

September 26, 2019

Dear Friends,

On October 21, Canadians will vote in a federal election, electing Members of Parliament who will help shape the life of our country for the next four years.

On the one hand, an election provides an opportunity for citizens to reflect deeply on the values we hold dear, on the common good, and on the promises that candidates and parties make as they seek our vote. On the other hand, an election can focus on fear and on appeals to apparent self-interest. Decisions based on fear are often flawed, even dangerous, and what appears to be our self-interest may be so detached from the common good that, in fact, it does everyone harm.

In the midst of the exile, when it would perhaps seem quite normal to be driven by fear and self-interest, Jeremiah utters these words on behalf of the God of Israel: “Pray for the city into which I have sent you in exile, and seek its welfare, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” As Lutheran and Anglican Christians, we receive this as lively counsel from the living God.

What might that look like as we prepare to vote in October? How might we reflect on key elements of our churches’ public witness as Election Day approaches?

Along with a broad base of faith communities, our two churches share a deep sense of call to actively work for the common good. In 2013, our two churches made particular commitments to encourage each other in addressing issues of Reconciliation, Climate Change, Responsible Resource Extraction, Affordable Housing, and “free, prior and informed consent” for Indigenous peoples.

An election campaign is a good time to think about these issues, pray about them, talk about them in our churches, and ask about them in town hall meetings and to campaigners at the door. Both The Canadian Council of Churches (www.councilofchurches.ca/news/2019-federal-election-guide/) and KAIROS (www.kairoscanada.org/resources/federal-election-2019) have prepared ecumenical resources to encourage discussion and reflection on various issues. We commend them to you for your consideration.

What kind of a Canada do you desire? How is that desire rooted in your spiritual convictions as a follower of the way of Jesus Christ? Let's talk about that in our churches, pray about it in the deep longing of our hearts, bear witness to it in our public discourse, and seal it with a vote that thoughtfully considers what will make our country a good place for all, and therefore a good place for each of us.

Yours in the Spirit of Full Communion,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan C. Johnson".

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark MacDonald".

The Most Rev. Mark MacDonald
National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, Anglican Church of Canada

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Nicholls".

The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls
Primate, Anglican Church of Canada