



Statement on our Response to COVID-19 Pandemic September, 2020

All of us are very aware of the current pandemic situation related to COVID-19 and the efforts being made across our country to respond and reduce the spread. Throughout this time, we have become very aware of the heroic work being done by our front line medical workers and many others in essential services. **We are forever grateful!** We commend as well the leadership being given by our government leaders at each level. We join our hearts together to pray for those who have fallen ill, lost loved ones or who have experienced deepening economic hardship through this time. **We stand together as a community of faith ready to do what we can to respond in compassionate ways.** Our Pastors and Churches are doing their very best to adapt to the ever changing environment we find ourselves in. We really never have seen anything like this before in our lifetimes. Together we must find our way, listening to the Lord and trusted advisors as we go.

In an effort to help stop the advance of COVID-19, we are doing our utmost to adhere to all government directives. In mid March, all of our church buildings were closed and all in-person public gatherings were suspended in all our locations across Canada. Most of our congregations have continued their life together through online means during this time. While our buildings have closed, church life has not stopped, just taken on different forms.

As directed by our various provincial governments we are currently in the process of discerning how and when to begin public gatherings. This will be very much a staged process with different congregations coming back together to meet in person at different times. Smaller congregations will be able to begin meeting sooner while large ones will have to wait until at least the fall. Throughout this process we will do our very best to practice compassionate care all of our people whether they participate in person or online. For our in-person gatherings, we will seek to go above and beyond in practicing all protocols for ensuring the safety of those who participate.

Of course, as always throughout this pandemic, we realize that we can all do the simplest things like making a phone call, texting someone to check in, picking up groceries for those who can't get out, mowing someone's lawn or having a porch visit. We may be apart but we can still stay connected. If you have a Pastoral need, we encourage you to contact one of our local Pastors near you.

As the ministry of the church continues, we encourage all to remember the financial needs of the church. We thank the Lord for the faithfulness of His people in giving both to the church and to ministries of compassion in the community and around the world. Most of our churches are now providing online opportunities for giving which can be easily accessed. Please check church websites and social media platforms for information.

We serve a God who helps us in times of trouble to overcome our fears. May we be instruments of His peace. May we understand the times and know best what to do.

Grace and peace to you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlie".

Charles E. Mashinter
Acting Executive Director