

Yellowknife church publicly welcomes gay parishioners
The United Church in Yellowknife is publicly stating that it welcomes people of any sexual orientation and gender identity.

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United Church minister Nancy Steeves, with Minister Peter Chynoweth, says churches that welcome everyone are a dime a dozen.

Rainbow banners now hang over the pulpit at the United Church in Yellowknife. This weekend, the church publicly stated that it welcomes people of any sexual orientation and gender identity.

The church is now one of 17 United Churches in Western Canada to hold special status within the national organization, as a congregation that openly welcomes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

'You don't have to park who you love and how you love at the door.'- *Nancy Steeves, United Church minister*

"I think churches that say 'all are welcome' are a dime a dozen," said Nancy Steeves, a United Church minister from Edmonton.

She spoke at a service the Yellowknife congregation held over the weekend.

"There are safe places to be who you are ... that you don't have to park

your mind at the door. You don't have to park your sexuality at the door. You don't have to park who you love and how you love at the door."

Kathy Burns was on the committee that facilitated the church receiving special status. She says part of her work was to make amends for the past.

"I also felt that the Christian church has a lot to answer for," Burns said.

Members of the congregation say the next step is living up to their promise.

"This is a way of making explicit a welcome that hasn't always been there and isn't everywhere," Steeves said.



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