



## *St. John's and Area Council of Churches*

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

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The Honourable Dwight Ball

6 December 2018

Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador

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, we respectfully ask for a review of the decision of December 2017 that you not participate in signing a proclamation related to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018.

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 particular denomination or expression of Christianity. We celebrate the fundamental unity of 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 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.

The Premier, Cabinet Ministers and Members of the House of Assembly are invited to attend and participate in special events and celebrations sponsored by community organizations, some of which are faith-based. It is common practice for these individuals bring greetings which usually include words expressing the openness and welcoming nature of our community.

It would be difficult for persons elected to public office to properly serve their respective constituencies if they were to rigidly follow the "Government's mandate and policies" and only take part in events that are "non-commercial, non-religious and non-political".

The St John's and Area Council of Churches is not an advocacy organization, apart from advocating 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 the Premier and others elected to public office from acknowledging the St John's and Area Council of Churches. We would like to arrange a meeting with the appropriate individuals to clarify the 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, PVBVM  
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      Party Leaders  
Denominational Leaders in the St John's Area