

# PROPOSAL TO SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL #2020-02

**Title:** All People, One God! Equity Action Plan 2020-2021

**Original Source:** Equity Committee, October 2020

## PART 1: VISION AND VALUES

---

### VISION STATEMENT

The Shining Waters Regional Council communities of faith reflect the communities where we worship in all their magnificent diversity. We welcome people of all mental and physical abilities, all races, sexual orientations and gender identities, racialized persons, and all others who are marginalized, into the life and work of the Region; they demonstrate how welcome they feel by joining and being active in our communities of faith. They feel heard and seen, encouraged and supported in sharing their diversity in ways that enhance our communities of faith. We are enriched by having all God's children in our church.

Striving to be faithful followers of Jesus in our time and place, Shining Waters Regional Council will continue to remove physical and other barriers to participation in the life and work of the Region and society, committing itself to resisting all forms of oppression, especially Anti-Black racism which has had a deleterious impact on all Black lives.

Expanded from the policy approved May 2019

### OVERALL GOALS

We strive to **WELCOME AND CELEBRATE** people of all abilities, any sexual orientation and gender identity, racialized persons, and all others who are marginalized, and missing in our community of faith into the life and work of the Region in ways that are public, intentional and explicit.

Zero tolerance for racist speech, discrimination and/or other forms of bigotry.

Communities of faith and regional leadership reflect the diversity of the greater community with measurable targets.

AS **FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS** of Jesus, we seek to reach out and connect with targeted groups at the events that they hold so that we may experience and enjoy new experiences. We live out life in its fullness in a good way that invites us to be hospitable, to respect and to learn from one another.

Rooted in the hospitality and justice of the gospel we will **REMOVE THE BARRIERS** to participation in our life and work that includes looking for bias at work in our policies and procedures.

We believe in God who has created and is creating, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We will respect the sacredness of our gatherings and **BE OPEN TO THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT** who calls us to bring our bodies, minds and hearts, as well as our cultures and our histories together in ways that will transform who we are and how we gather and how we work together.

We will walk the talk of our commitments to diversity and inclusion and rise to **RESIST OPPRESSION**, expressions of hate and discrimination, in our midst and in the world.

## **PART 2: 2020/2021 ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENTS**

---

The journey to being an intercultural, diverse, inclusive, anti-racist, affirming community is life-long. In the coming year we commit ourselves to grow in the following ways:

### **EQUITY COMMITTEE**

Identify, support and train leaders to help grow and care for a culture of belonging across the region. These leaders will serve as resource people, and with the support of staff, will curate a knowledge bank of resources, including professional consultants, event guidelines, facilitation best practices, and policy analysis tools, for use across the region.

### **EXECUTIVE**

The Executive will oversee and support the work of the Equity Committee with regular reports throughout the year. We will continue to lift up and map out regional policy and the work of the Commissions in advancing the next steps of our journey towards an intercultural, anti-racist and affirming region.

### **COMMUNITIES OF FAITH COMMISSION**

The Communities of Faith Commission commits to:

- Bringing wise speakers to inform our work each month with a particular lens of equity
- Intentionally implementing change out of the learnings from speakers; determining how to be accountable for implementing change, translate our learnings into policy and practice
- Writing policy to support the region's commitment to equitable sharing of resources across the region
- Completing the mapping process with EDGE to help lift up the needs across the region to inform how we will strategically support congregations and prioritize ethnically diverse congregations.

### **PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION**

The Pastoral Relations Commission will:

Collect data on the pastoral relations process from entry point to the end of the first year answering this question: How does unconscious racist/sexist/ableist bias hinder or create barriers for ministers in the congregational setting? Who is chosen? Are there differences in the terms of the pastoral relationship between ministers who are White and all other racialized ministers and why? Also look at that question for the LGTBQI community. What is the experience of racialized, BIPOC, differently abled and LGTBQI ministers after one year of their pastoral relationship? How does unconscious racist/sexist/ableist bias affect their health, joy and excellence in ministry?

## YOUTH

The Minister for Faith Formation, Youth and Young Adults will provide resources for youth-led and community of faith-led educational equity initiatives, for example conversations on conversion-therapy.

### **PART 3: OPERATIONAL ACTION PLAN**

---

Through the Executive Minister, staff are accountable to implement the following:

1. Display visible signs of welcome in regional offices, on the website, letterhead, and at events by December 31, 2020, including the Affirm logo, rainbow flags, the forward movement (accessibility), and signs in the languages used across the region
2. Review the Violence and Harassment policy and procedures and ensure they are sufficient and accessible. (November 2020)
3. Build a knowledge bank of intercultural, anti-oppression facilitation practices in support of building competence in equity--based ways of working
4. Host a region-wide public service of celebration for Affirming commitment in 2021.
5. Regularly post, share and track, stories of diversity, inclusion, affirming ministries and action against injustice in the ongoing communication of the region.
6. Create a public directory of Affirming Ministries, accessible buildings, and languages spoken in worship (December 2021)
7. Strengthen partnerships within the United Church and the wider community with equity-based groups.

### **PART 4: AFFIRMING STATUS**

---

Shining Waters Regional Council was acknowledged by Affirm United <http://affirmunited.ause.ca/> as having Interim Affirming Ministry Status. To fulfill the requirements for becoming an Affirming Ministry we need:

- A vision statement concerning the inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life and work of the Ministry. The Equity policy statement, approved in May 2019 will serve this purpose.
- An ongoing plan of action that is voted on by the Regional Council and includes a public celebration of becoming an Affirming Ministry. This Equity Action Plan will serve this purpose. One of our operational actions is to host a public celebration in the spring of 2021.
- A liaison with Affirm United, who facilitates the annual contribution and arranges for participation in the Annual General Meeting. This role is currently being supported by two regional staff, Susie Henderson and Jeffrey Dale.

## **PART 5: MOTIONS FOR THE 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

---

### **EQUITY ACTION PLAN**

that the Shining Waters Regional Council Equity Action October 2020 plan, be received.

### **AFFIRMING REGION**

that Shining Waters Regional Council become an Affirming Ministry, based on the 2020 Equity Action Plan; continue our membership in Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble, for an annual fee of \$1000; and host a region-wide public service of celebration for our Affirming commitment in 2021 (possibly on March 14, 2021 which is also Affirm United's PIE Day. PIE Day is an opportunity to be Public, Intentional and Explicit about our ongoing commitment to the full inclusion and celebration of LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people.)