April 8, 2018 - WHY BECOME AFFIRMING?

Affirm United has been a valuable resource in my education toward TSA becoming an affirming ministry. AU is an independent organization within the United Church of Canada that supports our quest. Their website, “ause.ca”, has: links to other United Churches who have gone through this process, books and video resources for us to use and a link to “Open Hearts” – Affirming Ministry Resource.

“Open Hearts” has been my main resource on this website. Particularly “We’re Already Welcoming, so Why Become Affirming?” (pg. 12, Open Hearts).

To me, becoming affirming takes it up a notch. It is more inclusive to those who are or feel marginalized. As in our own Statement of Purpose: “… we strive to recognize the light of God in each person, regardless of age, race, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, economic status or any other category by which the world may seek to divide.”

It more than our being welcoming, which suggests we are charitably “letting” them join us. It is more that we all desire to become part of a community. As we all show up together we become a cohesive blend of individuals and families. It is God’s love that brings us together, and the desire to worship collectively. Those of us who believe in this possibility of togetherness need to speak up and make it happen. The world, countries, communities, and church are made up of diverse family units that lend their distinctive qualities to the whole. We have things to learn about love and friendship from others.

Since outside negativity has probably shaped much of the attitude of LGBTQ, and other individuals regarding church, a need has risen for a safe place to worship that accepts and includes the marginalized seamlessly into a family/home. A community of inclusiveness that strives to understand the distress created by ignorance and cruelty can form a sanctuary of justice and safety. This is, to me, an Affirming Ministry.

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