

WHAT IS IT?

Affirming Congregations are local churches which:

- **welcome** bisexuals, lesbians, gay men, and their families in all aspects of church life;
- **promote reconciliation** for bisexual, lesbian and gay people in Church and society; and
- **minister to and with** gay men, lesbians and bisexual persons.

The Affirming Congregation Program is an opportunity, a challenge, a hand reaching out. It is for local churches who are ready to begin dialogue about the concerns of lesbians, bisexuals and gay men in the United Church. If your congregation is committed to justice, is willing to discuss difficult issues, or has a group of people in the congregation who are willing to foster this discussion, then you are ready to begin the process of becoming an Affirming Congregation.

PURPOSE

The Affirming Congregation Program has a three-fold purpose:

- 1) **to help** local churches to consider justice and ministry issues arising from the involvement of gay men, lesbian women and bisexual persons;
- 2) **to support** local churches who are willing to be visible servant churches in ministry to and with lesbian, bisexual and gay members of the United Church;
- 3) **to identify** local churches where lesbians, bisexuals and gay men are welcomed as full participants in the Body of Christ.

For more information
on

The Affirming Congregation Programme

contact one of the churches listed in this
pamphlet

or

contact
your local Affirm United Group

or

write to
Affirming Congregation Programme
Box 333 Station Q
Toronto, ON
M4T 2M5

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**THE UNITED CHURCH
of CANADA**

WELCOMES

GAY MEN

LESBIAN WOMEN

&

BISEXUAL PERSONS

**THE AFFIRMING
CONGREGATION
PROGRAMME**

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA AFFIRMING CONGREGATION STATEMENTS

The Affirming Congregation Programme was launched by Affirm and Friends of Affirm (now called Affirm United) in the summer of 1992. It is an opportunity for congregations to study the issues of inclusion and welcoming of diverse peoples into the life and work of the congregation. The particular focus of the study is the inclusion of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons in the life and work of the church.

As of this date eight United Church congregations have voted to be recognized as an Affirming Congregation.

Here are the Statements of Faith and Action adopted by the four congregations in Toronto when they decided to become an Affirming Congregation:

Bloor Street United Church

300 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON M5S 1W3
416-924-7439

Statement of Faith and Action

We believe that all people are created in the image of God and are unconditionally loved by God. All persons are free to enjoy God's gifts of love, joy and intimacy. We lament injustice done to gay, lesbian and bisexual persons in church and society.

We, the people of Bloor Street United Church, are committed to creating a community where all people are welcome regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, differing abilities, ethnic background, or economic circumstance. We seek to use the gifts of all persons in every aspect of congregational life, including designated ministry, regardless of sexual orientation. We pray for God's spirit to guide us as we work for reconciliation and justice for all persons in both church and society.

Glen Rhodes United Church

1470 Gerrard Street east
Toronto, ON M4L 2A3
416-465-3772

Statement of Faith and Action

We, the people of Glen Rhodes United Church, are determined that our life together will be fully inclusive for people of all ages, races, genders, sexual orientations, differing abilities, ethnic origins and economic circumstances.

Therefore, we hope that God will work in us so that we will be a sensitive congregation, willing to share our faith and gifts in language and worship, in the life and work of our church and wherever God calls us to do justice in the wider community, with compassion, fun and laughter.

Trinity-St. Paul's United Church

427 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON M5S 1X7
416-922-8435

The Congregation amended their mission statement to read in part as follows:

Worship God, nurture one another, and struggle to be faithful to God's will lie at the centre of our community and outreach. We affirm that all who seek to live faithfully regardless of ability, age, class, ethnicity, gender, race or sexual orientation are full participants; and are all urged to take full

responsibility in the life, membership and leadership of the congregation.

Bathurst United Church

427 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON M5S 1X7
416-921-4967

Statement of Faith and Action

Our goal at Bathurst is to become an inclusive, participatory and non-hierarchical community which invites and uses the gifts of all its members.

We seek to nourish the Spirit within each of us and among us and within our world by strengthening our connectedness with one another and with all people, particularly the poor and marginalized, and with the Earth and all creatures.

We understand the Spirit to be revealed in Jesus and in the Judeo-Christian scriptures, as well as in the world of nature and in the spirituality of other traditions.

We recognize and celebrate a wide diversity of ability, age, class, ethnicity, gender, race and sexual orientation among us, and we welcome all those who seek to grow with us, and encourage them to live out their gifts in the life and work of the congregation.