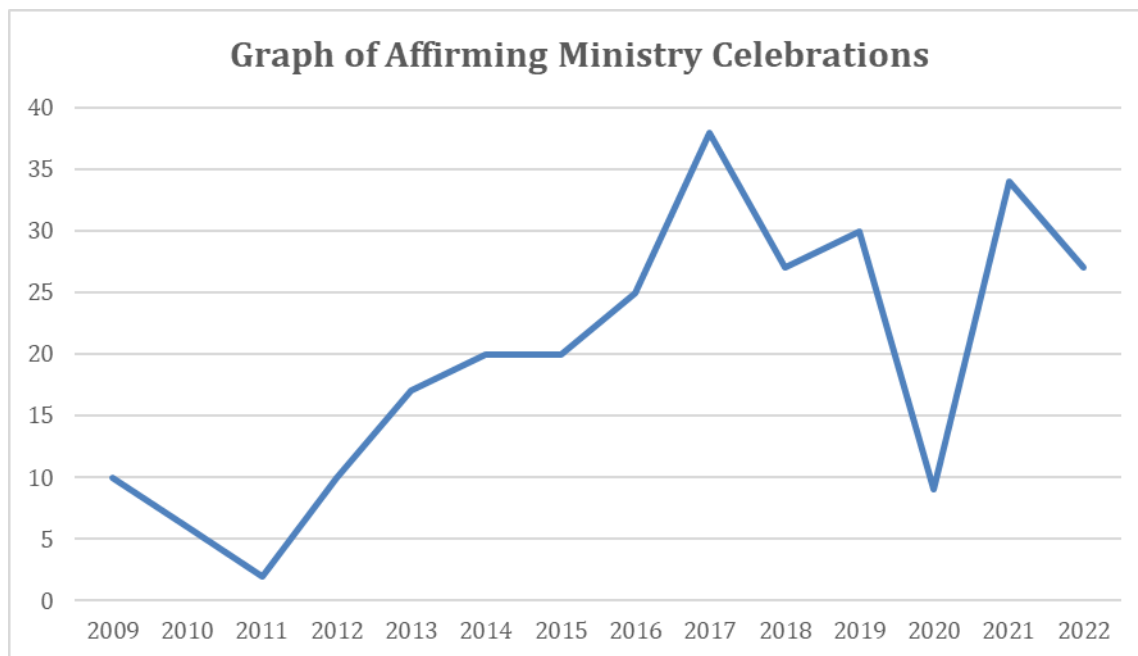
Geographical location:

NL 3; PE 1; NS 22; NB 11; QC 9; ON 116; MB 32; SK 12; AB 40; BC 34; NWT 1; Nat. Org 1; Regional UCW 1; Regional Councils 9.

The number of ministries in the Affirming Ministry Process was 180 at the end of December 2022. 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 for encouragement to proceed, etc.

Year	Celebrations	In Process			
2009	10		2016	25	110
2010	6	36	2017	38	120
2011	2	50	2018	27	143
2012	10	68	2019	30	155
2013	17	80	2020	9	180 (COVID 19)
2014	20	91	2021	34	164
2015	20	90	2022	27	180





Coordinators for the Affirming Ministry Program:

Coordinators for the program have been Eli Carter-Morgan for western Canada (MB and west); Linda Hutchinson for Ontario; Jackie Harper (January) and Kim Curlett (March to December) for eastern Canada (QC and east). Linda Hutchinson oversees the program - keeping lists up to date, attending Council meetings, writing reports, preparing details for celebrations, working with regional councils, etc.

Resources used in the Affirming Ministry Program:

- *Open Hearts* found at <http://ause.ca/wp-content/pdf/OpenHearts.pdf> is our main resource in which the Steps for Becoming an Affirming Ministry are found on pages 7-9
- *Celebrating Gender Diversity – Trans and Gender Identity Kit* is a second excellent resource found at <http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/trans-kit.pdf>
- Other very good resources for study and education, exercises, etc. are found on the AU/SE website <http://affirmunited.ause.ca/>

Although all the work of ministries is noteworthy and heartwarming, activities of special note in 2022 are:

1. **Communities of Faith are to be commended** for their passion for this social justice work! As life resumed to a new normal following the COVID Pandemic, we have been blessed by our developed skills with on-line gatherings, live-streaming and recording worship services and celebrations for later viewing. The on-line meeting ability allowed one of our Affirming Ministries in Nova Scotia to share and support a ministry in process in Grande Prairie AB. Also coordinators can interact in conversation with Affirming Groups in ministries across the country.

