

**Statement on Our Response
To the COVID-19 Pandemic
- March 2021 -**



As we continue to navigate through the current pandemic, we want to update you about our response as a denomination. We are grateful for the sacrificial work of our front-line medical workers and others in essential services. We commend our government officials for the leadership they have given. We join our hearts to pray for those who have fallen ill, lost loved ones or have experienced economic hardship. **We stand 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 have worked to care well for people and help those in our congregations stay connected while also welcoming new friends. With the prospect of vaccines before us, we look forward to a time when we can return to gathering and interacting in person.

In March of 2020 all of our church in-person public gatherings were paused across Canada. As restrictions eased in the latter part of 2020, some of our churches began regathering following all guidelines to ensure safety of congregants. Other congregations have elected to keep their services online only until a time in the future when there will be less restrictions on gatherings.

We continue to monitor public health guidelines in each of our local church settings and have left it to the discretion of each local congregation to develop plans and timelines for resuming congregant gatherings. As always, our priority is to keep people safe. Accordingly, when we churches elect to regather, we will work to meet and exceed all protocols that are called for. We will strive to practice compassionate care for all, whether they participate in person or online.

As ministry continues even in a pandemic, we encourage all to remember the financial needs of the church. Most of our congregations and parishes are providing online opportunities for giving. Please check church websites / 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 as we seek to understand the times and know best what to do.

Grace and peace to you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles E. Mashinter". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Charles E. Mashinter
Executive Director