

Public | Intentional | Explicit

# National Affirming/PIE Day FAQ's

## Why Pi?

Love is a circle. It's irrational, inclusive, and infinite. And we're delighted to add an Affirming twist to International Pi Day celebrations on 3.14, March 14, every year.

## Why Pie?

Why pie? Why not?! Mmmmm... pie.

## Why PIE?

We've been using the acronym **PIE** because it's easy to remember and stands for **Public, Intentional, and Explicit**: the standard for an affirming welcome of LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people. PIE represents three ways for us to test just how real our Affirmation and celebration of gender or sexual diversity is. Each of the three concepts supports the others.

## **Public:** Public = Being out and proud!

Especially in religious contexts, it's not the norm for queer folks to truly know and feel that they will be embraced exactly as they are.

**Being Public:** Using symbols and signs echoed outside and inside your building, in your services, programs, on websites and social media channels, and in all other facets of the life of your organization. Openly using the language of gender and sexual diversity.

Living out being Public means showing up in public places to support gender and sexual diversity, especially when local or global events lead to vulnerability, silencing, and violence. The broader community should know who you are; a witness to the wider community that God's love extends to everyone equally and without reserve. This is still a radical message!

**MORE PIE PLEASE!**



## Intentional:

**Intentional = Putting thought and resources into action!**

Many people and groups, the church included, assume that gender and sexual diversity are now fully accepted, so “special” efforts are no longer needed. This sadly isn’t true. Society has come a long way, but there is a long way to go, and churches have inherited centuries of transphobic and homophobic oppression carried out in the name of God/the Gospel. Living into PIE means investing time into planning, programming, and utilizing resources and growth opportunities.

Affirming people and churches are still a minority, and that minority needs to express radical love with intention.

**Being Intentional:** Deliberately continuing the process of study, education and dialogue with members of their faith community. Ensuring that the history of oppression and discrimination by the Church is both understood and acknowledged, and that continued growth and celebration are part of its ministry. Including pronouns on name tags; watching for advocacy opportunities; continuing to expand and challenge theology through study and conversation, partnering with other ministries and community groups to put on events, being politically active, programming guest speakers, support groups... etc., all of these, when done with Intention, can be transformative.

## Explicit:

**Explicit = Not Having to Wonder!**

Church should be a place of wonder, not a place where you have to wonder whether you will belong or not. This is why explicitly naming and Affirming queerness and queer folks is so important. There is a power in a name, especially when LGBTQIA+ names have for centuries been used as insults, and Two Spirit identities have been violently oppressed and suppressed by Christianity and colonization.

**Being Explicit:** Be specific about who you welcome and include. Saying "all" are welcome is virtually meaningless as most churches say this but are not Affirming. Explicitly indicate in your Mission and Vision statement— and everywhere else!— that the LGBTQ2SIA+ community is a part of and embraced in all facets of church life. Show and tell your commitment to your faith community by always exploring what it means to live out the unconditional love of God. Don't just practice what you preach - preach what you practice!

## Can anyone participate?

We hope that everyone who wants to will celebrate National Affirming/PIE Day! While the concept is rooted in ways of measuring and celebrating action within a faith ministry context, we are certain that the concepts of PIE can be applied to any community or organization.

You don't have to be officially *Affirming* to host an event. Our co-founders, Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble and Affirming Connections, are rooted in the United Church of Canada tradition, but we welcome people of all faiths and backgrounds to celebrate.

We ask you to keep in mind that if you host an event, you are publicly showing your full affirmation of LGBTQ2SIA+ folks and your commitment to continuing this journey. A PIE event means that you take LGBTQ2SIA+ inclusivity seriously, even while having all of the pie fun!

If you use our materials or if we share your event, it is not an endorsement. Rather, we want to be a part of letting people know about the amazing, diverse, and inclusive things happening in churches, communities, and cities across Canada.

## We're already welcoming! Why become Affirming?

Many United Church ministries and people feel they already welcome everyone and wonder why they need to become an Affirming ministry.

Most LGBTQIA2S+ people have experienced condemnation, exclusion, and hatred within Christian communities. A deep distrust or fear of Christianity, church, and often, religion at large, is the result. Many people of all ages still live in closets of shame or fear.

The biggest source of discrimination is still religiously motivated. And a religious attack requires a religious response.

By becoming an Affirming ministry you make a Public, Intentional, and Explicit statement that you celebrate and honour LGBTQIA2S+ people. While there are dangers associated with publicly 'coming out' as Affirming, it is less dangerous for Affirming ministries than it is for LGBTQIA2+ people themselves.

Working for justice on sexual or gender issues integrates with other work for justice—including anti-racism or environmental justice. It opens the doors to new ways of being, softens and challenges us, and invites us to live into who God is calling us to be. To be Affirming is to be on a journey for greater justice for all the earth, and the Affirming process prepares and propels us, reminding us all the while that we are not alone!

Learn more at [affirmunited.ause.ca/affirming-ministries-program](https://affirmunited.ause.ca/affirming-ministries-program)

## We're already an Affirming Ministry – what next?

You are not alone! Through Affirm United, Affirming Connections, and the 270+ Affirming Ministries across the country, there are lots of resources and expert advice to help keep your Affirming Ministry relevant and thriving. It's understandable to feel stagnant or 'stuck' sometimes, but you don't have to stay there! How can you make your commitment to be affirming Public, Intentional, and Explicit?

For example:

- **Public:** Do the people who come to your ministry or hear about you know that you are an Affirming ministry and what that means? Do you have your statement and Affirming symbols on your website, print materials, social media, signs? Are you present at Pride events and other LGBTQ2S+ events throughout the year?
- **Intentional:** Do you continue to host events and educational programming that keep your Affirming ministry active? Workshops, studies, partnerships with other organizations, incorporating Affirming messages into your services, and other regular events at your ministry are all important. Have you revisited your action plan? What areas do you need to grow in? Have you looked at your policies to make sure they are updated to include new areas of education (For example: A trans-inclusive washroom policy, safe space guidelines for rental groups, pronoun guidelines, etc.)
- **Explicit:** Are you clear how you can be fully inclusive - moving beyond tolerance into celebration? Is this communicated to your community and the broader public? Do you have LGBTQ2SIA+ folks in positions of leadership and consultation in your ministry? Do you continue to share your story of your Affirming process and how the work will be ongoing in the future? Can you accompany neighbouring ministries through the Affirming process?

These are a few examples to get you thinking about what PIE can mean in your ministry today and in the years to come. Start from where you're at, choose one or two goals, and go from there. Remember that you are supported and that you can reach out when you need to! And if you're in a place to lend support, reach out to those around you and let them know. We're in this together.

For more information on the Affirming process and on who Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble is: [www.ause.ca](http://www.ause.ca)

For more about Affirming Connections: [affirmingconnections.com](http://affirmingconnections.com)

PIE Day questions, queries, pie recipes?  
Visit: [www.pieday.ca](http://www.pieday.ca)

