



National Affirming/PIE Day March 14, 2023

Love is a circle. It's irrational, inclusive, and infinite. We're delighted to add an Affirming twist every year to International Pi Day celebrations on March 14. Affirm United founded this day as an official way to invite people across Canada to show what it means to be inclusive.

Why PIE? PIE = Public, Intentional, and Explicit.

PIE because is easy to remember and is the standard for an affirming welcome of LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people. PIE represents three ways for us to test just how real our Affirmation and celebration of gender or sexual diversity is. Each of the three concepts supports the others.

Public = Being out and proud!

Especially in religious contexts, it's not the norm for queer folks to truly know and feel that they will be embraced exactly as they are.

Being Public: Using symbols and signs echoed outside and inside our building, in our services, programs, on websites and social media channels, and in all other facets of the life of our church. Openly using the language of gender and sexual diversity.

Living out being Public means showing up in public places to support gender and sexual diversity, especially when local or global events lead to vulnerability, silencing, and violence. The broader community should know who we are; a witness to the wider community that God's love extends to everyone equally and without reserve.

This is still a radical message!

Intentional = Putting thought and resources into action!

Many people and groups, the church included, assume that gender and sexual diversity are now fully accepted, so "special" efforts are no longer needed. This sadly isn't true. Society has come a long way, but there is a long way to go, and churches have inherited centuries of transphobic and homophobic oppression carried out in the name of God/the Gospel. Living into PIE means investing time into planning, programming, and utilizing resources and growth opportunities. Affirming people and churches are still a minority, and that minority needs to express radical love with intention.

Being Intentional: Deliberately continuing the process of study, education, and dialogue with members of our faith community. Ensuring that the act of oppression and discrimination by the Church is both understood and acknowledged, and that

continued growth and celebration are part of our ministry. Including pronouns on name tags; watching for advocacy opportunities; continuing to expand and challenge theology through study and conversation, partnering with other ministries and community groups to put on events, being politically active, programming guest speakers, support ... etc., all of these, when done with Intention, can be transformative.

Explicit = Not Having to Wonder!

Church should be a place of wonder, not a place where you have to wonder whether you will belong or not. This is why explicitly naming and Affirming queerness and queer folks is so important. There is a power in a name, especially when LGBTQIA+ names have for centuries been used as insults, and Two Spirit identities have been violently oppressed and suppressed by Christianity and colonization.

Being Explicit: Be specific about who you welcome and include. Saying "all" are welcome is virtually meaningless as most churches say this but are not Affirming. We have explicitly indicated in our Mission and Vision statement— and everywhere else! —the LGBTQ2SIA+ community is a part of and embraced in all facets of church life. Show and tell your commitment to your faith community by always exploring what it means to live out the unconditional love of God. Don't just practice what you preach - preach what you practice!

Gladwin Heights United Church became an Affirming Ministry on October 28, 2018. Our church family encourages you, no matter your gender identity, to enjoy and participate in all that we do as a community of faith.

Affirm United works for the full inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in The United Church of Canada and in society.

For more information, visit the Affirm United website:



<http://affirmunited.ause.ca/>