


Saturday July 15th

Affirm United/S' affirmer Ensemble Annual General Meeting

Zoom Link:

Agenda Items:

1. Opening / Welcome
2. Opening Prayer  [God Loves Queer People](#)
3. Language Considerations + Holy Manners
4. Call to Order
5. Enabling Motion
 - a. Motion: That all persons present are invited to participate in the discussions and all non-members be corresponding members of the meeting without a vote.
 - i. Anthony Lee- Smith, Pegi Ridout. CARRIED.
6. Accepting the Agenda as circulated.
 - a. Motion: That the agenda be approved as amended.
 - i. Michelle Henry, Jake G., CARRIED.
7. Accepting the [Minutes from the 2022 AGM](#).
 - a. Motion: That the minutes from the 2022 AGM be approved.
 - i. Emma Pipes, Peter Kelsch, CARRIED.
8. Thanking Beaconsfield United Church and their work for this Conference/Meeting.
9. Introducing our Executive Director, Alix Dolson!
10. Introducing our present Board of Directors
11. Reports
 - a. [2022 Annual Report Draft](#)
 - b. Chair + Vice-Chair (Julian Munro, they/them + Brent Alexander, he/him)
 - i. Reflection on the resilience of AU/SE and wider community, new affirming ministries being added to the list, response and need for response to hate and fear from our community. Celebration of Executive Director, reinstating volunteer awards, student bursary, etc. We are encouraged by the work done with the Iridesce: Living Apology Project small group and the result and path forward that has been documented and shared. We know that we need all of our membership to keep AU/SE going.
 - c. Treasurer (Peter Kelsch, he/him)
 - i. Treasurer Report
 1. Note: that there is \$8620.00 still owed to consulting group Strong Roots - Brian Hoessler
 2. Korean Rainbow Project: AU/SE serves as a funnel to give this group grant monies. We hold the funds 'in trust' and disperse this upon request or need. One piece that is being worked on is the translation of Open Hearts to Korean.
 3. Note: the cash balance and assets are equal. AU/SE is a cash heavy organization.

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4. Question: United in Marriage line: What vision does the council have for that balance? Now that we have some increased staff capacity we are reimagining what this can be used for in the next year.
 5. Note: The communication between AU/SE and Affirming Ministries has been a priority, but there is a plan to do a personal membership campaign for 2024.
 - a. Note from zoom chat: "For a membership campaign, it may be helpful to also work with the Regional Council Affirm Committees and Affirming Ministries/congregations... As a member of a Regional Council Affirm Committee, I feel there is more we can do to promote the work and bridge between Affirm United and grassroots." - Tony Burnett
 6. Question: RC is Regional Council
 7. Council Meeting Expense refers to guest speakers, workshop leaders that the council brings in for meetings.
 8. Education/Research includes things like PIE Day, paying guest speakers, workshop leaders and equity monitors/chaplains for Kitchen Sink series.
 9. Questions:
 - a. Are the regional councils sent a bill for dues, if so what is the percentage of their budget? The regions pay a flat fee \$1000/year once they celebrate and become Affirming.
- ii. Financial Statements
1. Motion: That the membership approves the financial statements, as circulated.
 - a. Lyn Miller, Pegi Ridout. CARRIED
- iii. 2024 Budget Proposal
1. Motion: That the membership approves the 2024 budget, as circulated.
 - a. Note for Income: that the council will be organizing a membership campaign to drive up membership (both personal and household) to AU/SE in 2024.
 - b. Re: Grant Income: We have had our new Executive Director apply for grants as part of the new role. We cannot budget for grants in this budget, but we are confident that we will have some income from grants in 2024. We wanted to be transparent with the membership with a low number in the proposed budget for grant revenue.

