

## Affirming Resource Team



### AFFIRMING MINISTRY RESOURCE TEAM

Prior to restructuring of The United Church of Canada on January 1, 2019, Algoma Presbytery, Cambrian Presbytery, and Manitou Conference had all been designated as Affirming Ministries, by Affirm United/s'Affirmer Ensemble.

When restructuring took place, there was expectation within our constituency that the Canadian Shield Regional Council would automatically be designated an Affirming Ministry, since all of the constituent parts that formed the new regional council, had done the work and been previously recognized.

Affirm United/s'Affirmer Ensemble determined, however, that each of the new regional councils would be granted 'interim affirming status," but would need to follow steps in order to attain full affirming accreditation.

At the 2019 Inaugural Regional Council Meeting (Sault Ste. Marie), the court authorized the Affirming Ministry Resource Team to do the work necessary for affirming ministry designation to be achieved.

In 2020, the resource team met with representatives from Affirm United to discuss their requirements. The key item was to develop a new "Affirming Ministry Statement," intended to guide the life of our regional council.

Each governance entity within our regional council was asked to respond to the following:

*1. As the Canadian Shield Regional Council works toward our Affirming Ministry designation, how is your area of the region's governance structure living out our affirming commitment within its responsibility and function?*

*2. What might we be doing to demonstrate our commitment to the affirming process in the year ahead?*

Feedback guided the Affirming Ministry Resource Team in crafting the draft "Affirming Ministry Statement" for consideration at this general meeting.

Of note, the Pastoral Relations Commission took steps to amend their handbook to explicitly assert that all persons are welcome into the full life and ministry of the church.

Below is the draft "Affirming Ministry Statement" the Affirming RT hopes to be approved:

*As an Affirming community, the Canadian Shield Regional Council welcomes and supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirited (LGBTQ+) people in all aspects of the life, work, worship and governance of the church. We believe that all people are children of God; that persons of all ages, races, abilities, and sexual orientations are part of our increasingly diverse culture; and we welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church.*

*We aspire for members of the LGBTQ+ community to find the churches and governing bodies in our Regional Council to be safe places to worship and share gifts.*

*An increasing number of our churches proudly march in Pride Parades each year behind banners proclaiming who we are. Many of our members are also present at community events in support of the LGBTQ+ community.*

*The Canadian Shield Regional Council is fully supportive of Affirm United as we strive to continue to be supportive and accepting of all with whom we are in relationship. Please visit their website [www.affirmunited.ca](http://www.affirmunited.ca) to learn more.*

*Our Regional Council acknowledges that God's love is wider and more inclusive than we can imagine, let alone live out, and we commit ourselves to sharing that news with others who may have heard a quite different message about what it means to be church. Because voices of condemnation, exclusion, and hatred are loud and persistent within the church and in society, we declare that it is important to be a public witness and to be a role model for other ministries. As a Regional Council, we will work persistently, and encourage our communities of faith, to be safe, accessible, inclusive, and affirming.*

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