2. **Regional Councils** continue to engage with the Affirming Ministry Program – with 9 of 16 having achieved official Affirming status. Regional Councils are important role models and they support for ongoing Affirming work in their regions.
3. **Coordinators** became adept at recording certificate presentations for recorded celebrations and also making presentations “in-person” at Zoom Celebrations.

Gratitude:

We are very grateful for:

- the **ministry of Jackie Harper, our Coordinator of the Program for eastern Canada** and it was with much regret that we received Jackie’s resignation for health reasons. Jackie has been with us since December 2018, a long time supporter of AUSE as a Conference Minister of the former Bay of Quinte Conference relating to the B of Q Conference Affirming Ministries Action Group. We have appreciated her work with ministries in the east as well as doing special tasks such as speaking at the Affirming Celebration of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council and speaking about the Affirming Program with students of Atlantic School of Theology in the fall of 2021. We have been blessed and offer Jackie our very best wishes!
- the support given to this program by **M Chorney, Communications and Marketing Coordinator**, who joined AUSE in the September of 2021, offering us expertise in all ways of communications . . . website, social media, etc . . . managing, posting, trouble shooting and so much more with speed, expertise, good humour and caring. Thank you, M!
- the support of our **AUSE Treasurer, Peter Kelsch (starting in Fall 2021), and Membership Convenor, John Calhoun**, who kept us “on track”. Thank you John and Peter!
- the support of **volunteer, Judy Amsbury**, who ensures that one of our AUSE pull-up banners is available to newly Affirming Ministries for they celebrations across Canada. Thank you, Judy!
- the support to this program by **Carol Owegi, of the General Council Office of the Moderator, and the Moderator**, who sends a letter of congratulations from The United Church of Canada to each new Affirming Ministry, to be presented at their Service of Celebration. Thank you, Carol and Carmen!
- the support and encouragement of the **Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble Council**
- the **Regional Council “Affirm Groups/Networks/Forums” and Affirming Ministries** across the country who promote our program, offer workshops, speak to and coach local ministries through the process. We are grateful also to **individuals** who speak, coach and support the program.
- **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 publicly, intentionally and explicitly P.I.E.**



A few comments from ministries to end our report for 2022

- “My kids were confirmed on Sunday and this [becoming Affirming] means so much to them too. We look forward to engaging with others in the future and continuing this work with you.”
- “We anticipate this event [Affirming Celebration] with joy.”
- A ministry which voted in December 2021 to become Affirming sent their membership fee right away because they are “so keen to belong”. [celebrated Spring 2022]

Report respectfully submitted by Linda Hutchinson
for Eli Carter-Morgan and Kim Curlett, Coordinators in 2022,
on behalf of the Affirming Ministry Program.
July 2023



Interim Report (Jan 1 to June 30, 2023) from Affirming Ministry Program

To: AU/SE Council and Annual General Meeting

From: Affirming Ministry Program Coordinators – Eli Carter-Morgan, Kim Curlett and Linda Hutchinson (Written by Linda Hutchinson)

Date: July 1, 2023

<i>New Affirming Ministries (January 1 to June 30, 2023) – 23</i>	<i>Date of Celebration</i>
Humber Valley UC in Etobicoke	Jan 22-23
Erin Mills UC in Mississauga ON	Jan 29-23
Port Wallis UC in Dartmouth NS	Sun Feb 12-23
Riverview UC in Elmdale NS	Sat Feb 18-23
Fish Creek UC in Calgary, AB	March 12, 2023
Trinity UC in Beamsville ON	April 30-23
Trinity UC in Bobcaygeon ON	April 30-23
John Black Memorial UC in Winnipeg MB	April 30-23
Chinook Winds Regional Council	May 5-23
Birds Hill UC in East St. Paul MB	May 7-23
West Point Grey UC in Vancouver BC	May 28-23
Kitchissippi UC in Ottawa ON	June 4-23
Siloam UC in London ON	June 4-23
Beach UC in Toronto ON	June 4-23
St. Paul's-Victoria Ave UC in Chatham	June 4-23
St. Luke's UC in Upper Tantalon NS	June 4-23
Lakeview UC in Regina SK	June 11-23
St. Paul's UC in Grande Prairie AB	June 11-23
Faith UC in Kingston ON	June 11-23
Kimbourne Park UC in Toronto ON	June 18-23
Whitehorse UC in Whitehorse ON	June 18-23
Dunlop Central UC in Sarnia ON	June 25-23
High River UC in High River AB	June 25-23

