

## Our Open and Affirming Statement

*We declare that First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Congregation. We believe that all people are sacred in the eyes of God, welcome at God's table, and entitled to full and equal participation in the life of the church.*

*We recognize that congregations have historically condemned and excluded some persons and groups of persons from the institutional church whether through an active effort or through complicit silence.*

*In response to our understanding of Christ's invitation to the table, we declare that we will continue in our struggle to be open and affirming to all persons regardless of sexual orientation, age, race, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental abilities, and we will work to show our understanding of the Realm of God as a place of diversity and justice by our actions and our witness in the world.*