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- c. Note for Expense: We have cash assets to be able to support a deficit that may occur, but we are optimistic about the grant income. However, with the changes our organization is going through we do need to forecast and plan in response to the need for our executive director position, etc.
 - i. Comment: Peter is a rockstar.
2. Motion: That the membership approves the 2024 budget, as circulated.
 - a. Peter Kelsch, Michelle Henry, CARRIED.
- d. Communications (M Chorney, they/she)
- e. Affirming Ministries Program (Linda Hutchinson, she/her)
 - i. 2022 Annual Report
 1. Note from zoom chat: "Anything I can do to help in the Toronto/GTA area?" - Ruth Bramham, Cummer Ave UC (North York)
 - ii. 2023 Interim Report
 1. Comment: Judy mentions that we need to buy another celebration banner to keep up with the many celebrations. Signorama in Peterborough has previously made our official AU/SE banners. Judy offers that regions and churches can connect with her to create duplicate banners that are like the AU/SE banners.
 2. Question/Comment: How much does a banner cost? About \$500. A region could buy a banner to be used in their region, showing the importance of this work. For example, Prairie to Pine has purchased and made their own banner with the Affirming Logo. There is a comment that Horseshoe Falls Region has their own banner.
- f. General Council Office
 - i. Sarah Williams and Beth Baskin are staff who stay connected with AU/SE. In September there will be a 2SLGBQIA+ staff person who will be a new liaison from the General Council in September 2023.
 1. There is a new hymn repertoire that will be called "let us sing" coordinated by Olivia Smith. There will be a variety of hymns that are geared towards singing in French, ASL, non-binary language, queer folk and more!
 2. Iridesce: Working Group report has submitted a report to the General Secretary, GS33, passed unanimously to create a memorandum of understanding between GC and AU/SE naming our relationship can thrive and move forward. Also part of this

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report asks for work on an apology to the 2SLGBTQIA+ members of the United Church of Canada. The General Secretary wants the Terms of Reference finalized by August to be put through a nominations process to begin work at the beginning of September to end of October. Individuals who are interested may have an opportunity to connect.

a. Question: Are we ready to issue an apology when there are still churches who continue to harm LGBTQ and Trans people?

i. That is a conversation that has been ongoing. The working group was very candid and not necessarily unanimous when discussing this. The GC is working on what it looks like to push/pull the UCC communities of faith into right relations with the queer . This conversation is not taken lightly and has been spoken about many times with no clear answer.

1. Note: that people who are still harming the queer community may be moved to change and work towards right relations and inclusion.

ii. In general the GC likes the idea of an apology being worked towards and asks questions about how that affects the communities of faith and members.

iii. Note: that this process of exploring an apology is expected to take all the time needed to consult, learn, pray and create an apology perhaps by 2025.

iv. Questions:

1. Who or what entity would accept the apology? That is something that we are still figuring out, to whom, from whom and how?

2. How do we put teeth on this conversation, given the structure of the United Church of Canada and the governance we use, with regards to upholding faith activities and work like inclusion, same sex marriage across any church in the UCC, how do we examine this need for radical inclusion when one church decides they do not want to

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uphold these things that we profess to value across the UCC?(both publicly and in our churches) Answer: in this specific context the vast majority of COF and regions would expect affirming and openness, but the structure of the GC/UCC does not allow for certain implementation of these things.

g. Nominations

i. We are in need of a Western Banner Coordinator.

1. Work with Judy Amsbury (current Banner Coordinator) to send banners to/from Affirming Ministry celebrations and other events. Postage is covered.

- a. A lot of this is administration and keeping track of the banner's whereabouts and the need for it. Those in this role would need to submit a receipt for reimbursement from our treasurer.

ii. We are in need of Youth Advocates (Regional)

1. Promote the goals of Affirm United/S' affirmer Ensemble (AU/SE) to youth within the church and those working with youth
2. Promote the involvement of youth in AU/SE
3. Work with others to identify and remove any barriers for LGBT youth trying to access AU/SE and its activities.

iii. Proposed Slate of Directors (according to the by-laws, we must have 8-12 positions occupied):

- a. Note: Our council meets monthly over zoom, and we hope to continue that way moving forward. The AGM and Winter meeting (weekend) have been in-person in previous years, we have workshops, guest speakers and community building. There is an expectation that those on the board will engage thoughtfully and intentionally. While we do have staff support we do have more to do to further the mission of AU/SE.
2. (co-chair)- Julian Munro (they/them) (2nd: 2021-2024)
3. (co-chair)- Michelle Henry (she/her) (3rd: 2023-2026)
4. (treasurer)- Peter Kelsch (he/him) (1st: 2021-2024)
5. (member-at-large)- Mallory Brennan (she/her) (1st: 2022-2025)
6. (member-at-large)- David Hall (he/him) (1st: 2022-2025)
7. (member-at-large)- Caitlin Smithers (she/her) (2nd: 2023-2026)
8. (member-at-large)- Joyce Payne (she/her) (1st: 2022-2025)

