

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen MP
Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

May 5, 2020

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), we are writing to endorse the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC) proposal to sustain the charitable sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. We attach a copy of the CCCC's April 21, 2020 proposal for your reference.

Canadian Christian charities extend well beyond the reach of the CCCC's member national denominational offices. In the ELCIC, our congregations and faith communities are engaged in helping those most vulnerable through food banks, counselling, senior's care, shelters, community outreach, as well as welcoming refugees to Canada, and more.

Canadian Christian charities provide a vital benefit and support to Canadians, adding to the richness and health of our nation.

As bishops and treasurers of the ELCIC's synods and national church, we are deeply aware of the efforts our congregations and faith communities are making to care for the people they serve. As the CCCC notes, faith-based charities provide significant public benefits to individuals, neighbourhoods, regions and the nation. For every dollar in a place of worship's operating budget, the community receives more than \$4.50 of socio-economic value and non-members of churches are four times more likely to use a church's community programs than are its members.¹

As churches, we fully support the public health restrictions in order to promote the common good. We acknowledge the important efforts by the Government of Canada to provide assistance for families, employers and organizations. Nevertheless, there are times when faith-based organizations fail to meet the criteria of any particular assistance program.

The restrictions on public gatherings have a huge impact on faith communities by preventing in-person gatherings for worship, weddings and funerals. Along with the spiritual support given to each other, these gatherings are normally the place where participants offer financial contributions to support the organization. While church members continue to practice generosity, congregations vary greatly in their capacity to receive and process offerings from a distance.

1 www.cccc.org/news_blogs/noteworthy/2020/04/22/covid-19-cccc-calls-for-a-matching-funds-program-to-support-charities/

We support the CCCC's proposed *Matching Donations Distribution Model* as a way for charities and the government to share the responsibility for adapting to our current pandemic crisis.

Before, during and after the pandemic, charities offer commitment and experience to the work of supporting Canada's most vulnerable people. Charities are vital in living out the call we hear echoed across the country during these unprecedented times that "we are all in this together."

We thank you for considering the CCCC's proposal and we continue to pray for you and the Government of Canada as you carry out your responsibilities in these most unusual times.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Susan Johnson
National Bishop, ELCIC

The Rev. Dr. Greg Mohr
British Columbia Synod

The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer
Synod of Alberta and the Territories

The Rev. Dr. Sid Haugen
Saskatchewan Synod

The Rev. Jason Zinko
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