

March 13, 2020

Dear Mennonite Church Saskatchewan;

It was with great disappointment yesterday that we decided it was necessary for the wellbeing of our community to postpone the 2020 MC Sask Annual Delegate Sessions this weekend. To be clear, we are not disappointed with the decision to postpone. We are disappointed, however, that we are unable to be together this weekend as a church community. Personally, I was looking forward to our time together. I was looking forward to the pastors and leaders workshop Friday afternoon with Arli Klassen and Jeanette Hanson. I was looking forward to the business sessions and hearing from our different commissions and programs. I was looking forward to worshiping together through song, sermons and communion. I was looking forward to *Deepening our Walk with Each Other & the World*. We had good registration numbers and I am convinced; we would have enjoyed this time together!

But now we are being asked to let this go, to “self-isolate”, and to respond in helpful ways as we face the uncertainty of the COVID-19. While the risk continues to remain low for Canada, this virus has shown to change situations quickly. To help navigate these challenging times, I recommend examining the Mennonite Church Canada updated pandemic response resource for congregations (<https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/outbreakresources>), continue monitoring the Saskatchewan Health Authority website for the latest updates (<https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca>), examine Wildwood Mennonite Church’s response (attached to email), and check in with one another by whatever means seems appropriate. As the flight attendant always reminds passengers, in the case of an emergency, put your oxygen mask on first before assisting others. And remember to pray. Pray for our health workers, first responders, researchers, the sick and recovering, government officials making decisions, and ourselves as we respond from a place of deep trust and hope.

In regards to next steps for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, the MC Sask Council is working at alternative plans. Currently, this is what is being considered: MC Sask will hold its Annual Delegate Sessions on Saturday, April 25, 2020 (location to be determined). We will re-evaluate and confirm these plans 15-20 days prior the meeting. This meeting will primarily be a business meeting, focusing on reports, passing the new bylaws, and the budget. Our programs, commissions and partner organizations will be invited to participate as per usual, but the event itself will only be one day. In regards to the Pastor & Leader’s Event, our guest speakers Arli Klassen & Jeanette Hanson and the theme *Deepening Our Walk with Each Other & The World*, we plan to hold a “Mission and Worship” event. This event would be held the weekend of October 2 & 3, 2020 (location to be determined), to bring together our ADS theme and the launch of the new Voices Together Hymnal. Most of our congregations ordered bulk hymnals through the MC Sask office which are expected to arrive in late September. This event would allow congregations to not only pick up their hymnals, but to sing

through them together too! This is in the earliest planning stages, however both Arli Klassen and Jeanette Hanson have confirmed their availability and interest in being here. We will keep you posted with updates!

As we continue to *Deepen our Walk with Each Other & The World* in these times, I leave you now with the words from Bryan Moyer Suderman's song (and one of our boys favourite bedtime song), *You're Not Alone* –

*“You're not alone, we are one body.
You're not alone, we stand with you.
You're not alone, your time of suffering is our suffering too
And I know the day is coming when we will be rejoicing anew.”*

The peace of Christ be with you;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Siemens', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ryan Siemens
Executive Minister
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan