



St. John's and Area Council of Churches

P.O. BOX 91, 430 Topsail Road
St. John's, NL
A1E 4N1

Mayor Danny Breen
City Hall, St John's

6 December 2018

Recognition of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The St John's and Area Council of Churches joins the World Council of Churches and related national bodies in observing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January of each year.

As we prepare for our 2019 observance, it is timely to seek an update on the decision reflected in the letter from Mayor O'Keefe dated 13 July 2017 (copy attached) "... that we are unable to hear proclamations which are matters of political controversy, ideological or religious beliefs, or individual conviction." The letter advised that the City was developing a policy. Our letter dated 17 April 2018 (copy attached) asked if we could be favoured with a copy of the policy once it had been developed.

We respectfully ask for a copy of the City policy for our information and guidance.

The St John's and Area Council of Churches was organized in 1998

- to give expression to the fundamental unity of the several Christian communions (denominations);
- to provide for conference, consultation and common action in Christian witness and service in and for the community;
- to promote through cooperative efforts with all agencies the spiritual, moral, social and civic welfare of the community; and
- to provide an avenue of communication and participation in the Canadian Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.

The Council of Churches does not promote any one denomination or expression of Christianity. We celebrate our fundamental unity as Christians. Most of the Christian denominations in the area are represented on our Executive Committee, and all denominations are invited to participate in our activities. The extent of participation is their decision.

The Council of Churches is broadly based and has positive relations with most of the other faith communities in the area. We are one of the sponsoring bodies of the annual evenings of Jewish/Christian/Muslim Dialogue (which have been held since 2003), and we work closely with

the Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities as a part of the Religious Social Action Coalition.

You and Members of City Council are invited to attend and participate in special events and celebrations hosted by faith-based organizations. Indeed the common practice is to have those invited to bring greetings. The greetings usually include words expressing the openness and welcoming nature of our community.

The St John's and Area Council of Churches is not an advocacy organization, apart from advocating for cooperation among the various expressions of Christianity and other faith communities.

Theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019 is **"Justice, Only Justice, You Shall Pursue"**, (CF. Deuteronomy 16:20). We would be pleased to welcome you or your representative at our service at St James United Church, Elizabeth Ave, at 3:00 pm Sunday 20 January, or at our breakfast for clergy and chaplains at the Salvation Army Citadel, Adams Ave at 9:00 am Tuesday 22 January.

It may be that some misunderstanding led to the decision that precludes you as Mayor or Members of City Council from acknowledging the St John's and Area Council of Churches. We would like to meet with you or the appropriate persons to clarify this issue.

Yours faithfully,

Rev Derek Krunys,
St Andrews Presbyterian Church (The Kirk)
President
St John's and Area Council of Churches

Father John Cole, PhD, Secretary
Ecumenical Director
Archdiocese of St John's

Michael Collins, Vice President
Past Chair, Parish Council
St Pius X Roman Catholic Church

Sister Bernadette Doherty, PVBM
Presentation Sisters

Major Barry Gray, Treasurer
Salvation Army

Rev Nancy March
Anglican Parish of St Mary the Virgin

Rev Bill Mercer
Wesley United Church

George H Powell, Past President
Former President
Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada

Sister Diane Smyth, RSM
Sisters of Mercy

Copies to City Manager
 Deputy Mayor O'Leary

Councillor Hickman
Councillor Jamieson

Councillor Burton
Councillor Collins
Councillor Froude
Councillor Hanlon

Councillor Korab
Councillor Lane
Councillor Stapleton

Denominational Leaders in the St John's Area