

Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons

General Charter

Original drafted in 1979

Last amended by membership vote in November 2013

FOREWORD

For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

Doctrine & Covenants Section 58:26-28

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this general association shall be Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons (AFFIRMATION).

ARTICLE II - POSITION

We affirm that homosexuality and homosexual relationships can be consistent with and supported by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III - PURPOSE

Affirmation does charter itself for the purpose and position herein stated, as a charitable, service, educational and religious oriented association.

As members and friends of the gay and lesbian community, it is our intention to work for the understanding and acceptance of gays and lesbians as full, equal and worthy persons within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("the Church") and society, and to help them realize and affirm self-worth.

Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons is a welcoming community and welcomes all persons regardless of sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Affirmation supports and encourages its members by assisting them in dealing with the Church, their families, employers, work associates and social contacts. The association offers its members strength and support in solving personal problems through mutual acceptance and fellowship.

The association is organized to:

- Encourage spirituality, prayer and the practice of all Christ-like and charitable behavior in the recognition of members as whole and complete children of God.
- Provide support for people experiencing difficulty reconciling their sexual orientation with traditional Mormon beliefs and other belief systems about homosexuality.
- Provide a forum for communication and education for members and leaders of the Church and our peers concerning homosexuality.
- Provide support and opportunity for social interaction, intellectual development, emotional stability and cultural exposure with those of similar heritage and background.

ARTICLE IV--ORGANIZATION

Any individual who has paid general association membership dues for the current period shall be considered a member of the general association of Affirmation. An individual may also be a member of a local chapter or the chapter-at-large of Affirmation.

The members of Affirmation, meeting in a general conference, shall be the ultimate governing authority of the general association of Affirmation. The regular activities of the association shall be directed by a President and an Executive Committee, elected and appointed as provided in the Bylaws. Certain actions of the President and Executive Committee shall be effective only upon ratification by the Board of Directors (Board), the members of which shall be selected as provided in the Bylaws. In general, the President and the Executive Committee shall serve as the functioning executive of the general association, and shall establish policies, procedures and guidelines for the general association, affiliated chapters and fellowship groups.

The President shall be elected by the dues-paying members of the general association, in the manner provided in the Bylaws. The President shall select and appoint, from among the dues-paying members of the general association, two Vice Presidents, one of whom shall be designated the Senior Vice President. The President and the two Vice Presidents shall constitute the Executive Committee. The appointment of the Vice Presidents shall be effective upon ratification by the Board, as provided in the Bylaws. In the event of the President's resignation, removal or other inability to act, the Senior Vice President shall become the President, appointing two new Vice Presidents, in the manner appointed above. In the event of the simultaneous resignation, removal or other inability to act of both the President and the Senior Vice President, the other Vice President shall become the President. The President may remove any Vice President at any time and shall appoint (a) successor Vice President(s) in the manner provided for the original appointment of such Vice President(s).

A local chapter may become affiliated with the general association by supporting the General Charter, and by applying to and being accepted by the Executive Committee, in the manner provided in the Bylaws. Members of the local chapter must meet the requirements of membership in Affirmation Gay & Lesbian Mormons to have full membership privileges. Membership in a local chapter does not automatically constitute membership in general association of Affirmation.

A Board of Directors shall be appointed by the President and the Executive Committee to advise and assist the Executive Committee and to oversee any paid staff or employees of the organization, in accordance with the Bylaws. The Board shall consist of no more than fifteen members, plus the President, who shall preside at meetings of the Board, and the two Vice Presidents. Appointments to the Board made by the Executive Committee must be confirmed by a majority of the Board members currently serving. Appointments to the Board may also be made by any Board member, and the appointment will be considered official upon confirmation by a majority of the other current Board members. Appointments may not be made in excess of the total seats permitted by the Charter. With the exception of the members of the Executive Committee, who serve *ex officio*, members of the Board shall serve for three-year terms. A Board member may be removed by the remainder of the Board in accordance with the Bylaws. A portion of the seats on the Board may be reserved to represent specific constituencies, per procedures outlined in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE V--LEGISLATION

Proposed amendments to this General Charter, and to the Bylaws, may be submitted by any three or more dues paying members of the general association to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall present any such proposed amendments in writing to the full membership (all current dues paying members) with provisions for voting on the acceptance or rejection of the amendment. The amendments shall become permanent upon the ratifying vote of a simple majority of the ballots or votes received in reply, or alternatively, by a simple majority of members of Affirmation in attendance at a general business session of the next general conference. A vote must be called for, by mail or electronically, within no more than six weeks of the Executive Committee having received the proposed amendment, or by a vote at the general business session of the next conference if the proposed amendment is received less than two months before the start of the next conference. Should the Executive Committee and three other dues paying members unanimously agree the amendment is frivolous, they may refuse to submit the proposed amendment to the membership for a vote.

