

AFFIRMING RESOURCE TEAM

I started working on this report on February 16th, which happened to be Family Day. To me, a broader sense of family is defined less by biology or legal marriage and more by functional, emotional, and committed relationships. It is a group of people who provide love, support, safety, and mutual care for one another like a chosen family or a church family.

As Communities of Faith, the CSRC and individuals, Jesus calls us to be a “Living Reflection” of God’s love. A true church family is not just a building, but a community bound by love, not blood.

Over the last year, I had the opportunity to see God’s love in action, not just in this region but in the wider United Church of Canada.

In June 2025, I attended the Festival of Faith. The Affirming Team had a display table set up at the festival. I was so happy with the amount of festival goers that not only came to our display but asked questions about what affirming was all about. It led to some wonderful and faithful conversations. One of the workshops I attended was led by Ruth Noble from Affirm United called “Affirming in the Face of Hatred and Faith-Based Trauma”.

A few weeks later on July 17-21st, I attended the Affirm United AGM in Charlottetown PEI. Rev. Caitlin Smithers from St. Andrew’s North Bay and a member of the Affirming Ministry Resource Team was also there. Between the workshops, we had the opportunity to connect with other Affirming ministries across the country. I would recommend that any C.O.F. that is Affirming have a representative at the Affirming AGM whether it is person or on zoom. It can rejuvenate and inspire new ways of living out what means to be Affirming.

In August, I was a commissioner at the GC45 in Alberta. Although the hours were long the sense of being a part of a larger family made it worth the time. The highlight of GC45 other than the election of Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath as our new Moderator was the Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ People and communities.

Prior to the apology, there was great care taken to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ delegates were given time to meet as a group privately to talk and prepare ourselves for the apology, even though we had no idea what it said. It was a time of prayer and reflection. When the apology was read, it was a time of joy and jubilation but also a time of sadness and pain for wounds not healed. When the words “...*We offer this apology with an awareness of both past and present harms and failings...*” were read, it told me and others that there is hope. We need to live into the Apology.

In November, the Affirming Resource Team had a town hall check-in via zoom where we talk about possible workshops and share ideas for affirming work in local Communities of Faith.

Together with Shining Waters, we just finished a 4-evening book study with author Donald Schmidt called “Homosexuality for Progressive Christians.”

Thank you to all the Affirming C.O.F. in the Region and a very special thank you to the members of the Affirming Resource Team who make this work so enjoyable and are a Living Reflection of God's love in action.

Your Affirming Ministry Resource Team are:

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