

THE UCC JOURNEY TOWARDS AN APOLOGY TO 2SLGBTQIA+ COMMUNITIES

Origin: General Council Executive

1. Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality

The church we are/are becoming brings with it brokenness, wounds and acknowledgement of its possible role in injustices and mistreatment of 2SLGBTQIA+ persons (their friends, family and allies).

[At GC32 in 1988](#), the GC declared that all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation, who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, are welcome to be or become full members of The United Church of Canada, and all members are eligible to be considered for ordered ministry.

The church considered the possibility that the issue concerning 2SLGBTQIA+ in the United Church is less about gender and sexuality and more about how the church dealt with difference and conflict through, before and beyond the 1988 period. While healing and celebration happened in several places after 1988, it did not happen in most places. On many levels, the church failed to respond by offering healing space and pastoral care.

2. 2011 GLBTT National Consultations:

At GC40 in 2009, the church was called to reemerge as a leader for justice by undertaking specific actions to move local congregations to embrace the United Church's welcoming policies for all people in the sexual orientation and gender identity continuums. **GC40** directed the church to host a national consultation with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and two-spirited members of the United Church to discuss homophobia and heterosexism in the church. A Final Report was written and submitted to PC-PMM. It included a specific recommendation action: for "the General Council to offer a formal statement of apology to all people that have been hurt by the practices and policies that encourage and reinforce the right to discriminate based on sexual orientation and gender identity."

[GLBTT Consultation Report](#) (pages 93-105).

GC40 also affirmed and directed work on Transgender Identity issues and a national consultation focusing on the place, role, and ministries of "transgender" folks in the church. (GC40 HAM 04) . The 41st General Council affirmed its commitment to the [full inclusion of Transgender – Gender Variant individuals](#) into the membership of the United Church of Canada, and support for the Civil and Human rights of Transgendered persons in the society.

3. The Iridesce: The living Apology Project

At [the 42nd General Council](#), the church approved support for a national process of a Living Apology installation project for dialogue, storytelling, education, and reconciliation with persons who identify as sexual or gender diverse including but not limited to Two-Spirited,

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer persons. [The Iridesce: The Living Apology Project](#) launched in 2017 was a collaboration between the General Council Office (GCO) and Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble (AU/SE). Over three years, the project gathered stories from across the United Church and submitted its final report to the General Secretary in July 2020. Upon review of the report, it was recommended that the General Council Office (GCO) form a working group to recommend follow-up actions to the General Council Executive. The working group concluded and submitted formal recommendations for follow-up on the [Iridesce Project in February 2023](#). The Executive received the report in May of 2023 ([GS 33](#)), and acted on the recommendation to craft and offer an apology to 2S and LGBTQIA+ communities.

4. Apology to 2S&LGBTQIA+ communities Task Group

In November 2023, a volunteer apology task group was appointed to draft an intentional living apology that moves beyond a statement to explicit action. Recognizing the need for apologies to be lived into with action, the apology task group developed a statement in response to the findings of Iridesce: The Living Apology Project and the 2011 National GLBTT Consultation report. The Apology Task Group developed the first draft of the statement in June 2024. Through Regional Council Executives, the Task Group invited initial feedback to the zero draft in an online survey and a total of 34 responses were received. In January 2025, a public town hall meeting was held, during which the Task Group presented the draft of the Apology. The Town Hall was attended by 96 people. The Task Group provided an update on the Apology development and welcomed insight into what needs more attention. Participants also spent some time in small groups brainstorming ways that the church could invite Communities of Faith across the country to live into the apology.

5. Draft Apology to 2SLGBTQIA Communities by The UCC – GC 44, March 7, 2025

GS 142 Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities: A revised draft (February 2025), was presented at GC44. The General Secretary proposed that the GCE receive and approve the text of the Apology and: direct the General Secretary to develop a process for offering the apology to the 2S and LGBTQ communities at the 45th General Council, August 2025, and direct the General Secretary to develop a plan to share and animate the apology, to communities of faith, regional councils and partner groups. GCE voted affirmatively to the proposal and to have the Apology proceed to GC45.

Living into the commitments on equity

The United Church is committed to working toward the full participation of people who identify as Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and people from diverse marginalized communities. The Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities is a part of the United Church's commitments on equity. By acknowledging past harm the United Church explicitly recognizes and apologizes for the homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia experienced by 2S & LGBTQIA+ individuals within the church. It includes a commitment to upholding and fulfilling the recommendations of the "Living Apology into Action" statement. By offering the apology and committing to action, the Church hopes to promote healing from past harms and foster reconciliation with the 2S &

LGBTQIA+ community. The ultimate goal is to create a church that is a place of sanctuary and belonging for all people, where everyone feels safe, supported, and valued.

Social Policies of the UCC

- Policy Title: Living Apology to Members of LGBTTTQ Communities (GC42 2015-060)_ [Living Apology to Members of LGBTTTQ Communities \(GC42 2015-060\).docx](#)
- Policy Title: Sexual Orientation (1984S256) - [Sexual Orientation 1984 \(1984S256\).docx](#)
- Policy Title: Transgender - [Transgender.doc](#)
- Policy Title: Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People Within The United Church of Canada and Supporting Their Civil and Human Rights (GC 40 2009 – 086) - [Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People \(GC 40 2009 - 086\).doc](#)