

A Timeline of Gender and Transgender Justice in The United Church of Canada

1925	The United Church is inaugurated.
	The Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) brings together the Women's Missionary Society (Presbyterian Church in Canada), the Woman's Missionary Society (Methodist Church, Canada), and the Canada Congregational Woman's Board of Missions.
1936	Lydia Gruchy is the first woman ordained in the United Church.
1947	The National Association of As One That Serves (AOTS)—a men's service club—is formed.
1953	A committee is established to study women's work in the church, with the goal of establishing a united women's organization and to further full partnership of women and men in the church.
1960	Final approval is given by the General Council to establish a women's organization to "share in a much more meaningful way the work of the church."
1962	The Women's Association and Woman's Missionary Society join to form the United Church Women (UCW).
1963	The church approves the <i>Married Women Working</i> recommendations, which include pushing the government to provide daycare homes, day nurseries, and equal pay for equal work.
1964	The church does away with provisions that restrict ordination of women to those who are unmarried, widows, or at a time in their lives when they are no longer required in the home.
1970s	Women diaconal ministers are finally allowed to be married and retain their status in the order.
1971	Persons in the Deaconess Order are made official members of the courts with full speaking and voting privileges.
1978	The magazine <i>Women's Concerns</i> is launched, exploring issues from a Christian feminist perspective.
1980	The church approves the Contraception and Abortion policy, supporting a woman's right to choose.
	The church elects its first female Moderator, Rev. Lois Wilson.
	The church commits itself to "the disciplines of opening our language," identifying exclusive language and implementing changes in new publications.
1982	The Changing Roles of Women and Men in the Church Committee is renamed The Committee on Sexism.
	The church commits to work toward breaking down sex-role stereotyping and to develop strategies for eliminating sexism.
	The church produces a study guide on contraception and abortion.
	The church approves the <i>Guidelines for Inclusive Language</i> , stating, "There is no intent to impose inclusive language proposals with reference to God."
1984	The church declares and confesses its complicity in sexism and commits to addressing this.
1986	The church formally adopts the <i>Guidelines for Inclusive Language</i> in its own worship, discussions, correspondence, reporting, and publishing, and instructs its divisions and standing committees to do the same.
	The church encourages the use of a variety of metaphors, images, and pronouns for God in documents, worship, and liturgy.
	Anne Squire becomes the first lay woman elected Moderator.

A Timeline of Gender and Transgender Justice in The United Church of Canada

1988	The church embraces the goals of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women in Church and Society of the World Council of Churches (WCC).
	The church approves the <i>Gender Justice and Partnership Guidelines</i> .
1988–1998	The church works to support the WCC’s Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women in Church and Society, focusing on economic injustice, violence, racism, and participation.
1992	The church calls on the federal government to guarantee access to basic social, health-care, and economic services regardless of gender, ability, race, age, sexual orientation, or place of residency.
	The church agrees to study and evaluate the housing conditions and difficulties of single women living on fixed incomes and single senior women.
	The church agrees to continue to provide resources that demonstrate the links between the feminization of poverty and violence against women and children.
	The United Church Publishing House (UCPH) publishes <i>Crossing Worlds: The History of the Woman’s Missionary Society (1925–1962)</i> .
1994	The church urges the federal government to ensure that female circumcision and sexual orientation are identified as grounds for gender persecution as outlined in the Immigration and Refugee Board’s guidelines.
	The church encourages the wider church to continue creating opportunities to pursue the goals of the WCC’s Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women in Church and Society in ways that foster wholeness, both within and beyond our faith communities.
	Virginia Coleman becomes the first woman elected as Secretary of General Council.
1997	The church produces the resource <i>Just Language: A Guide to Inclusive Language in The United Church of Canada</i> .
2000	The church affirms women in the church and names lay leadership development for women’s groups as a top priority.
	The church affirms its support for work on gender justice in relation to global economic justice.
2003	The church issues an Apology to United Church Deaconesses and Ordained Women Clergy, expressing sincere regret to the women who were forced to relinquish their rights to practise ministry if and when they married, and expressing sorrow for the loss of their leadership.
	<i>Our Roots, Our Lives: Glimpses of Faith and Life from Black and Asian Canadian Women</i> , edited by G. A. Wenh-In Ng, is published by UCPH.
2005	The United Church of Canada Archives begins the “Making Room For Women” project as an effort to identify and preserve personal papers of women in the United Church and the records of organizations they’ve participated in.
2007	The magazine <i>Women’s Concerns</i> is discontinued.
2009	The church approves its <i>Commitment to Inclusion</i> (search “commitment to inclusion” on United Church Commons), which states that, in matters respecting worship, doctrine, membership, and governance, the United Church is opposed to discrimination against any person on any basis (race, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, socioeconomic status, age, language, or any other basis on which a person is devalued). The church further commits to becoming an anti-discriminatory and welcoming denomination.
	The church affirms the participation and ministry of transgender people (search “affirming ministry transgender” on United Church Commons), and encourages all congregations to welcome transgender people into membership, ministry, and full participation.

