

Easter Week
April 8, 2020

Dear fellow British Columbians,

As a group of Christian leaders we seek to join our voice in praise and thanksgiving for the care, kindness, and sacrifice of courageous front-line health care workers, social and food services staff, and civil servants. We are praying for everyone involved in protecting the health and safety of all in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. May God strengthen, protect, and guide all who seek to provide healing and may their work be a moving expression of the mercy and love of God.

We recognize how worrying the global pandemic is. It is a crisis which provokes uncertainty, panic, loss, discouragement, and loneliness. As followers of Jesus, we know that God is with us in the midst of worry and loss. We pray that the Spirit of Christ will bring you peace and an abiding sense of calm. The promise of scripture offers us hope: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. You are in the palm of my hand" (Isaiah 41:10). We have hope that God will see us through this crisis.

Signs of hope and solidarity are evident throughout our province. Despite the restrictions imposed by social distancing and necessary isolation, people everywhere are discovering new and creative ways of reaching out and helping their neighbour. Knowing the value of community, they are heralds of hope to the lonely and consolers to those in distress. It is inspiring to witness the bonds of affection that sustain our communities and society.

Nearly 2 million people in BC identify as Christian, and the vast majority of them are engaged in their Christian faith and church communities. We are called to love and support our society, not only with our prayers, but also in our actions. Indeed, we are called to "seek the peace of the city" (Jeremiah 29:7).

In this very difficult time in our world we encourage everyone to:

1. Obey guidelines set by the government, including self-quarantining, social distancing, sanitizing, and hygiene.
2. Find neighbours who are alone or self-quarantining, and offer to help them.
3. Assist the elderly, even if only to talk with them from their porch, through a window, or on the phone.
4. Assist others in need of extra encouragement, companionship, and help, for example: single parents, those with limited mobility or chronic illness, or those struggling with mental illness.
5. Do more of what brings you deep joy, then share with family, friends, and the world.
6. Be in touch with your nearest church or community organization and, if it is safe for you, offer to volunteer. For instance, there will be very high need for grocery and meal delivery in the coming weeks.
7. Donate to charities working on the frontlines. Money is best, but you can call to see what items are most useful in these circumstances.

God is with us and wants to shoulder our burdens and offer us comfort and protection. As we pray for the virus to end, let us also together pray:

- For everyone affected by COVID-19 or the closure of social services, particularly the elderly, marginalized, homeless, and hungry.
- For the mental and physical health of all.
- For our political and civic leaders to have wisdom, courage, and humility as they make extraordinarily difficult decisions.
- For all those who work on the frontlines and behind the scenes.
- That all secular and religious communities would work together for the common good.

Let all followers of Jesus Christ join together asking for the grace and peace of our almighty and merciful God, especially for all the sick and their families, health care and social workers, authorities, and volunteers who are sorely tried by the COVID-19 pandemic.

By and for God's grace,

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

Denominational Leaders

Archdiocese of Vancouver, Roman Catholic Church, Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB
 British Columbia Baptist Conference, Rev. Dr. Bernard Mukwavi, District Minister
 Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, Rev. Rob Ogilvie, Executive Minister
 Christian & Missionary Alliance, Canadian Pacific District, Rev. Errol Rempel, District Superintendent
 Christian Reformed Church, Classis BC North-West, Kathy Smith
 Diocese of Kamloops, Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Joseph Phuong Nguyen
 Diocese of Nelson, Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Gregory Bittman
 Diocese of Prince George, Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Stephen Jensen
 Diocese of Victoria, Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Gary Gordon
 Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia & Yukon, Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Melissa Skelton
 Evangelical Free Church of Canada, Lower Pacific District, Rev. Rob Stewart, District Superintendent
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, British Columbia Synod, Bishop Gregory Mohr
 Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in British Columbia & Yukon, Rev. David Horita, Regional Director
 Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada, Rev. Barry Buzza, President
 Mennonite Church British Columbia, Rev. Garry Janzen, Executive Minister
 North American Baptist Fellowship, Jeremy Bell, General Secretary
 Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church of Canada, Treena Duncan, Executive Minister
 Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, British Columbia & Yukon District, Rev. Ken Russell, District Superintendent
 Presbyterian Church in Canada, Westminster Presbytery, Rev. Victor S.J. Kim
 Salvation Army, Divisional Headquarters, British Columbia Division, Lt. Colonel Jamie Braun

Non-Profit Executives

Alpha Canada, Shaila Visser, National Director
 ChurchForVancouver.ca, Flyn Ritchie
 City in Focus, Tom Cooper, President
 CityReach Care Society, Simon Gau, Executive Director
 Corpus Christi/St. Mark's College, Dr. Peter Meehan, President and Vice-Chancellor
 Focus on the Family Canada, Terence Rolston, President
 Hope For Freedom Society, Dennis Fagan, Executive Director
 L'Arche Greater Vancouver, Denise Haskett, Executive Director
 Mission Central, John Hall, Executive Director
 Mission Possible, Matt Smedley, Chief Empowerment Officer
 Nightshift Ministries, MaryAnn Connor, Executive Director
 Power to Change Ministries, Rod Bergan, President

Regent College, Jeff Greenman, President
 Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, Daniel Whitehead, Executive Director
 St. Andrew's Hall, Tim Dickau
 Trinity Western University, Mark Husbands, President
 Union Gospel Mission, Bill Mollard, President
 Vancouver School of Theology, Indigenous Studies Program, Rev. Dr. Ray Aldred,
 Director
 World Vision Canada (BC), Lisa Hamilton, Philanthropy Advisor
 Young Life, Mike O'Leary, President
 YWAM Vancouver, Mike Davies, Executive Director
 24-7 Prayer Canada, Aaron White, National Director

