

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