

Affirming Sunday skit

Written by Christina Ritchie and the Affirm team of St. Andrew's United Church, Moose Jaw SK

Setting: a United Church board comprised of the chair of the board, minister of the church, and a few other members of the congregation discussing the benefits and negatives aspects of becoming an Affirming church.

Cast:

Chair; Church Minister; Council member 2 (hesitant to change); Council member 3 (easily distracted by their phone)

Chair	Okay for tonight's meeting we'll be deciding whether we want to be an affirming church. But before we start let's have our minister guide us with a little prayer.
Minister	Dear lord let us all come into this meeting with prayers in our hearts, and inspire us to respect each others' choices as we decide today whether we should undertake this new and exciting challenge and become an affirming church.
All	Amen
Chair	Okay, the discussion will be if we want to begin the process of becoming an affirming church. I know we have a lot of differing views on this subject, so let's keep this as respectful as possible.
Member 2	Before we start anything, I want to know exactly why we need to do this. Why do we need to become an affirming church?
Chair	Because if we do this we can get a grant for our church that will help make our church more accessible to everyone.
Member 3	Hogwash!
Minister	This really isn't about money. We want to become an affirming church, so we can officially and publicly celebrate what we've already been trying to do: live the radical hospitality that Jesus lived and taught.
Member 3	<i>(Looks up from the phone)</i> Sorry, what were you saying?
Minister	Please try to stay with us. We'd like everyone's input on this because this is a big decision for our church and can help move forward in many ways. Being an affirming church means we affirm God's love for all people, regardless of income, ability, social standing, age, gender expression or sexual orientation. Therefore, if we affirm this love, that means that we must welcome, include and celebrate the rich diversity of all God's people.
Member 2	But doesn't the Bible say that it's sinful for men to love other men?

Member 3	<i>(suddenly interested)</i> Yah, isn't there something about being stoned for lying with another man?
Minister	Don't worry, we're not going to have any stonings. In truth, yes, there are a few, very few passages that seem to say that non-heterosexual relationships are sinful but we have to understand the times and context in which these words were written.
Member 3	Like what?
Minister	Great question, but the answer could take hours. This is why if we start this process, there will be some time for workshops and other occasions where we can examine our understanding of the Bible and how being an Affirming church fits our Christian faith.
Chair	Acceptance has been going on forever and it's time for our church to catch up. It's time for us to accept everyone in our community.
Member 2	Well, I still don't see why we need to this affirming stuff.
Minister	Why don't we brainstorm some reasons why this would be a good thing for our congregation. Why do we need this "affirming stuff?"
Member 3	To be honest, I think we need to get some new people and get rid of the grumpy old people like (Member 2) over there. Come on, we are living in 2018 not 1918. It's time to get with the time, gramps!
Member 2	Who are you calling gramps, you young whipper snapper! Why in my day we....
Chair	Hold it! Enough, you two. We don't talk that way to anyone in our congregation. Remember we need to show each other respect. This is one of the reasons our church needs to do this - in a Christian church we respect the voices of all, regardless of age!
Member 3	One benefit might be that this could put us on the map; maybe get some free publicity. We could go viral on Facebook! Maybe even get a few more people coming to church!
Member 2	I don't like the idea of spreading some virus but I do like the idea of new members, not to mention more offerings in the plates. But I'm still uncomfortable with promoting a gay lifestyle.
Chair	We're not promoting anything. We'd simply be welcoming people into our church the way God created us!
Minister	Yes, and while there may be a few passages that would contradict what we do here, there are countless passages in the Bible about welcoming those who have

	been turned away. Jesus himself went out of his way to minister to, eat with, and be in the company of those who many others saw as unworthy.
Chair	If we decide to proceed, what steps would we have to do next?
Minister	We might have to make some changes in order to become more welcoming. For example, see how we can make our church more accessible for people with mobility issues such climbing stairs or needing hearing devices to hear the service.
Member 2	A chair lift would make it much easier to go up and down those darn stairs.
Member 3	What about our wedding policy?
Minister	Good point! Yes, we'd need to open our wedding policy so that our agreement to marry couples would no longer be limited to a man and a woman but instead any couple that are willing to commit themselves to each other for life. Oh, and also abide by the provincial marriage laws.
Chair	What about gender neutral bathrooms?
Member 2	Isn't that going a bit too far?
Member 3	You have gender neutral bathrooms in your own home and that's working out OK, isn't it?
Minister	Yes, that's another thing we'll need to investigate, but that's a simple matter of signage and a bit of education.
Member 2	But what about our relationship with other churches? Do we need to hire someone to translate our services to sign language? There is so much to do and so many things to consider, we can't just jump into this!
Minister	We're not just jumping in. This is only the first step in what will be a process of prayer, education, listening to concerns and hopes, and receiving the guidance of Affirm United and other congregations that have already done this. Will it be easy? No. Will we make mistakes along the way? Yes. But isn't that the story of our faith? None of us are perfect Christians but we keep trying and when we get things wrong, we pray for God's grace. In the end, we'll take this to the entire congregation for a vote and let the people decide. All we're trying to decide today is whether to start this journey.
Chair	With that said, all in favour of beginning the process to become an affirming congregation?
Member 2	<i>(addressing the congregation)</i> Thank you for watching our production. We won't show you the results of this vote but instead ask you: what results do you hope from the vote?