ARTICLE VI--STATEMENT OF NONPROFIT STATUS

This association is organized exclusively for nonprofit, charitable, educational and religious oriented purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the "Internal Revenue Code").

The organization claims that donations and funds received shall therefore be exempt and deductible under the foregoing section of the Internal Revenue Code. Upon the dissolution of the association, its assets remaining after payment of all its debts and liabilities shall be distributed to a non-profit fund, foundation or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational and/or religious oriented purposes and which has established its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

No part of the net earnings of this association shall ever inure to or be for the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the association shall be empowered to make reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the exempt purposes for which it was formed.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the association shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an association exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons

Bylaws

ARTICLE I--NAME

The name of this general association shall be Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons (AFFIRMATION).

ARTICLE II--ADHERENCE TO GENERAL CHARTER

Affirmation is empowered to perform any and all acts which are defined in the General Charter and the Bylaws of the association and shall do nothing which is inconsistent with their provisions and with resolutions adopted by the Executive Committee and ratified by the Board as provided herein.

ARTICLE III--ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

Section 1. The term of office for the President shall be one calendar year, from January 1st through December 31st of the year following the election of the President.

Section 2. Candidates for the office of President must formally declare their candidacy in writing to the Corresponding Secretary no later than the end of the first day of the annual general conference of Affirmation. Declaration(s) of candidacy should be included in the November issue of the newsletter and on the Affirmation website. A ballot will be sent for use by each current, dues-paying member of Affirmation.

Section 3. Ballot votes must be mailed to the General Association's post office box postmarked before November 20th, and marked "BALLOT" on the envelope. Such ballots will be opened and counted by an Election Committee (consisting of the Corresponding Secretary of the Association and two dues-paying members of Affirmation chosen by the Corresponding Secretary) not earlier than November 25th, and not later than December 1st, and the results reported to the current President. All ballots will be submitted to the Executive Committee for verification.

The Election Committee shall execute a certificate verifying the results of the election, which shall be printed in the next issue of Affinity.

ARTICLE IV -- DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

Section 1. The President shall preside at and conduct the business meetings of the Executive Committee. He/She shall be responsible for timely responses to all mail and telephone inquiries about Affirmation, and forwarding the information to the appropriate chapter, fellowship group or General Association officer.

Section 2. The President shall report or cause to be reported at each regular meeting of the Executive Committee and each meeting of the Board, and each meeting of the General Association of Affirmation, the status of the General Association's budget and operating expenses.

Section 3. The President shall be empowered to perform any tasks as requested by the Executive Committee and in keeping with the General Charter and these Bylaws.

ARTICLE V -- THE AFFIRMATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. The Affirmation Board of Directors (hereafter: Board) shall consist of no more than fifteen members, plus the President and the two Vice Presidents (the "Executive Committee"). Members of the Executive Committee will serve ex officio. Other Board members shall serve for three- year terms.

Section 2. The Board shall meet in-person at least annually, in conjunction with the annual general conference of Affirmation. It may meet at other times, and may conduct business by telephonic or electronic communications followed by written confirmation of the votes of its members.] A quorum shall be a simple majority of all currently serving Board members. A quorum is required for Board decisions to be binding upon the President or the members of the General Association, for matters over which the Board has authority in accordance with the Bylaws. Meetings of the Board with less than a quorum may occur, but no binding decision may be made at such meetings.

