

# **Edith Rankin Memorial United Church (ERMUC)**

## **Introduction to Affirming Documents**

Thank you for your participation in our journey towards becoming an Affirming Ministry.

A Vision Statement and a Plan of Action have been crafted from your words given to us in the workshops held to explore opportunities for Edith Rankin to become an Affirming Ministry. Also attached is the Inclusive Marriage Policy supported by Council.

All of these documents have been reviewed and accepted by Affirm United, the organization that designates Affirming Ministries in the United Church of Canada.

A congregational meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2024 to vote on becoming an official Affirming Ministry in the United Church of Canada.

### **Your Affirming Team:**

Kathy Baer, Amy Baker, Rachael Henry, Susan Robertson, Barb Taft  
Michelle Down and Joyce Payne – providing resource support.

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## **Edith Rankin Memorial United Church (ERMUC)**

# **Affirming Vision Statement**

Come join us on the journey as we strive to be a vibrant faith community, nurtured within the rich traditions of the United Church of Canada and guided by love.

We seek to be a safe and inclusive faith community for people of all gender identities, sexual orientation, marital status, family configuration, health and differing abilities, ages, races, ethnicities, beliefs, and socio-economic circumstances, and all others who will be encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry including leadership positions, thereby enriching us all.

- we celebrate God's presence in praise, prayer and proclamation;
- we encourage one another through mutual care;
- we explore the Way of Jesus as life-long learners; and
- we endeavor to understand and serve the world in word and action.

## Edith Rankin Memorial United Church (ERMUC)

# Affirming Action Plan

<b>ERMUC Core Values</b>	<b>Short-term Goals</b> <i>Continue/implement within 3 years</i> <small>* in alphabetical order</small>	<b>Long-term Goals</b> <i>Implement within 5 years</i> <small>* in alphabetical order</small>
<p><b>Our Faith Journey</b></p> <p><b>Worship</b> We celebrate God in traditional and alternative forms of worship. We rejoice in preaching and music which praise God and inspire us. We enjoy and encourage sharing worship leadership between clergy and laity.</p> <p><b>Life-Long Learning</b> As followers of Jesus, we are on a life-long journey of Christian education, prayerful discernment, and spiritual development.</p>	Celebrate other faith traditions and customs during our Sunday services.	Actively work to promote ERMUC as a welcoming faith community for 2SLGBTQIA+ and Indigenous communities.
	Frequently schedule inclusive hymns in Sunday service – ie: ‘Songs for the Holy Other’.	Continue to have a Minister at ERMUC who supports and leads affirming ministry, worship services and outreach.
	Hold progressive services with other faith communities – ie: churches, mosques, temples, etc.	Establish ERMUC as a ‘community center’ providing space for community groups.
	Include a ‘Blessing of the Boats’ on the water during an outdoor summer service.	Invite speakers from inclusive/affirming community organizations to our monthly breakfast series.
	Participate in pulpit exchange and collaborative services with other community churches.	Learn about other faiths.
	Update any relevant policies and procedures to accommodate affirming and inclusive language.	Plan a yearly calendar of partnership events with other Affirming Churches in Kingston.