Total number of **new** Affirming Ministries in 2023 (Jan 1 to June 30) is 23 compared with 17 in this period in 2022

Affirming Ministry Closure

Bradford UC in Bradford ON

Date of Closure

Total number of Affirming Ministries, as of June 30, 2023 is 310, as follows:

NL 3; PE 1; NB 11; NS 25; PQ 8; ON 125; MB 34; SK 13; AB 40; BC 36;

NWT 1; YT 1; National 1 (Diakonia of UCC); Regional UCW 1; Regional Councils 10



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Type of Ministry Breakdown of 310 ministries is:

Educational Institutions 4; Educational Centres 2; Chapter 1; National Organization 1; Residential Living Facility 1; University Chaplaincy 1; Regional Councils 10; Regional UCW 1; Communities of Faith 289.

Celebrations Pending: 14

Mount Zion UC in London ON
Cressy Glenora UC in Picton ON
Norval UC in Georgetown ON
St. Matthew's UC in Richmond Hill ON
Trinity UC in Grimsby ON
Trinity-St. Stephen's UC in Amherst NS
Aurora UC in Aurora ON
Northern Spirit Regional Council
Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council
Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council
Margaretsville UC in Margaretsville NS
Wesley-Knox in London ON
Southminster UC in Lethbridge AB
Living Skies Regional Council

Date of Celebration

July 23 2023
August 2 2023
Sept 17 2023
Sept 17, 2023
Sept 24 2023
Sept 24 2023
Oct 15-23
Oct 2023
Fall 2023
TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA
Spring 2024

Total number of ministries in the *Affirming Process* as of Jun 30, 2023 is 189.

Coordinators of the Affirming Ministry Program:

The program is coordinated by 3 volunteers:

Kim Curlett works with ministries in the Affirming Process in Eastern Canada, Eli Carter-Morgan works with ministries in the Affirming Process in Western Canada and Linda Hutchinson works with ministries in Ontario, regional councils and oversees the program.

Eli has been on leave since April 27/23 due to an impending change in pastoral relations and moving. Eli should be back by August.

Total Numbers of Affirming Ministries:

We are starting to see the changes taking place in The United Church of Canada reflected in our total numbers. Even though new ministries are continuing to join the Affirming Ministry Program, some established Affirming Ministries have sadly had to close their doors while others have found ways to join other communities of faith through shared ministry or amalgamation. Hence the total number of Affirming Ministries is continually changing.

We are grateful to the commitment of all Affirming Ministries and trust that the people of the ministries which close will take the Affirming culture with them wherever they go in the church and society.

We are grateful for the spread of the Affirming culture especially in this time of backlash and violence against the 2SLGBTQ+ communities throughout the world.





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Financial Statements

For the year ended

December 31, 2022

With comparatives to the prior year and to budget

These Financial Statements have not as yet been reviewed by an independent accountant. Once this task has been completed, the statements will be sent out to the membership by email.



**ANNUAL REPORT
2022**

Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble
Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison
As of December 31, 2022

	2022	2021
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Chequing/Savings		
Operating Cash		
General Chequing account	\$ 31,970	\$ 102,518
PayPal Cash Account	250	-
Total Operating Cash	32,220	102,518
Savings		
Savings account	6,159	45,506
Term Deposits - short term	45,210	-
Term Deposits - more than 1 yea	75,533	-
Total Savings	126,902	45,506
Total Chequing/Savings	159,123	148,024
Accounts Receivable		
Accounts Receivable-trade	2,160	4,290
Allowance for doubtful accounts	(1,455)	(1,634)
	706	2,656
Prepaid expenses	200	1,100
Total Other Current Assets	906	3,756
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 160,028	\$ 151,780
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		
Accounts Payable	-	152
Anne TD VISA Account	-	(211)
Peter TD VISA Account	29	21
Accrued Expenses	8,620	-
Total Accounts Payable	8,649	(38)
Deferred Revenue		
Deferred Revenue Individual Memberships	3,600	200
Korean Rainbow Proj "In Trust"	2,435	5,000
Total Deferred Revenue	6,035	5,200
Total Liabilities	14,684	5,162
Net Assets		
Restricted Net Assets		
Conference Surplus Fund	1,175	1,175
Emergent Grant Fund	2,830	2,830
United In Marriage	13,834	13,834
Total Restricted Net Assets	17,839	17,839
Unrestricted Net Assets		
Opening Unrestricted Net Assets	128,779	105,695
Net Income	(1,274)	23,084
Total Unrestricted Net Assets	127,505	128,779
Total Net Assets	145,344	146,618
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$ 160,028	\$ 151,780



