

July 29, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Liberal, Papineau
Prime Minister of Canada, Ottawa
pm@pm.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

As the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), I wish to express my support for motion *M-36 Emancipation Day* by the Honourable Majid Jowhari, Liberal, Richmond Hill, to designate August 1 of every year as Emancipation Day in Canada.

The realities of systemic anti-Black racism in Canada have been well documented—including by the United Nations' Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent—and many of these racial inequities are directly linked to the legacies of slavery in Canada. Recent anti-Black racist acts and the subsequent wave of backlash against anti-Black racism have further highlighted the need to address the many systemic injustices and racial discrimination experienced by Canadian Black communities.

The ELCIC is seeking to be faithful in our commitment towards anti-racism.

In March 2020, the ELCIC joined with the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada to affirm the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent and call on our churches to do more to address anti-Black racism (www.elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=552). This work was amplified with the endorsement of ten additional denominations.

The ELCIC has recently established a task force to address racism, white supremacy and issues of racial injustice as one-step toward becoming an anti-racist church and dismantling anti-Black racism.

In June 2020, the ELCIC National and Synod Bishops issued a pastoral letter acknowledging racism "within us and within our communities" and encouraging church members to repent, listen, learn, hear the stories, stand alongside of, speak up, speak out, and stand up against injustice (www.elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=570).

Commemorating Emancipation Day on August 1 is an opportunity for churches and communities to acknowledge history and to deepen engagement in eliminating anti-Black racism in our society. In light

of this, we support designating August 1 of each year as Emancipation Day, to mark the abolishment of slavery in Canada.

We support motion *M-36 Emancipation Day* and appeal to you directly to support and pass this motion. As an organization committed to actively engaging in ending anti-Black racism, the ELCIC will also be declaring our support of motion M-36 within our communities of faith.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan C. Johnson", with a small cross symbol to the left.

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

cc: The Honourable Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Official Opposition
The Honourable Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the NDP
The Honourable Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
Jo-Ann Roberts, Interim Leader of the Green Party
ELCIC National Church Council