



**Mennonite
Church
British
Columbia**

March 10th, 2021

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Letter to Congregations re COVID-19 Restrictions

Dear MCBC Congregations and Leaders,

MCBC supports and encourages your congregation to follow the recommended restrictions of the BC government and the Provincial Health Officer stipulating no indoor worship services.

There has been recent attention on the court proceedings associated with congregations advocating for their right to have in-person worship services under the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms despite the provincial health restrictions. MCBC does not believe this perspective is consistent with the message of love, concern and community that Jesus teaches us. MCBC supports and affirms the health restrictions as measures to care for others and to preserve the capacity of our health system.

Jesus calls us to serve our community and to follow his example of thinking of others first. To insist on our rights is contrary to the Christian message of doing to others as we would have them do to us. The Bible encourages us to gather in faith and also tells us to care for the elderly, the sick, the homeless and the disenfranchised. We also recognize that reducing the spread of COVID-19 is about limiting our in-person contacts as much as possible, and the restriction on church gatherings helps to keep the BC infection rate low enough that other in-person contacts can continue, such as daycares and elementary schools, physical therapy and elective surgeries. Our adherence to provincial guidelines is one way we can love our neighbours who need these in-person services.

In discerning the wisdom of the biblical message, MCBC has chosen to support the decision to continue to gather through alternate means such as online worship. These actions are a witness to the community as we place the needs of the elderly and the sick above our needs to see each other physically. In recent days, we have been encouraged to hear comments at provincial health briefings that suggest it may be safe for restrictions to be eased soon. However, we affirm the need for ongoing patience, and we will wait until indoor in-person gatherings are allowed before affirming these changes for our congregations.

May we seek and spread the peace of Christ with creativity and commitment. We offer our prayers to your congregation as you embrace the Lenten season.

Sincerely,

Gerry Grunau
Moderator, Mennonite Church British Columbia
With the Support of MCBC Pastors

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