



6 February 2023

Dear siblings in Christ in Living Skies Regional Council,

You're receiving this because you're a member of Living Skies Regional Council or connected to a partner group. This includes: Commissions, committees, task groups, Networks, and Clusters; Communities of Faith and outreach/ incorporated ministries; all Ministry Personnel; and lay delegates. This is an invitation to the entire Regional Council to assist the Affirming Task Group and the whole Region in the journey towards becoming Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Affirming.

### **The Affirming process and task group**

"Affirming" means public, intentional, and explicit inclusion of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people and communities in all aspects of the life and ministry of the United Church. In addition, the Affirming process includes (but is not limited to) age, racial and cultural backgrounds, differing abilities, ethnic and theological backgrounds, spiritual beliefs, economic circumstances, and all definitions of family.

The Affirming process was created by Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble and is endorsed by the General Council of the United Church. It offers a journey of education, discernment, action, and transformation to all United Church and ecumenical ministries.

At the 2019 Living Skies annual meeting, delegates voted to begin the Affirming process. ([Please see the web page here.](#)) A task group began its work in 2021 and is guiding the Regional Council through the Affirming process.

If and when the Regional Council becomes Affirming following a vote at its annual meeting, this would not mean that all communities of faith and other ministries automatically become Affirming. Every ministry in the United Church needs to undertake its own Affirming journey.

### **Invitation: vision statement feedback**

Every Affirming process requires a vision statement and action plan. The Affirming Task Group will bring an Affirming Vision Statement to the 2023 Regional annual meeting. **We invite your thoughts on the draft included at the end of this letter.**

This statement is a key part of the Regional Council Affirming process. Delegates to the May 25-28 2023 Regional meeting will be voting on this. This is your only chance for feedback! We will not be editing this statement on the floor of annual meeting. Thoughts you offer here will be carefully taken into account by the Affirming Task Group as it prepares the final draft for annual meeting. A video version of the draft statement is available in late February. Please use it freely! Please see the Regional Council website or YouTube channel.

Your response is so important to our work. Please use this survey to share constructive suggestion on the draft vision statement, and to reflect on how becoming Affirming would change or challenge the work of the Region. Link: <https://form.io/form/230317525608049> (Short link: <https://bit.ly/3jmPHZw> )

Please consult as possible with the membership of your committee or governing body as applicable. In addition, you can choose to respond as an individual; please identify this in the survey.

**Deadline: March 15, 2023.** If you prefer to communicate directly with a member of the Affirming Task Group, please contact one of the members below by email, or phone the Regional office at 306-704-0181.

Yours faithfully, the Living Skies Affirming Task Group:

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### **Living Skies Affirming Statement: draft**

*Living Skies Regional Council celebrates the diversity of God's creation and encourages the full participation of all people in our ministries.*

*The full rainbow spectrum of human diversity includes (but is not limited to) age, gender identity, racial and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation, differing abilities, ethnic and theological backgrounds, spiritual beliefs, economic circumstances, and all definitions of family.*

*We make a public, intentional, and explicit commitment to sharing our faith, gifts, and resources to live out God's call to love, compassion, and justice.*

*As an Affirming Ministry, we will support an ongoing, engaging, educational process for Communities of Faith and other ministries to understand what it means to be affirming. We will offer encouragement and inspiration to existing Affirming Ministries.*