Section 3. The power of recall and removal of the President is vested in the Affirmation Board. Recall and removal of the President may be initiated by the written request of three or more members of the Board (the "moving parties"). The moving parties shall prepare and deliver to the Corresponding Secretary a written statement of the reason for such request, and copies of such statement shall be mailed to each member of the Board. Not sooner than seven (7) days following the mailing of such statement the Board may meet, in person or telephonically, to consider the action to be taken with respect to such request, or not sooner than fourteen (14) days following such mailing, the Board may act upon such matter through telephonic communications with written confirmation of the votes of the members to be mailed to the Corresponding Secretary, who shall designate an Election Committee with the same qualifications as indicated in Article IV Section 3, which Committee shall count the votes and sign a certificate of the results. Recall and removal of the President shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the Board voting on the issue. The certificate of voting results shall be published in the next issue of *Affinity*. Upon removal of the President, the Senior Vice President shall become Acting President and serve in that capacity until a new election may be held to select the next President. Such an election must be held not more than two months after the removal of the former President. The person removed from the Presidency may not run for re-election at this time, but is not prohibited from running for President in later elections. The Board shall also have the power of removal of individual Board members, for any reason, using the following procedures: Three Board members may propose to the President in writing the removal of a specified Board member. The president must call a vote of the Board on the proposal. If a majority of the Board eligible to vote agrees, the removal is effective and the President or the Board may appoint a new member. The member proposed for removal may not vote on their own removal.

Section 4. The President shall preside at the meetings or other proceedings of the Board, unless the matter at issue involves the President, in which case any member of the Board designated by three or more members of the Board shall preside. All actions must be

taken based upon the voting concurrence of a simple majority of all of the members of the Board eligible to vote, or other majority as specified herein.

Section 5. The duties of the Board shall be the following:

1. Advise and assist the Executive Committee,
2. Assist with fund-raising for the organization,
3. The authority and responsibility to ratify the disbursement of grant and loan monies,
4. Oversee any employees or paid staff of the organization, to include having final approval in hiring or firing decisions,
5. Confirm appointments made by the President for Vice Presidents and by the Executive Committee to vacate seats on the Board. The Board also confirms nominations to the Board by Board members.
6. The power of recalling the President of Affirmation and causing a new election to be held, in accordance with these Bylaws.

ARTICLE VI--EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President and two Vice Presidents selected and appointed by the President and ratified by a simple majority of the Board as provided in Article VI of these Bylaws. One of the Vice Presidents shall be designated the senior Vice President. In the event of the resignation, removal or other inability to act of the President, the senior Vice President shall become the President, and in the event of the resignation, removal or other inability to act of the senior Vice President, the other Vice President shall become the President. The President, from time to time, may remove any Vice President. In any case of vacancy of the office of Vice President, the President shall appoint successor Vice President(s) in the manner provided for the original appointment of such Vice President(s). Actions of the Executive Committee shall be taken by majority vote (two of the three members) of the Executive Committee.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall meet at such times and places as may be designated by the President. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of the President and one of the Vice Presidents. One member of the Executive Committee shall act as secretary at the meetings of the committee, and records the minutes and actions of the meeting.

Section 3. The President and the Executive Committee may appoint members to the Board of Directors. The three members of the Executive Committee shall serve as *ex officio* members of the Board, and the President shall preside. All other Board members serve for a three-year term.

ARTICLE VII--DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall appoint the following executive officers ("general association officers") of the general association:

- Managing Editor of Affinity--the general membership publication of AFFIRMATION
- General Conference Chairperson or Co-Chairpersons
- Treasurer
- Corresponding Secretary
- Publications Director — (publications other than *Affinity*)
- Public Relations Director

Any dues-paying member may be appointed to one or more of the foregoing positions. The appointment of each of the foregoing named officers shall be effective upon ratification by a simple majority of the Board. Any of the foregoing officers may be removed by action of the Executive Committee, and successor officers appointed in the manner provided for the original appointment of such officers. In addition, the Executive Committee may appoint such other adjunct officers and committees, from time to time, as it may deem appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- Family Service Director(s)
- Chapter Development Director
- Women's Issues Director
- Fund Raising Committee
- Area Representatives
- Liaison Assistants for other related support groups

The appointment of any such adjunct officers and committees shall not require the ratification of the Board. All adjunct officers and committees shall serve at the pleasure of the Executive Committee.

Section 2. Prior to April 1st of each year, the Executive Committee shall prepare and forward to the Board for ratification an annual budget for the activities of Affirmation for the current calendar year.