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<p><b>Fellowship</b></p> <p><b>Diversity and Inclusiveness</b>  We are a multi-generational congregation which seeks to support the spiritual journey of all ages. We welcome and respect people of all gender identities, sexual orientation, marital status, family configuration, health and differing abilities, ages, races, ethnicities, beliefs, and socio-economic circumstances. We welcome diverse ideas expressed with Holy manners.</p> <p><b>Fellowship</b>  We seek to be a safe, welcoming, Christian community where friendships are nurtured and enjoyed.</p> <p><b>Mutual Care</b>  We look after each other through the intentional ministry of pastoral care and the loving efforts of congregational groups and individuals.</p>	Advertise Sunday services including Kingston Transit bus route information.	Establish a dedicated Social Media Coordinator (perhaps shared with other local churches).
	Actively link to all ECORC efforts and programs to support 2SLGBTQIA+ people.	
	Create and publicize a gender-neutral bathroom.	
	Display visual signs of inclusion and welcome both inside and outside – ie: Pride flag, Ally flag, messages on electronic sign, etc.	Hold a charity event to benefit local 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations.
	Establish an ‘Equity Support Team’ who will be trained to facilitate on a rotational basis at ERMUC council meetings, congregational meetings, and events, etc.	
	Intentionally welcome people when they come to ERMUC for the first time.	
	Explicitly share our individual and collective stories as an invitation and welcome to others.	Promote ERMUC as a ‘2SLGBTQIA+ friendly’ wedding venue.
	Host youth events – ie: family nights, skating parties, high-school dances, etc.	
	Increase our presence on social media – ie: weekly affirming message, search engine optimization, etc.	
	Offer learning opportunities – ie: ‘Gender & Pronouns Workshop’, etc.	Seek out ways to be a presence at and participate in inclusive community events.
	Participate in local Pride Parade(s).	
	Prominently post our inclusive Vision Statement.	
Promote our church within the community as an “Affirming & Welcoming” community on social media.	Sponsor a film showing at the annual community 2SLGBTQIA+ Film Festival.	

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<p><b>Service &amp; Stewardship</b></p> <p><b>Justice and Service</b> We seek to support people living in poverty, the dispossessed, and the hurting people within our neighbourhood and globally.</p> <p><b>Wise Stewardship</b> We are all called to be wise stewards of God's creation and the resources of time, talent, and treasure offered in service to God's realm.</p>	<p>Encourage the use of energy-saving practices by all people using ERMUC facilities.</p> <p>Offer monthly community outreach events (not faith-focused) – ie: ukulele, pickleball, fishing, etc.</p> <p>Partner with neighbouring elementary school(s).</p> <p>Plant and nurture native species growing on church property.</p> <p>Provide MAID grief support.</p> <p>Respond to community needs by offering awareness &amp; training workshops – ie: Naloxone, AED defibrillator, etc.</p> <p>Support community needs – ie: food bank, warm clothing, Aid for the North, etc.</p>	<p>Assist community events and organizations by providing teams of volunteers – ie: food kitchen, clothing drives, etc.</p> <p>Seek out opportunities for supporting the needs and concerns of existing community groups – ie: indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, underhoused, youth, refugees, etc.</p>

<b>Being an AUSE member</b>	<b>Yearly Actions</b> <small>* in alphabetical order</small>
<p>ERMUC will commit to being an active member of Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble (AUSE).</p>	<p>Identify lead contacts with AUSE to both receive information and invitations, and to report annually on the ongoing affirming work of ERMUC.</p> <p>Pay our yearly affirming congregation membership dues to AUSE.</p> <p>Try to send members to the Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble's Annual Conference and General Meeting (held each summer) either in-person or virtually.</p>

## Abbreviations

AED	Automated External Defibrillator
AUSE	Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble
ECORC	East Central Ontario Regional Council of the United Church of Canada
ERMUC	Edith Rankin Memorial United Church
MAID	Medical Assistance in Dying
2SLGBTQIA+	Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Queer/Questioning, Inter-sex, Asexual, and others

## **Edith Rankin Memorial United Church (ERMUC)**

# **Inclusive Marriage Policy**

At Edith Rankin Memorial United Church, we believe that all people are included in God's divine plan and are part of God's gift of diversity in humanity.

We are committed at Edith Rankin Memorial United Church, to perform and bless the marriages of all couples who are legally permitted to marry within Ontario, including people of all sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Marriages conducted at Edith Rankin Memorial United Church, using the church's Ministry Personnel, are under the auspices of the United Church of Canada, as well as the Province of Ontario as the licensing body. Sanction to marry is given by the issuing of a Marriage License from the Province, and which must be provided to the church in advance of the ceremony.