

June 19, 2020

Greetings siblings in Christ,

God is with us in the struggle. I believe that God is calling us to move forward, even though we are surrounded by so many uncertainties, to infuse God's love into this ever-changing world. We as Communities of Faith, as followers of The Way taught by Jesus of Nazareth have an important role to fill during this strange time. That role is simple, be love; show compassion, act justly, and walk humbly with each other, with our neighbours and strangers, and with Creator. How we put this into practice is a whole lot different than our 'church habits' of the past. We can no longer rely on our past practices; we are being forced away from 'the way we've always done it.' I pray that we will all seize this opportunity to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit along The Way.

I truly believe that you have done well over the past few months. You have risen to the challenge, remaining faithful even in difficult circumstances. I have also been moved by the response of so many humans, to care for the vulnerable, to gather hearts in prayer, to journey with those who are struggling, and even to begin to make changes because of the witness of oppressed peoples. There is still much work to be done, and I trust that Communities of Faith will embrace the new challenges with the same creativity, openness and courage.

The task before you will not be easy. It will take intentionality, attention to detail, and openness to change, but I trust that if love is our guide we will find joy in the struggle, together as community. We, the Regional Council Covid19 Task Group, have prepared a way to help guide you in this difficult task. These are our recommendations, based on the latest information available from health and science, from the Quebec Government, and from General Council. Our recommendations come from study and expertise, in the hope that we can enable the opening of our building in a legal and in a safe way. At this time, we do not know the full implications of not following through on the intentional process of planning and recording our plans. For this reason, I hope you see these instructions as a help and not a burden. We, the Regional Council Covid19 Task Group, want to help enable the opening of your building, and using the prepared forms will enable our helping, and guide your planning. I trust that the Holy Spirit will amplify all of our efforts, as we open our building for the building of community once again.

I will try to give you a snapshot of these recommendations, to help you in working with the checklist. We are currently in Phase 0, and will be legally in Phase 0 until June 22nd. There is Phase 0 work to complete before Phase 1 can begin. On June 22nd it will be legal to begin Phase 1, however, we are recommending that you have your Phase 1 Plan prepared and submitted before beginning Phase 1 in your building. Phase 1 does not allow for worship in the building, but is a time to start holding small group meetings and enabling renters to return safely. Phase 1 does allow for outdoor worship of no more than 50 people who are physically distant and wearing masks is suggested. We recommend that you experience Phase 1 for a little while before beginning Phase 2, and that Phase 2 begin no sooner than Labour Day. The Regional Council Covid19 Task Group will also need your Phase 2 plan before you begin implementation. Know that we are here to enable you and not to get in the way of your ministry to your community.

We have an amazing staff that supports the work of our Regional Council, and they continue to serve our communities of faith with deep compassion and hope. We also have creative and courageous ministers all throughout our Regional Council, who are working hard to adapt while being present to their community. We also have passion-filled lay-leaders within our Communities of Faith, who continue to

shine the light of Christ while doing the work of the church. Thank you all for your service in *God's Dream* (Desmond Tutu).

As I write this, I am praying for you. I pray that Creator will reveal God's self to you as you act as a responsible co-creator in this world. I pray that you will shine the light of Christ through your actions of justice and compassion. And I pray, that you will be inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Breath of Life, giving you the courage to act in wisdom.

You are not alone beloved children of God, and you have been called for such a time as this.

Rev. Linda Buchanan
President
Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council

on behalf of the Regional Council Covid19 Task Group