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9. (member-at-large)- Richard Hollingsworth (he/him) (1st: 2023-2026)
10. (member-at-large)- Kim Curlett (she/they) (1st: 2023-2026)
11. (member-at-large)- nominated Anthony Lee - Smith (he/him) (1st 2023-2026)
12. (member-at-large)- nominated Robert Lawson (he/him) (1st 2023-2026)
13. (member-at-large)- nominated Jake G (they/them) (1st 2023-2026)
14. (member-at-large)- nominated Ruth Bramham (she/her) (1st 2023-2026)
 - a. Available vacancies for nominees 10-12:
 - i. 2023-2026
 - ii. 2023-2026
 - iii. 2023-2026
- iv. If someone from the floor nominates themselves or another for a position that has someone listed in the proposed slate, the group will hold a membership vote via raising hands virtually/via video and in person.
 1. Motion: That the membership elect the proposed slate of directors for their listed terms.
 - a. (co-chair)- Michelle Henry (she/her) (3rd: 2023-2026)
 - b. (member-at-large)- Caitlin Smithers (she/her) (2nd: 2023-2026)
 - c. (member-at-large)- Richard Hollingsworth (he/him) (1st: 2023-2026)
 - d. (member-at-large)- Anthony Lee - Smith (he/him) (1st 2023-2026)
 - e. member-at-large)- Kim Curlett (she/they) (1st: 2023-2026)
 - f. (member-at-large)- Robert Lawson (he/him) (1st 2023-2026)
 - g. (member-at-large)- Jake Girton (they/them) (1st 2023-2026)
 - h. (member-at-large)- Ruth Bramham (1st 2023-2026)

A Vote Online and Vote in person on paper has taken place:

 AGM VOTE

We have received the votes for new or renewed participants on the board of directors. MOTION: That the membership accept the proposed slate of directors as listed based on the ballot vote.

Alan Gershummy, Judy Amsbury, CARRIED (1 AB)

12. New Business

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- a. AU/SE Awards Presentation!
 - i. Affirming Ministry of the Year: Port Nelson United Church in Burlington Ontario!
 - ii. Volunteer of the Year: Sharon Valmont Golden Ears United Church, Maple Ridge, British Columbia!
 - iii. Youth Advocate Award: Welly Hanenburg, Redeemer University, Ontario
 - iv. AU/SE Student Bursaries: Criteria, involved in UCC community of faith, LGBTQ+ advocacy and demonstrated financial need. 5 winners will receive \$1000.
 1. Ael Spence (they/them) Toronto, ON
 2. Jayden Escalente-Jones - they/he - Kitchener/Waterloo, ON
 3. Mortimer Haworth(Mo, Mim) - he/him - London, Ontario
 4. Samantha Clayton- she/her - Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
 5. Tracey Bazso- she/they - Airdrie, Alberta
 - b. Future Projections- Alix Dolson
 - i. AU/SE Care Circle Development
 - ii. Affirming Ministers
 - iii. Kitchen Sink Series
 - iv. What do you want to see, as our membership committed to the work? How can we better serve you?
 1. Email executivedirector@ause.ca with your responses.
13. Thank you to volunteers who have helped our organization in big ways:
- a. Our incredible Board of Directors
 - b. Linda Hutchinson
 - c. Eli Carter-Morgan
 - d. Kim Curlett
 - e. Judy Amsbury
14. Thank you to staff and facilitators who work with us throughout the year.
- a. M Chorney
 - b. Alix Dolson
 - c. Michiko Bown-Kai
 - d. General Council Office Staff- Sarah Williams and Beth Baskin
15. Thank you to departing/departed council members, volunteers, and staff.
- a. Brent Alexander
 - b. Emma Pipes
 - c. Jackie Harper
 - d. Brian and Kit from Strong Roots Consulting
16. Post-Business Happenings
- a. Michiko Bown-Kai is leading online groups to connect and build community:

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- i. 2S-LGBTQIA+ Folks Considering Ministry/Candidates: **July 20th, 8pm Eastern.**
 1. Email communications@ause.ca for the zoom information.
 - ii. BIPOC 2S-LGBTQIA+ Folks
 - b. Drag and Spirituality Conference- <https://dragandspirituality.com/>
 - i. October 2023- San Francisco
 - ii. October 2024- Toronto!
 - c. Kitchen Sink Series Call Out!
 - i. Looking for facilitators. Honorarium provided.
 - d. Affirming Connections Affirming Leaders Day
 - i. <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/affirming-leaders-day-2023-tickets-663067752497?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshwebdesktop&fbclid=IwAR1yCMnWuO2GIvQo87VsjK3GJidIRIk12utgyCWUQnqIMlK8hQwUq9ZSwlM>
 - ii. Early Bird tickets until September 1st
17. MOTION: to destroy the Ballot
- a. Caitlin Smithers, Linda Buchanan, (1 AB) CARRIED.
18. Closing Prayer
19. Adjourn
- a. Michelle Henry, Caitlin Smithers, CARRIED