Section 3. The Executive Committee each year shall select, and give notice to the general membership of the Association of, a date and place for a general conference of such membership at a location reasonably convenient to the general membership of the association. The general conference shall be held over a period including a weekend, and shall be held on or prior to the last weekend in October in each year.

Section 4. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for:

1. Directing the general activities of the Association;
2. Promoting the formation of new chapters within Affirmation;
3. Publishing or causing to be published a national newsletter;

4. Organizing or causing to be organized an annual national conference;
5. Defining and promoting the general goals for Affirmation for the term of office of the Executive Committee.

Section 5. The Executive Committee shall review the income and expenses and determine the General Association annual fee to be assessed of each voting member of the Association. Said fee shall be sufficient to cover a subscription to the national newsletter and the operation expenses of the General Association. Any change in said fee shall be subject to ratification by the Board. Chapters may require an additional local chapter membership fee sufficient to cover chapter operating costs, but this shall not constitute membership in the General Association of Affirmation.

ARTICLE VIII--MAINTAINING CHAPTER AFFILIATION

Section 1. Area Representatives who are dues-paying members of the General Association, may be appointed by the Executive Committee to coordinate the activities of, and communication with, members and potential members who live more than thirty (30) miles from any organized chapter. The Area Representative will maintain contact with the President and receive referrals from individuals within his/her geographic area. The Area Representative will work toward the organization of a local chapter by active promotion of Affirmation and fellowshiping of potential members.

Section 2. Affiliate chapters of Affirmation shall consist of any number of persons choosing to associate under a single designation, but which have less than three members paying dues to the General Association. Affiliate chapters shall be governed by the Executive Committee, or an appointee thereof, who shall report to the Executive Committee. Affiliate chapters shall not be autonomous and may be reorganized or disbanded at the discretion of the Executive Committee at any time. The right to use the designation of Affirmation: Gay & Lesbian Mormons, or any part thereof, is also at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Chapters of Affirmation shall consist of any number of persons choosing to associate, not less than three of whom have paid dues to the General Association for the year. Qualification will occur when the dues are received by the national treasury. The chapter must maintain a regular meeting schedule, meeting at least once every three months. A quarterly written or electronic communication should be published. The chapter shall have bylaws or other written documentation setting forth the method of selection of a chapter leader and method of accounting for chapter funds; a copy of document shall be filed with the Secretary of the General Association. The chapter shall provide contact information for the chapter leader to the Editor or Secretary of the General Association in a format to be determined by the Editor or Secretary. Chapters maintaining the above criteria will receive all referrals in their geographic area, and will be listed in the online directory. Chapters shall be governed by locally elected or appointed leaders, subject to the goals and objectives of the General Association as outlined in this Charter and Bylaws.

Section 4. The Executive Committee shall periodically review and determine the status of all chapters. Any group of persons desiring to affiliate with Affirmation will make application to the Executive Committee with the following:

1. the name by which the chapter will be known

2. the status (Chapter or Affiliate Chapter) desired
3. the name of the chapter director
4. a mailing address and a phone number for chapter business
5. a copy of the chapter's mission statement, constitution or chapter and bylaws.

Section 5. A chapter's recognition as a chapter shall be in effect as of the receipt by the national treasurer of not less than three paid General Association memberships for the year, subject to acceptance by the Executive Committee and by receipt of the information required in Section 4 of this Article. If affiliation is disallowed, the individuals will become members of the Chapter-at-Large.

Section 6. The status of a chapter may be revised or recognition revoked by the Executive Committee for any of the following reasons:

1. a failure to remit individual membership fees to the General Association
2. a six-month lapse in the functioning of the chapter
3. gross non-compliance with the General Charter, Bylaws or the chapter Guidelines
4. the inability of the Executive Committee to establish contact with a chapter representative for 90 consecutive days
5. a failure to represent Affirmation: Gay & Lesbian Mormons in a manner consistent with these Charter & Bylaws.

Upon dissolution of any chapter, the membership records and any remaining funds shall be sent to the President and become part of the general funds of the Association, in accordance with the 501(c)(3) requirements imposed by the internal Revenue Service. Any individual member of a dissolved chapter shall become a member of the Chapter-at-Large and entitled to the privileges thereof until membership expiration.