A Timeline of Gender and Transgender Justice in The United Church of Canada

2010	The Rev. Cindy Bourgeois is the first openly transgender person ordained in the United Church.
	A survey on being transgender in the United Church, completed by 193 trans people and 138 allies, informs the work of the Trans/Gender Diversity Task Group.
2011	383 people participate in a series of GLBTT national consultations, which provide opportunities for trans people, LGLBTQ people, and allies to help shape an open, welcoming, and affirming United Church. A report is offered to inform the directions of General Council 41 (GC41).
2012	The work of the Trans/Gender Diversity Task Group comes to an end, having created online resources and laid the foundation for ongoing work. A final report with recommendations is received, and work assigned to appropriate General Council Office staff and/or United Church committees for follow-up.
	The church acknowledges the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation, affirms that gender identity is not a barrier to membership and ministry, and requests the General Secretary to update all existing policy statements that refer only to “sexual orientation” to include “gender identities.”
	The registration form for GC41 includes, for the first time, the option for participants to self-identify their gender. This is acknowledged at GC41 as a way the church is working to more fully welcome trans people.
	At GC41, Ruth Woods, a transgender woman and United Church ordained minister, shares her story in a video entitled Ruth’s Story .
	The Rev. Cheri DiNovo, then a Member of Provincial Parliament for Ontario, succeeds in getting Toby’s Act passed. This amendment to the Ontario Humans Rights Code to include gender identity and gender expression is the first of its kind in North America.
2013	A Trans and Gender Identity Facebook group is created for allies of trans people. A private Trans Network [UCCanada] is created for trans people in the church (contact transgender@united-church.ca for instructions on how to join).
2015	General Council 42 approves the Living Apology to Members of LGBTTQ Communities (as a travelling, interactive art installation project—see also 2017, 2018).
	The United Church begins offering extended health benefits for trans employees (and their dependents) who are transitioning. (For more information, see “ Benefits for Active Members .”)
	The first edition of <i>Celebrating Gender Diversity: A Toolkit on Gender Identity and Trans Experiences for Communities of Faith</i> is published. This resource is available on the United Church’s Gender, Sexuality, and Orientation webpage under “Downloads.”
	The webinar “Celebrating Gender Diversity: Five Stories,” which shares stories of five trans and gender queer people in the United Church, takes place. A recording is made available .
2016	United Church people are encouraged to take action to support Bill C-16, a bill which would add gender identity and gender expression to the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code. The bill becomes law in 2017.
	The United Church begins participating in Thursdays in Black , a WCC campaign against sex- and gender-based violence.
	The webinar Celebrating Gender Diversity: Gender Identity & Communities of Faith looks at how the <i>Celebrating Gender Diversity</i> toolkit (2015) may be used.

2017	The National United Church Women (UCW) celebrate their 55th anniversary in Vancouver, BC.
	Iridesce: The Living Apology Project is launched as an invitation for story-sharing to all affected by the church's 1988 decision. Stories are welcomed from before, during, and after the 1988 decision—to help the church discern if and how it might live into a possible apology to the church's 2SLGBTQIA+ people.
	A Global LGBTQTwo-Spirit Consultation is jointly presented by The United Church of Canada and Affirm United in order to host a dialogue on 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, with a focus on the church's role in understanding and supporting those rights. Included are eight global partners, the United Church's Partner Council, as well as ecumenical and civil society organizations.
	The Rev. Cheri DiNovo, then a Member of Provincial Parliament for Ontario, successfully passes the Trans Day of Remembrance Act that marks November 20 as the official day. Ontario becomes the first and (to date) only government in Canada to legislate recognition of the day.
	As One That Serves (AOTS) closes its National Executive; local AOTS groups continue to function.
2018	The Iridesce installation is shared at General Council 43 (see this interview), and the Iridesce Theatre Presentation is performed . At General Council 43, the church approved the continuation of this project (relaunched in 2019).
2019	An updated edition of <i>Celebrating Gender Diversity: A Toolkit on Gender Identity and Trans Experiences for Communities of Faith</i> is published.