



**Mennonite
Church**
British
Columbia

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Dec. 15, 2020

To all MCBC Congregations,

Greetings during this time when we reflect on the birth of the Christ child.

Garry Janzen and myself attended an information session for BC provincial faith leaders this past Monday, Dec. 14, 2020 hosted by Premier John Horgan, Health Minister Adrian Dix and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry. The session was an update on current pandemic developments and a question/answer follow-up. Monumental breaking news was vaccinations of health care providers and residents of long-term care homes in Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Health will start Tuesday, Dec. 15th.

All three government representatives expressed their significant appreciation for the support, commitment and encouragement that faith organizations have contributed to their communities and to the efforts of the government to reduce the impact of Covid19.

An engagement process with faith leaders was announced. Dr. Robert Daum, Simon Fraser University Wosk Centre of Dialogue will facilitate five sessions with faith community representatives in a consultative initiative to seek advice regarding future actions with respect to Covid19. One breakout group will consist of 25 leaders from Christian denominations.

One question was where this pandemic might position us in the months leading up to Easter. Dr. Henry was cautiously optimistic that our collective situations will improve by the end of March. She cited warmer weather will restrict virus transmission, transmission rates will decrease because of effective measures being implemented and vaccinations will have protected approximately 8% of the population.

Some questions focused on loosening restrictions for in-person worship services. Dr. Henry's response was transmission rates are still too high and there is too much risk for gatherings or events of any kind to be considered. Seniors would be primary attenders at worship services and they are in the high risk category. Previous restrictions were not addressing the rapid rise in transmission. Therefore the restrictive measures that were extended to January 8, 2021 will remain in place.

There was additional clarification that the production of livestream services for online viewing or the preparation of pre-recorded services are permitted with appropriate masking and distancing and minimizing the number of people that are involved.

May your congregation experience the blessings of the Advent season.

Mennonite Church BC

Gerry Grunau
Moderator

[On behalf of the MCBC Executive]

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 3:11