ARTICLE IX--STATEMENT OF MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND IDEOLOGY

Section 1. Affirmation hereby adopts the following statement of its mission, objectives and ideology, which will be reviewed and updated, from time to time, as deemed appropriate by the members assembled in general conference, upon the recommendation of the Board.

Section 2. The mission of Affirmation shall be to provide gay and lesbian Mormons and former Mormons with opportunities to make their own choices by helping them deal with issues regarding sexual orientation, spirituality, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Section 3. The objectives of Affirmation are as follows:

(1) Affirmation will provide opportunities for gay and lesbian Mormons and former Mormons to:

- 1.

1. Work through sexual orientation issues—especially issues of being gay or lesbian and Mormon.
2. Discover their own values and develop a way of living in harmony with those values.
3. Network with each other.

(2) Affirmation will interact with the extended Mormon community to:

1.
 1. Eliminate the prejudices and misconceptions about sexual orientation.
 2. Educate family and friends about being gay or lesbian and Mormon.

(3) Affirmation will interact with other gay and lesbian organizations to:

1.
 1. Share our values and views.
 2. Encourage our members to serve the community.

Section 4. Affirmation expresses the following ideology:

1. Sexual orientation is an inherent part of each individual.
2. Many Mormons—gay and straight—have prejudices and misconceptions about sexual orientation. Eliminating those prejudices and misconceptions is in everyone's interest.
3. Although Affirmation is not a religion, Mormon cultural, spiritual, and religious heritage is an intrinsic part of Affirmation. We encourage our members to develop personal spirituality.
4. Affirmation is one voice in a chorus of many. We respect the right of individuals to organize to meet their own needs.
5. Friendship, learning, healing and support are inherent in our gatherings. Family and friends are welcome.
6. Affirmation functions provide a safe place to affirm our humanity. Beliefs about religion, spirituality, sexuality and other private issues are respected as personal values. We honor each individual's process without judgment.
7. Affirmation remains politically neutral, but encourages its members to follow their consciences.

ARTICLE X--ENDOWMENT FUND

Section 1. The Executive Committee may establish an Affirmation Endowment Fund which shall receive contributions from members and friends of Affirmation. The

objective of the Endowment Fund will be to receive and invest principal funds and to earn an income which shall be used to further the purposes of Affirmation as stated in the organization's Charter.

Section 2. The Endowment Fund shall be governed by Finance Sub-Committee comprised of not less than three nor more than seven members who shall be appointed by the President and ratified by the Board.

Section 3. The Finance Committee may appoint an Endowment Fund Administrator to administer the affairs of the Fund in accordance with policies and rules that the Finance Committee will establish.

Section 4. The Affirmation Treasurer shall be the custodian of the monetary assets of the Endowment Fund. Funds are to be invested and disbursed in accordance with the directions of the Finance Committee.

Section 5. A report of Endowment Fund finances and activities shall be made regularly to the Affirmation President, Executive Committee and the Board. Annually, a financial report of the Endowment Fund shall be made available to the general membership of Affirmation.

Section 6. Disbursements of funds from the Endowment Fund, including internal transfers, must be approved by the Board upon the recommendation of the President.

Addendum: Affirmation's Youth Services Mission Statement

Ratified into Affirmation's Bylaws on September 5, 1998 at the Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon

Our Mission

Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons endorses community-based and national initiatives which assist youth and young adults who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or questioning their sexuality (GLBTQ). Affirmation's Youth Services relies upon such initiatives to promote positive emotional, spiritual, and psychological development among Mormon affiliated youth and young adults who struggle with their sexual orientation. By providing information about and referral to such initiatives, Affirmation serves as a link between community resources and young individuals in need.

Our Vision

Affirmation believes health and wellness is possible for Mormon affiliated GLBTQ people of all ages who accept themselves. By supporting those service initiatives that believe similarly, we hope to preserve the physical and spiritual lives of GLBTQ youth, and thereby reduce risk behaviors including intra-personal violence (suicide and other self-destructive acts), alcoholism, HIV transmission, sexual and emotional exploitation, substance abuse, dropping out of school, running away, and exposure to unhealthy adult role models and environments which seek to exploit youth sexually, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.