

**Theology**

We take the Bible seriously, yet not literally. We're a progressive community that values inclusivity, yet also reflects people all along the theological spectrum. As a congregation, we don't insist on what you believe, as much as see the call to discipleship by Jesus as one where people are encouraged to experience a deeper relationship with the Divine through the teachings of Christ and the witness of the Church throughout history. We believe the Spirit empowers us and gifts us with the abilities needed to live into the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus and the mission of God in the world.

**Core Values**

We have four core values that shape who we are and what we do in ministry as a community:

* Living Faith - we believe our faith is alive and evolving. Faith is also something that needs to be lived into, not just thought about.
* Inclusive Fellowship - we believe that we are called to embody the radical hospitality of Christ through an inclusive fellowship built on the gospel witness that everyone is included regardless of age, gender identity, orientation, affluence, ability, race, ethnicity, language, or creed. At Trinity United, everyone is included who seeks to live into the teaching of Jesus.
* Joyful Service - we believe that we are called to live out our faith in all aspects of our lives. Joyful service is our response to the Gospel and God's love and care for all of creation. We serve, not because we have to, not because it's dictated somewhere, but because we want to! You'll find many people from Trinity United active in the wider community.
* Being Anti-Racist - we believe that racism exists and creates human contrived barriers between people who are created in the image of God. As followers of Jesus, it isn't enough to be non-racist, we are called to be anti-racist - to confront the biases and the privileges that exists in our society and actively work to deconstruct these systems so that everyone can live their full life in community.

**Worship Style**

From our Core Values has developed a worship style that takes seriously the Christian tradition while being open to the Spirit. Our worship music is a blend of contemporary and traditional music. Our choir offers a variety of music in different styles spanning the spectrum. We use piano, organ, percussion, guitar, and orchestral instrumentation. We try to make the language accessible and meaningful. Some Sundays the style is high energy, while others are more contemplative. Each worship experience has shared leadership with our Lead Minister. We're relaxed and formal. Some people wear jeans others wear a suit. Our children and youth are welcome to be themselves, which can mean it's a little noisy at times. Together we're a family.

**Steps Taken** (Prior to February 21, 2021)

* Same-gender inclusive marriage policy adopted in 2018
* All church forms became gender neutral
* Space usage and other rental agreements require users and renters to adhere to Affirming values
* Gender neutral washroom at both campuses
* Increased gender neutral and feminine language for God used in worship
* Some pronouns or words have been altered in hymns and scripture readings to be gender neutral
* Variety of Affirming music used in worship
* The use of the pronouns he/she has been changed to they
* Trinity United participated in and had a booth at the last in-person Pride Parade
* 5 inQUEERies events were held – and more planned for the future
* 6 Queer Worship services – planned to be a monthly worship opportunity

**Affirming Ministry Statement**

(Adopted February 21, 2021)

We at Trinity are an ever-evolving community of faith rooted in social justice, joyful service and the radically inclusive love of God.

We believe that God loves us all, and that every person is created in the image of God expressed through the diversity of creation. We believe the Spirit empowers us to love as Jesus loves, which whole-heartedly includes people and families in the LGBTQ2SIA+ community as they are, without change or compromise, as reflections of their Creator. We believe our diversity makes us more resilient and more receptive to the urgings of Spirit asking us to live out this inclusive faith in every aspect of our lives. We believe all voices should be heard and listened to with open hearts.

We celebrate the vibrancy of all people who come to share their gifts and their lives, without exception and without limitations. We celebrate the divine nature, the humanity and the dignity of all people, and we strive to respond to the needs of our community from this place. We imperfectly embody these ideals as we commit ourselves to a living faith.

**Action Plan – Continuing to Become**

***At the All Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 21, 2021, Trinity United Church unanimously voted to become an Affirming Congregation*.** Much work over many years has lead up to this faithful decision, and in turn, this faithful decision lights a new fire of witness and work for the years to come. Trinity United Church takes this decision to heart, as a transformative time to both deepen and strengthen our Affirming Ministry within the church, and to live into a role of Affirming prophetic witness in the larger community. This prophetic witness is not just words, it is:

* **Self-reflection** – are we who we say we are? Are we doing what we say we are doing?
* **Relationship building** – connecting with faith communities (in both the ecumenical and multi-faith contexts) in and around Prince George, and with community organizations to contribute to an affirming local culture, and as a resource for the LGBTQ2SIA+ community in and around Prince George, and in northern British Columbia
* **Action** – events and programs at Trinity United, and in partnership with other organizations to hold loving space for and with LGTBQ2SIA+ people, and also (perhaps separately) to support those who are working on building Affirming resources within themselves, their organizations, and their communities.
* **Justice** – offering our resources to support the growing and strengthening of Affirming community in Prince George, and within our own church; offering these same resources to partnered justice work in campaigns that align with Affirming ministry values.

**Trinity United’s Affirming Ministry Action Plan moving forward includes:**

1. Form an ongoing Affirming Committee, accountable to the Trinity United Church Board, to guide and shape the Affirming Ministry journey at Trinity, including self-reflection, relationship-building, action and justice work.
2. Sending a delegate each year to the Affirm United AGM and Conference
3. Connecting with the Pacific Mountain Region’s Affirming process and committee

**Visual Presence (at both buildings unless otherwise specified):**

1. Getting an Affirm United banner and displaying it outside the church building
2. Making an Affirming Ministry wall hanging for the sanctuary
3. Building permanent light fixtures for the “Pride Lights” on the front of the church building at 3555 5th Ave
4. Making handbills, leaflets and posters about Affirming Ministry to be available in the sanctuary and other areas of church building
5. Adding the Affirm United logo to letterhead, email signatures, social media, posters, notices, handbills, and other communication platforms

**Community Presence**

1. Holding a public celebration of our official Affirming Ministry status; possibly in conjuction with this year’s Pride Parade and Festival in Prince George (July 2021)
2. Holding an unveiling of the Affirm United banner on the outside of the church building
3. Continuing to hold monthly Queer Worship evening services at which LGBTQ2SIA+ and allies are welcome
4. Continuing to hold quarterly inQUEERies events exploring the culture, history, and contemporary dynamics of the LGBTQ2SIA+ community, how this relates to experiences both within and outside the church, and how this should inform Affirming Ministry at Trinity United
5. Holding events yearly in conjunction with Prince George Pride events to contribute to the celebration of Pride in PG, and to acknowledge the fullness of Pride (spiritually, socially, politically, culturally, historically)
6. Marching yearly in the Pride Parade and holding a booth at the Pride Festival
7. Holding a yearly open book study to explore Queer Theology, or other aspects of Queer Christian life, in the context of Prince George, and how to build relationship and safer spaces in our own communities
8. Contributing a leading and sustaining presence to forming an Affirming Ecumenical Community in Prince George

**Justice Presence**

1. Holding a yearly celebration of the anniversary of our becoming an affirming congregation, and using this to prompt a time of collective self-reflection into how we are living out Affirming Ministry
2. Allocating resources yearly to invest in Affirming Ministry projects both within the Trinity United space and community, and in the larger community and space outside the church
3. Assessing policies, practices, and language at Trinity United to ensure they align well with Affirming Ministry values
4. Building relationships through activity, stewarding of resources (rental space, person hours, volunteer time, financial resources, partnerships and community connections), and presence to contribute to a local culture aligning with Affirming values

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