Marketplace Leaders

A. Allan Skidmore, Chairman & CEO, Skidmore Group
 Andy Szocs, Chair, The Szocs Family Foundation
 Angus Reid, Chairman, Angus Reid Institute
 Bob Gaglardi, Owner & CEO, Northlands Property
 Brian McConaghy, Founding Director, Ratanak International
 Bruce & Diane Ledingham
 Bruno De Vita, QC, Alexander Holburn Beaudin + Lang LLP
 David & Lise Ash, Business & Philanthropy
 David Bentall, President, Next Step Advisors
 David McLean, Chairman, McLean Group
 Dick Vollet, President & CEO, St. Paul's Foundation
 Fiona Dalton, President & CEO, Providence Health Care
 Geoff Tunnicliffe, Former Head, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
 Grant Damery
 Jae Kim, Principal, JK Philanthropy Advisors
 Jim Crescenzo, Founder, East End Boys Club
 Jim Pattison, Chairman & CEO, Jim Pattison Group
 John Montalbano, Chair, St. Paul's Foundation
 John Neate, CEO, JJ Bean Coffee Roaster
 Joo Kim Tiah, CEO & President of the Holborn Group
 Michael Audain, Chairman, Polygon Homes Ltd.
 Lawrence J. Ho, Senior Fellow Murdock Charitable Trust
 Paolo Aquilini, Aquilini Investment Group (AIG)
 Peter & Debbie Ash, Business & Philanthropy
 Peter Bull, President, P.M. Bull & Company LTD and Blenheim Realty LTD
 Peter Chung, Chairman & CEO, Primacorp Ventures INC
 Peter Lee, Caffé Umbria
 Peter Mogan, Mogan Daniels Slager LLP
 Reuben Zuidhof, Partner, Digital Hot Sauce
 Santa Ono & Wendy Yip
 Scot Sustad, Partner, Adventure Teaching
 Dr. Stephen Chung & Gail Chung, Head of Hepatobiliary & Pancreatic Surgery,

Vancouver General Hospital
 Tom Skidmore, CEO, Skidmore Development Group LTD
 William Lee, Navigators of Canada
 Dr. Will Johnson, Family Physician
 The Hon. Yonah Martin, Canadian Senator

Local Pastors

Broadway Church, Vancouver, Rev. Darin Latham, Lead Pastor
 Calvary Worship Centre, Surrey, Rev. Sam Owusu, Pastor
 Chapel Vancouver, Jonathan Mitchell
 Christ Community Church, Victoria, Rev. William Delleman, Pastor
 Christian Reformed Church, Rev. Henry Numan, Retired
 Christian Reformed Church, Prince George, Rev. Andrew Aukema
 Christian Reformed Church, Vancouver, Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma
 Christian Reformed Churches of British Columbia, Dena Nicolai, Chaplain and Refugee Support Mobilizer
 Coastal Church, Vancouver, Pastor David Koop
 First Christian Reformed Church of Vancouver, Rev. Tom Bomhof, Pastor
 Fraser Lands Alliance Church, Vancouver, Pastor Abe Chan
 Grace Lutheran (ELCIC) Church, Burnaby, Rev. Nathan Fong
 Grace Vancouver Church, Pastor Mike Hsu
 Gracepoint Church, Surrey, Rev. Steve Bains, Pastor of Community Development
 Hope Vancouver Network, Rev. Dave Carson
 Jericho Ridge Community Church, Surrey, Brad Sumner, Lead Pastor
 Jubilee United Church, Burnaby, Rev. Graham Brownmiller
 Maple Ridge Christian Reformed Church, Rev. Dr. Tim Sheridan
 Nelson Avenue Community Church, Burnaby, Rev. Johannes Schouten
 New Westminster Christian Reformed Church, Rev. Andrew Beunk, Lead Pastor
 Pacific Grace MB Church, Vancouver, Rev. Xavier Law, Senior Pastor
 Pastor and Professor, Rev. Dr. Darrell W. Johnson
 Peace Mennonite Richmond, Rev. Winston Pratt, Lead Pastor
 Peninsula United Church, Surrey, Rev. Bruce McAndless-Davis, Pastor
 People's Church Surrey, Rev. Ryan Delblanc Lead Pastor
 Southside Community Church, Surrey, Rev. Cam Roxburgh, Senior Pastor & National Director Forge
 St. Andrew's Wesley United Church, Vancouver, Rev. Dan Chambers
 St. John's Shaughnessy Anglican Church, Vancouver, Rev. John Stephens
 St. Peter's Fireside, Vancouver, Rev. Alastair Sterne, Lead Pastor
 Telkwa Community Church, Telkwa, Rev. Joe Ellis
 Tenth Avenue Alliance Church, Vancouver, Rev. Dr. Ken Shigematsu, Lead Pastor
 Terrace Christian Reformed Church, Terrace, Rev. Joel Ringma
 The Tapestry Church, Richmond, Rev. Albert Chu, Lead Pastor
 The Tapestry Church, Richmond, Rev. Michael Yang
 The Way Church, Vancouver, Rev. Jason Ballard & Chris Price
 United Church of Canada, Vancouver, Very Rev. Dr. Gary Paterson, Former Moderator

Westside Church, Vancouver, Rev. Matthew Menzel, Lead Pastor
Westwood Community Church, Coquitlam and President of the Association of Christian
Ministries Vancouver, Rev. Giulio Gabeli