

October 17, 2018

*They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor,
which was actually what I was eager to do.*
Galatians 2:10

Dear Friends in Christ,

On this International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, I invite you to pray for all those affected by poverty, raise awareness about the issues that contribute to poverty within our communities, and engage in initiatives that address these challenges.

As Paul and other apostles debated and discerned the shape of mission in the early church, they came to clear and enthusiastic agreement that “remembering the poor” is essential to the call to share the gospel. Care for neighbours in need is not only about acts of generous sharing and caring, it also includes ongoing learning about issues and a commitment to seek justice.

As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada’s (ELCIC) National Church Council (NCC) continues to discern what it means to be a church *In Mission for Others*, they have identified that one of our strategic priorities is Reconciled Relationships, and that working to end poverty in Canada is a key goal for this priority.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals commit to eliminating poverty by 2030. In Canada, more than 4 million people live in food insecure households. The Government of Canada has established a national poverty reduction strategy. The goal of eradicating poverty can only be achieved through a comprehensive, human rights-based strategy, back by strong legislation and sufficient funding for ending poverty for everyone. The ELCIC supports Dignity for All’s model of what Canada’s comprehensive national anti-poverty strategy needs to include: www.dignityforall.ca/about/our-plan/.

I am grateful that we journey together with many partners as we work towards Reconciled Relationships in the following ways:

The ELCIC works in effective partnership with Canadian Lutheran World Relief to support refugees, promote food security, and challenge the causes and respond to the consequences of injustice and poverty.

Organizations such as KAIROS, the Canadian Council of Churches, Citizens for Public Justice and the Lutheran World Federation help us to live out Jesus’ call to remember the poor.

We join with our full communion partner, the Anglican Church of Canada, in addressing the issues of homelessness and affordable housing and of responsible resource extraction.

Paul reminds us every congregation and faith community is called to remember the poor and discern the particular ways it can promote compassion, justice and peace in its neighbourhood.

As we pray for the eradication of poverty, I give thanks for all the ways that you participate in God's mission and pray for God's blessing on all the ways you work to eradicate poverty and to journey toward reconciled relationships.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol and followed by the name Susan C. Johnson in a cursive script.

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada