

## Wellington Square Inclusion Statement

At Wellington Square United Church, we embrace the liberating love of Jesus Christ. We recognize that we are not perfect and have not always loved well. We have not been inclusive and have caused harm. Moving forward, we are committed to doing better: loving, growing, listening, learning, and taking action to be more inclusive. <sup>[1]</sup>

While, at present, Wellington Square is not engaged in the process of becoming an affirming church, we commit to honouring the value of all people, spanning any ability, disability, economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality (2SLGBTQIA+)\*, mental wellness, age, marital status, neurodiversity, or theological perspective. <sup>[2]</sup>

We commit to living out our United Church Creed<sup>†</sup>, which says in part:

We are called to be the Church:

- to celebrate God's presence,
- to live with respect in Creation,
- to love and serve others,
- to seek justice and resist evil,
- to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
- our judge and our hope. <sup>[3]</sup>

We commit to the purposeful cultivation of a church community that provides a safer and more inclusive space for everyone to encounter the love of Jesus Christ. <sup>[4]</sup>

[1] An important part of any work of reconciliation in the church is repentance. This first paragraph indicates our confession of our failings and our commitment to doing better.

Also, in this paragraph we have a list of our actions. This list is important because it begins in love and in humility—growing, listening, and learning. It does not end there; it ends in inclusive action. These steps are consistent with our acknowledged need to learn and understand better.

[2] The second paragraph accomplishes two things. First, it straightforwardly states the stage we are at as a congregation—we are not currently pursuing becoming an affirming church. For many, this is an important marker, so we must be transparent about it. Some will

choose not to join us; others will appreciate our honesty about where we are. At least people can decide.

Second, we speak specifically to a range of people who have been marginalized by the church and require extra support and grace. The specificity here is important. This list might grow over time as we become aware of others. At the moment, it covers a range of people with sufficient specificity that people can feel seen.

[3] We felt it important to insert the section of the United Church Creed here because we want to remind ourselves and others of our participation in the larger body of Christ, and of the beautiful responsibilities that come with that. In particular, this stanza of the creed draws attention to

- our collective worship (called “to celebrate God’s presence”)
- our responsibility to Creation—a call toward sustainability
- Our position as servants of others—we do not gather to serve ourselves, we are not a church if we are serving ourselves, but only as we serve others
- Our apostolic call to seek justice—something that is particularly important in regard to inclusion as we know God has called us to love and bless all of His children especially if they have been mistreated by others. We need only remember that Jesus chose sinners over church folk; the hurting over the healthy. And we should do likewise.
- Jesus is our hope and our judge—we are no one’s judge. Otherwise, we are missing the hope in Christ.

[4] Ultimately, our goal is for people to encounter the living Christ and find a forgiven embrace in Jesus. We need to work to cultivate such a community—one where the aroma of Christ is so inviting that everyone turns to come in—but we will always be works in progress. Hence, we will never be a wholly “safe and inclusive” community, but we can always work toward becoming “safer and more inclusive”. The intentional cultivation of community involves the ongoing work of becoming maturing disciples of Jesus—a process that must inevitably lead us into deeper and more significant relationships with all of God’s children but especially with those who have been marginalized or hurt by society or most especially by the Church in the past.

\* 2SLGTBQIA+ is an acronym for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and the plus reflects the countless affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify.

† A New Creed (1968)