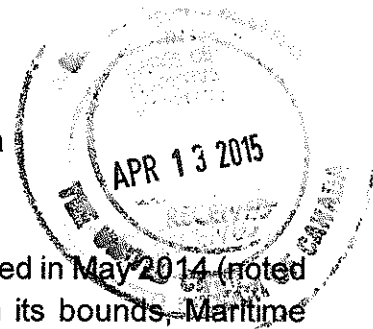


Envisioning Affirming Ministry
within Maritime Conference, The United Church of Canada
(Draft 6 – April 9, 2015)



- 1.1 In keeping with the Core Values Statement and Ministry Priorities affirmed in May 2014 (noted below) and recognizing the wide range of diversity of peoples within its bounds, Maritime Conference seeks to create a safe and welcoming space for all people.
- 1.2 Maritime Conference understands affirming to mean "gifts shared for the good of all, resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize,...human dignity defended..." (A Song of Faith, UCC), as seen in the teachings and actions of Jesus, the Christ**. Therefore, Maritime Conference will celebrate the blessings of, and support one another in the challenges of, our diverse life experiences, including but not limited to: sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, life experience, different abilities, ethnicity, race, generational culture, age, geographic location, economic circumstances, and others we have yet to discern. That said, we note that this work was born out of a particular concern for discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity within the church.
- 1.3 Maritime Conference will equally welcome all people as children of God and offer them the complete range of opportunities to fully be part of and participate in the life and work of the church, continually seeking to identify and dismantle barriers that hinder the participation and inclusion of marginalized groups and individuals. Listening actively and attentively, we will strive to live into understanding one another, treating those with whom we disagree with love and respect.

** (Some scripture references to "teachings": Matthew 22:34-40 [Love Your Neighbour as Yourself], Matthew 25:31-46 [The Final Judgement: "Inasmuch as you have done..."], Luke 10:25-37 [The Good Samaritan], Luke 15:11-32 [The Prodigal Son], and "actions": Mark 5:21-23 [Jairus' Daughter and the Woman Who Touched the Hem of Jesus' Garment], Mark 10:13-16 [Jesus Blesses Little Children], Luke 19:1-10 [Zacchaeus], John 4:1-26 [The Woman at the Well].)

Core Values Statement

Guided by the Spirit, mindful of our roots, we are a community of faith, called to celebrate the Christian gospel by supporting congregations to practice:

- *Inclusion*
- *Hospitality*
- *Justice-making*
- *Life-long learning*

to bring about transformation and renewal.

Ministry Priorities (2010-2015)

- *To provide financially- and geographically-accessible leadership development programs and resources*
- *To support local ministries through congregations, the main mission unit of The United Church of Canada, and efforts which equip people to share their faith*
- *To practice radical hospitality*
- *To reach out in our communities to embrace the multigenerational and multi-faith mix of the whole people of God*

Enacting Affirming Ministry
within Maritime Conference, The United Church of Canada
(Draft 6 – April 9, 2015)

“Seeking to continue the story of Jesus by embodying Christ's presence in the world” ([A Song of Faith](#), UCC), Maritime Conference is committed to enacting this vision for affirming ministry within the Conference. Therefore, in fulfillment of this vision, Maritime Conference will:

- 2.1 Incorporate this vision and plan of action into the mandate of a standing Conference Committee for Affirming Ministry in order to support and provide resources to the congregations of Maritime Conference in an ongoing process of being an affirming ministry within The United Church of Canada.
- 2.2 Expect the Maritime Conference administrative and programming staff to fashion their ministry, at all times and in all places, in keeping with this vision.
- 2.3 Expect the Maritime Conference standing and ad hoc committees, units, and task groups to regularly assess their agendas and their ministry to see that they are in keeping with this vision and to report on the same to the Conference Committee on Affirming Ministry.
- 2.4 Promote and identify Conference's Affirming Ministry status in official Maritime Conference signage, facilities, ways of being welcoming, our social media, our documentation, etc.
- 2.5 Direct the Conference Ministry Personnel and Education Committee to encourage Inquirers, Candidates, and Applicants for ministry within the Conference to carefully and prayerfully discern whether Maritime Conference, as an Affirming Ministry, can be a place for them to actively pursue their call to ministry.
- 2.6 Actively advocate for issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, both within the churches and ministries of our Conference and in the wider non-church community.
- 2.7 Not discriminate against ministers applying to serve in the Conference on the basis of sexual orientation, age, gender or gender identity, race, ethnicity, or ministry category (Diaconal, Ordained, Designated, Lay).
- 2.8 Work toward becoming a Conference in which inclusive marriage is available and recognized in all pastoral charges. To that end, Maritime Conference will expect oversight of pastoral charges to include conversation around fully inclusive marriage policies (as already recommended by the 2009 General Council).