

Affirm Committee Meeting

(November 18, 2018)

1) We started with a review of our activities to date:

- Approval to begin the process at our 2017 Annual Meeting
- September, 2017 – an introduction to the process, the creation of a “Covenant” to define norms for our affirming discussions and a presentation by Marianne Willson of her experiences and the challenges for the LGBTQ community in Chatham-Kent today
- In October, 2017 Michael Shewburg came as our Anniversary speaker and shared a bit of his personal journey
- In November we viewed the film “For the Bible Tells Me So”, followed by a brief discussion
- In December we began including an Open Hearts Moment at the beginning of each service as well as attaching a coloured ribbon to our Rainbow string
- In January, 2018 our committee attended the C-K Pride Pot Luck Dinner
- At the annual meeting in May, 2018 London Conference voted to become an Affirming Ministry

2) We wanted to remind ourselves of the steps recommended in becoming an Affirming Ministry.

From the Open Hearts document they are:

- Has completed an educational and discernment process
- Has approved an Affirming Vision Statement
- Developed an ongoing action plan
- Enacted an inclusive marriage policy
- Is a member of Affirm United
- Receives approval from Affirm United and schedules a service of celebration at which the ministry is publicly declared an Affirming Ministry

It was suggested that we email these steps to the congregation so they know where we are in the process.

3) It was agreed that as well as the Open Hearts Moment in our services we should encourage the regular inclusion of “affirming” liturgy and music in our services (Sharon will pass on a copy of the music in the Open Hearts document to Wendy for consideration). We will also convey this to Wanda and Carol for consideration.

4) Discussion on organizing “panel discussion” concluded with the thought that we could include topics/speakers on the following: C-K Pride, Schools (GSA’S), a politician, the United Church (someone recognizable, e.g. Chery DiNovo. Gail afterwards wondered about Joyce Payne, President of London Conference), and medical (Ian Johnston). Michael Shewburg was also suggested as a possible participant.

We began thinking of a single event at St. Paul’s but ended thinking of a Presbytery-wide event that might extend over 3 sessions perhaps with a couple of speakers each, possibly hosted by St. Paul’s and 2 other congregations. We’ll connect with Greg Simpson and Annalee Kerr to see if St. Andrew’s and Bothwell might be interested.