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Accrual Basis

Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble
Profit & Loss Prev Year Comparison
January through December 2022

	2022	Budget	2021
Income			
Donations			
Other Donations	8,538		10,059
Personal Memberships	1,940		4,045
Total Donations	10,478	17,300	14,104
Grants Received			
UCC Annual Core Funding Grant	3,000		3,000
UCC Horseshoe Falls M&S Grant	500		0
Total Grants Received	3,500	3,000	3,000
Membership Fees			
Affirm Ministries Annual Fees	31,442		40,883
AM Membership Fee-On Celebration	3,692		2,899
Institutional Annual Membership	550		500
RC Annual Membership Fees	9,000		4,000
Total Membership Fees	44,684	48,100	48,282
Merchandise Gross Profit	409	150	214
Other Income	1,430	100	127
Total Income	60,501	68,650	65,727
Expense			
Affirming Ministry Program	2,001	15,000	830
Communications/Promo/Networking	1,068	3,950	2,210
Council Meeting Expense	1,250	17,000	521
Education/Research	1,653	2,000	2,967
Financial fees	309	460	336
General Administration	1,860	1,780	4,048
Insurance	828	850	828
Legal, Audit and Consulting	20,312	20,370	300
Postage and Forwarding	814	800	1,331
Staff Compensation	31,680	42,000	29,273
Total Expense	61,775	104,210	42,643
Net Income	(1,274)	(35,560)	23,084

Communications Report – M Chorney (she/they)

The 2022 year was busy! I worked with Affirming Connections to plan PIE Day 2022, which takes place in March. This last year, we held two joint events – Queer Virtue with The Reverend Elizabeth Edman, and a panel discussion entitled “Everyone Gets a Slice”, which can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=un-ZNp252GI>. We also had some liturgies written for the day.

Kitchen Sink has been a slow start back up project here at AUSE. I wrote to all of the affirming regional councils and heard back from a few – we held one event in 2022 in May, entitled “Mourn and Organize”.

I visited the Centre for Christian Studies in the spring and picked up old AUSE meeting agendas, minutes, and reports. I have been scanning them into the AUSE google drive so that everyone has access to them!

I have also sent out quite a few newsletters and update the social media channels and website frequently. I also manage all the logo requests, and emails for new affirming congregations.

This beginning of this 2023 year has been much of the same, with a special focus on anti-hate that has been happening in our communities. We hosted a webinar with Affirming Connections and the United Church of Canada called “United Against Hate”. This video can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc868L_45YM

We, along with Affirming Connections, called this year’s PIE Day theme the “Year of Intention”. We have enjoyed seeing how different communities of faith take this theme and make it their own!

The other large chunk of my time has been taken helping to plan this year’s (2023’s) AGM! We can’t wait to welcome you to Beaconsfield!

It has been a busy year, and if you have any questions on any of this, please feel free to email me at communications@ause.ca!



General Council Office Report

Sarah Williams and Beth Baskin

June 2023

GCO updates:

- Memorandum of Understanding
 - At the May 2023 General Council Executive meeting the GS33 proposal was unanimously passed, which includes creating a formal memorandum of understanding between the GCO and AU/SE. This MoU will be created in collaboration, likely beginning Fall 2023
- Apology Working Group
 - Terms of Reference are being created for this working group, which will be advertised and convened through the nominations process at the General Council Office. When the post is public, Sarah & Beth will circulate to AU/SE
- Then Let Us Sing! (TLUS!)
 - A new online hymnal, which will be available Fall 2024 includes: French, ASL and LSQ interpretations of “We are a rainbow” and “A love that goes unspoken”, both of which speak to sexual diversity; a Spring 2024 webinar that explores hymnody and language around 2S-LGBTQIA+, and how TLUS! has attempted to remove binaries from the new collection; engaging in the process of identifying holes – actively seeking out what’s missing in the current repertoire and perhaps commissioning some more
- New 2S-LGBTQIA+ Program Coordinator
 - Program coordinator will start August 1, and link AU/SE and the GCO, replacing Beth & Sarah in this role.