

# Open & Affirming Survey

First Christian Church, Columbia, MO

**REVISED**



The Open and Affirming Exploration Team, in its continued work of leadership and discernment, invites the congregation to share in the attached survey. This survey is one part of the intentional process of discerning the will and readiness of the church to be a congregation of inclusivity especially in regard to people of differing gender expressions and sexual orientations.

This survey helps the O & A Exploration Team better understand the congregation's understanding and feelings on the subject matter in society and church. It will help them develop the next steps of discernment, education, and process.

This survey has been adapted from "Building an Inclusive Church," the training guide offered by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) LGBTQ+ Alliance. Both a hard copy version and an online version are available. If you wish to complete the hard copy, pick up as many forms as you might need for your family in the Narthex.

The online version may be completed at <http://firstchristian.org/2019/open-affirming-survey>. It is on the church website in the BLOG tab. The online version will need to be emailed to the church [fcc@firstchristian.org](mailto:fcc@firstchristian.org) or printed.

Every voice is important and all people in this congregation are valued. We want to hear from you! We don't have to ask for your name. Responses will remain anonymous. Thank you for your time in taking this survey.

**If you complete the paper copy version, you may: (Please complete and return the survey by August 1)**

- Mail it to the church office by August 1.  
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
101 North 10th St, Columbia, MO 65203
- Drop it off in the church office by August 1.
- Drop it off in the box available in the Narthex – labeled "O & A Survey" —by August 1.

## **Helpful Terminology:**

**Defining *Open and Affirming*:** A term used by Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Congregations in regard to their being *open to* and *affirming of* LGBTQ+ people in the life of the church.

**Defining the label/acronym LGBTQ+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other+. **LGBTQ+** is a mainstream umbrella acronym for use when labeling topics pertaining to gender identity and sexuality.

*What does it mean to be:*

***Open:*** publically acknowledged and proclaimed

***& Affirming:*** welcoming LGBTQ+ and all people as beloved children of God.

***& Affirming:*** thinking about the above label as an identity beyond sexual preference.

**Defining Inclusive Language:** This is language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people, especially gender-specific words, such as "man," "mankind," and masculine pronouns, the use of which might be considered to exclude women.

*Example:* God: is referred to as "God" and not "He."



**Please complete the following information and then mark answers to 19 questions:**

Mark the age range in which you fall:  10-14      15-18      19-29      30-39      40-49  
 50-59      60-69      70-79      80+

Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of First Christian Church?  Yes  No     If Yes, how long? : \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Does the state of Missouri have a non-discrimination policy for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities?**

Yes      No      Not Sure

**2. Does the city of Columbia have a non-discrimination policy for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities?**

Yes      No      Not Sure

**3. Who comes up with new ideas for ministry? (check all that apply)**

Clergy

Administrative Leadership (Departments/Cabinet/Governing Board)

Various lay leaders who may not be elected to an office.

Ideas are solicited from members who think outside the "everyday" church box.

All of the above

**4. How does the congregation receive and include new members?**

Outsiders are **not** easily included in the congregation.

New members are encouraged to join but are **not** actively integrated into the life of the church.

New members **are** welcomed and actively integrated in the life of the church.

Visitors of all kinds are vigorously pursued, welcomed and encouraged to join, and integrate into the life of the congregation.

New members are quickly invited to consider positions of leadership in the congregation.

**5. What is the prevailing congregational understanding of the message of the scripture?**

- A book of rules to avoid eternal damnation.
- The way to achieve personal salvation.
- A message to all that God is love.
- A message full of examples of God's inclusivity.
- There is no one prevailing understanding that would apply to the whole congregation.

**6. Relationships within the congregation are:**

- Isolated individuals and families
- Small groups of close friends
- Friendly within affinity groups (i.e. age, gender, class, race, language, education, orientation).
- A community of faith embracing relationships across affinity and ideological lines.

**7. When conflict arises, it is dealt with head-on in an open and loving atmosphere.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**8. The congregation is diverse in regards to age, ethnicity, class, race and language.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**9. The congregation is diverse in sexual orientations and gender identities.**

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

**10. Does the congregation use inclusive language in worship?**

Not at all

Inclusive language for humans *but not* God.

Inclusive language for humans *and* God in sermons.

Inclusive language for humans and God in sermons, hymns and liturgy.

Inclusive language for humans and God in sermons, hymns, liturgy and Scripture readings.

Not sure

**11. Do the pastors use examples that include people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in sermons?**

No

Yes, and I feel uncomfortable when it is done.

Yes, and I have no problems with it.

Not sure

**12. Has the congregation engaged studies on sexuality?**

No, the subject is too taboo.

Yes, and we will never do it again.

Yes, adult education classes and/or adult Sunday School, but only a few participated.

Yes, adult education classes and/or adult Sunday School, and we had a good turn out.

Yes, there was lots of interest and we plan to extend our studies of sexuality.

Not sure

**13. Are you aware of LGBTQ persons within the congregation?**

- No
- Yes, but they do not speak openly about it.
- Yes, and some speak openly about it to a few members of the congregation.
- Yes, and individuals and/or couples are visible, but **not** active in leadership of the church.
- Yes, and several individuals and couples **are** visible and active in leadership of the church.

**14. Are you aware of families in the congregation who include LGBTQ persons?**

- No
- Yes, but they do not accept their LGBTQ children or family members.
- Yes, and they do accept their LGBTQ children or family members, but do not speak openly about it.
- Yes, and they speak openly about their LGBTQ children or family members.
- Yes, and they are visible advocates.

**15. Would the congregation accept a pastor regardless of sexual orientation/gender identity?**

- Yes
- Yes, after a process of discussion and discernment.
- No
- Not sure

**16. Have the youth of the congregation expressed an opinion on accepting people of different sexual orientations/gender identities?**

- Yes, and they are solidly against.
- Yes, their view is positive, but they feel adults have mixed views on it.
- Yes, their view is positive and they feel adults are listening.
- Not sure

**17. Has the congregation already done or participated in blessings of same-gender relationships?**

- No, never
- No, but a pastor participated in such a service at another church.
- No, but two members did have a service which was private and at another church.
- Yes, but the service was private and at the church.
- Yes, and the congregation participated.
- Not sure

**18. Are our pastors in favor of explicitly welcoming and including people of all sexual orientations and gender identities?**

- Vocally against (  Brad;  Jimmy)
- Privately against (  Brad;  Jimmy)
- Privately in favor (  Brad;  Jimmy)
- Vocally in favor (  Brad;  Jimmy)
- Not sure (  Brad;  Jimmy)

**19. FCC's website offers the following welcoming statement:**

*First Christian Church is a vibrant faith community dedicated to worship, service, and fellowship, giving witness to the love and compassion of Jesus Christ in downtown Columbia and across the globe. With an open door, all people are welcome to share in the church's mission – to know God and follow Jesus Christ.*

**Would you support a welcoming statement which explicitly includes people of the LGBTQ community?**

- Yes, I would support such a statement.
- No, I would not support such a statement.
- Not sure, but I am open to more information.
- Not sure

**20. Please add any additional thoughts and comments you might have in the area below or attach further.**

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