

East Plains United Church Goes Public, Intentional, and Explicit (PIE)

In the spring of 2024, The Affirming Ministry Team of East Plains United Church in Burlington, Ontario, completed the requirements of Affirm United and were approved to become an Affirming Community of Faith. At a Congregational Meeting in early June, members voted overwhelmingly in favour of doing so.

East Plains held a wonderful Celebration Service on September 29, 2024. The new Affirm Team now had a formidable task: How can we be Public, Intentional, and Explicit about letting the community know our new designation. How do we express our Affirm Statement?

Amongst the congregation at East Plains there are several talented artists. The Art Gallery of Burlington supports local artists and artisans. A member of East Plains, Barbara Townsend, has won several awards from the Burlington Arts community. Her work has been shown at art galleries in Burlington, Hamilton, and Dundas.

The Affirm Team decided to invite Barbara to create a painting to depict the congregations new Affirm statement:

“We celebrate the richness of our community when we have diversity of age, ability, gender identity, racial/cultural backgrounds, economics, class, sexual orientation and family configurations fully participating in all aspects of the life and work of East Plains United Church. We commit to continuing education to promote understanding and create a safe environment for all.”

Barbara accepted the invitation and painted a lovely watercolour. It was then decided to have the artwork enlarged to five feet by 10 feet, printed onto aluminum, and coated to protect it from the elements. Next, the congregation had to choose the location for the painting to be mounted on the exterior of the building.

Barbara’s painting was mounted facing Plains Road on June 10, 2025. A brief service of dedication and blessing was held under the painting on June 15, 2025.

We are very grateful to Barbara Townsend for her generosity in sharing her gifts with the church and the community!

If you are ever in the neighbourhood, drive by and have a look!

