

Proposal #1 Affirming Region: Prairie to Pine  
Origin: Equity and Diversity Committee

***What is the issue? (describe in broad terms)***

We believe God/ Creator/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to: Publicly, intentionally and explicitly declare our inclusion of all people including the full range of genders, sexual orientations and sexual identities, by becoming an Affirming Region.

***Why is this issue important?***

***What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?***

The gospel teaches us to build communities that include all, but especially those who are marginalized. Those who do not identify as binary heterosexual are still pushed to the margins, often in the name of Jesus.

***What is the history/background of this issue?***

Most of the founding courts of Prairie to Pine Region were Affirming. Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble recognizes that the new regions are new entities, but also that we carry the history of the courts that went before. For this reason, Prairie to Pine Region was given the option of a simplified process to be declared an Affirming Ministry. By following this process, we can now be declared an Affirming Ministry at our next regional gathering.

***What are the principles informing this issue?***

Continuing the long history of Affirming Ministries in our area, from congregations to the former Presbyteries and Conference, is important to many people in our region.

With the ease of access to technology ever increasing, the seemingly instant connection to social media and the depersonalization of interactions over the internet comes a rise of hateful rhetoric. Unsettled political climates fuel fear and hate based actions that solidify the need for this public witness for love and inclusion more than ever.

***What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?***

We will no longer be able to call our region Affirming or use the Affirm logo. If we do not approve this motion at our next gathering, we will need to go through the full process as laid out in "Open Hearts".

Lack of action on this matter will have a negative impact on our region with the seeming disregard for previous struggles and accomplishments of past committees on this issue, a lack of support for our members who are part of marginalized communities and the absence of visual identification for new comers.

***How might Prairie to Pine Regional Council respond to the issue?***

1. It is recommended that the Regional Council approve the vision statement presented by the Equity and Diversity Committee and as approved by Affirm United/S'affirmer. (attached here).
2. It is recommended that the above proposal be accepted by at least 75% of the Regional Court.

**PROPOSAL #**

**DRAFT AFFIRMING VISION STATEMENT  
IN SUPPORT OF THE LGBTQI2S+ COMMUNITY**

**Prairie to Pine, a Regional Council of The United Church of Canada, is called to offer an open door, an open heart, an open mind and an open hand.**

An open door is evidence of the belief that all people are created in God's image and are unconditionally loved by the Creator.

An open heart follows Jesus' teachings to love one another. We extend that love to all, inclusive of their ability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or any other human division.

An open mind calls us to continue working for justice, dignity, and the full inclusion of everyone in all aspects of the church community and society.

An open hand is a symbol of our work towards reconciliation as Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples, and our call to live into the intercultural global community.

We recognize the unique and diverse Communities of Faith and recognize we are at varying levels of development and capacities.

