

CALL STATEMENT OF FIRST DAWN EASTERN EDGE REGIONAL COUNCIL

With joy in our hearts and a song on our lips,
we, the First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council of The United Church of Canada,
are called by God to dare to love and serve people
of all racial backgrounds, creeds, ages, cultural backgrounds,
sexual orientations, gender expressions, economic statuses, abilities
or any other lived experiences that have led to marginalization and oppression.
We believe that full participation in all aspects of our calling
to be bold disciples of Jesus Christ is the right of all peoples.
Through our various shared ministries and paths of deep spirituality,
we are called to uphold the varied gifts and skills in each other;
to be accepting of change while honouring heritage and traditions;
to seek justice and resist bias and through all of this,
to know that we are not alone. We are all God's children.
Thanks be to God!

Action Plan to be facilitated by FDEE Affirm Committee accountable to FDEE Regional Council:

As First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council, we are committed to removing barriers to full participation of all people in the life and work of our region by:

- prioritizing that all future gathering spaces for FDEE Regional Council meetings and other events be barrier-free and implement practices that are inclusive of all people's needs, such as:
 1. using signs to show where ramps/chair lifts and baby change stations are;
 2. inviting people to write their pronouns on their nametags;
 3. ensuring where possible there are gender neutral washrooms;
 4. encouraging people to say their names and to describe themselves before they begin speaking;
 5. reinforcing the policy of everyone using a microphone and having hearing loops wherever possible;
 6. have a quiet room for people who may get overstimulated;
 7. and following other inclusive practices such as the above.
- appointing an equity support person for any meetings or gatherings and making sure they are clearly identified as such;

- encouraging the use of “Holy Manners,” “A Whole People’s Covenant” and the “Intercultural Lens Resource Guide” in all of our meetings and work as a way to nurture an inclusive and caring community;
- encouraging members of traditionally marginalized communities to step forward to serve on committees of FDEE Regional Council and asking the Nominations Committee to intentionally seek out such candidates;
- directing the Pastoral Relations Committee (along with the Atlantic Candidacy Board) to inform Inquirers, Candidates and Applicants for ministry within FDEE Regional Council that we are an Affirming Region.

We are further committed to grow in our understanding of diversity and inclusion in FDEE Regional Council by:

- making use of guidance from The United Church of Canada (via *Gathering*) regarding sensitivity to the use of language, symbols and rituals in worship, seeking to be inclusive of all racial backgrounds, creeds, ages, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender expressions, economic statuses, abilities or any other lived experiences that have led to marginalization and oppression. and encouraging the Sessions and other such committees of Communities of Faith to do the same;
- offering learning opportunities, with the support of our Affirming committee, including offering workshops at the annual meeting of the Regional Council;
- nurturing of the creation of networks/clusters of discerning and established Affirming Ministries; and
- encouraging communities of faith and other incorporated ministries (including camps), within FDEE Regional Council to become Affirming Ministries.

We will be public, explicit and future directed in our commitment to being an inclusive, diverse and justice-seeking community by:

- participating faithfully and with humility in ongoing efforts to reach reconciliation with people that we have historically harmed, especially Indigenous peoples, those who have been racialized, the LGBTQIA2S+ community and the disabled community, etc. In this regard we will encourage members of the Regional Council to take part in local Pride events, fulfill the calls to the church in the TRC Report, continue discerning

how to be an intercultural and anti-racist denomination, to unlearn ableist language, etc.);

- identifying ourselves as an Affirming Ministry not only through the use of the Affirm United logo on our website and letterhead but also by being intentional in the use of images that are inclusive of all in both printed material and our online presence;
- along with setting aside a portion of proceeds from the sale of church property to support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, encouraging communities of faith to also make a contribution to AUSE or a local LGBTQIA2S+ organization; and
- paying our annual membership to Affirm United and recognizing our yearly anniversary of becoming an Affirming Ministry.