



March 19th, 2020

Dear Partner Colleagues:

Grace and peace to you, in the love of the Creator, in the communion of the Holy Spirit, and in the peace of Christ.

I want to take a moment to connect with United Church partners in God's mission in the world at this time in our global context. The changes that Covid-19 are forcing on everyone are difficult, but I realize that they have a particular reality in your contexts.

Covid-19 is rapidly changing the world. Now more than ever we realize we are in it together – we are not alone. At the same time, we are made increasingly aware of the economic gap between the North and South. Governments like ours in Canada closing borders, imposing emergency measures leading to “lock-downs” and social isolation and are reinforcing xenophobic practices.

As agents of compassion, engaged in ministries of hope that offer support to some of the most vulnerable people in your communities, what you do, in the best of times, is extremely important work: living out the Matthew 25 call that our faith be lived in acts that uphold life, especially for those in need.

I recognize, too, that these ministries are challenging to make work with physical distancing rules being imposed, and may not easily be done electronically, or with increasing social isolation.

I am also certain that you are doing everything possible to continue to support your people, our neighbours, family and friends, with your love and whatever actions can be taken to continue that work.

My prayers are for those who are hurting and scared, those who rely on services that are having to close, and those who will find themselves quickly in need.

My prayers are also for you, those who minister in the midst of this crisis – that you will remain healthy, that you will care for yourself, even as you care for those with whom you have been called to minister. We pray for the healing and mending of the world.

May we find tangible ways of supporting each other – and all of God’s world - in this time, and in the days to come, and may we know that, no matter what, as we “love and serve others,”

as we “seek justice and resist evil,” as we “proclaim Jesus,” with our words and our actions, we will find a way through this, together.

God is with all creation.

We are not alone.

Christ's peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Bott". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'R' and 'B'.

Richard Bott (The Right Reverend)

Moderator / Modérateur

The United Church of Canada / L'Église Unie du Canada