



3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario
M8X 2Y4 Canada

416-231-5931 1-800-268-3781
F: 416-231-3103
www.united-church.ca

July 27, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

As the Moderator of The United Church of Canada, I wish to express our support for the **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 United Church of Canada has sought to be faithful in our commitment towards anti-racism, exemplified by our continuing affirmation of the United Nations’ International Decade for People of African Descent. In June, the church further committed to working towards becoming an anti-racist denomination and to dismantling anti-Black racism. We do this important work out of our creedal commitment to seek justice, resist evil and provide a safe refuge to all who are part of God’s creation.

The United Church of Canada was pleased to support Canada’s official pronouncement on January 30, 2018, to recognize the United Nations’ International Decade for People of African Descent. A part of our response has been to initiate a joint ecumenical letter to work against anti-Black racism with the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. This letter was further amplified by a network of ten additional denominations in the Canadian Council of Churches. The United Church of Canada is also calling our congregations this year to commemorate August 1 as Emancipation Day as we live into a space to educate our faith communities on anti-Black racism. In the light of these, we support designating August 1 of each year as “Emancipation Day,” to mark the abolishment of slavery in Canada. This is an important action in deepening Canada’s commitment towards eliminating anti-Black racism in our society. We would certainly support working with Ministers across government to build on the spirit of the United Nations’ International Decade for People of African Descent by disseminating government initiatives towards this objective across all our congregations.

We place our support for Motion M-36 Emancipation Day and appeal to you directly to support and pass this particular motion. As an organization committed to actively engaging in ending anti-Black racism,

The United Church of Canada will also be declaring our support of Motion M-36 within our communities of faith.

Wishing you grace, peace and wisdom in your daily duties,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Bott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Right Rev. Richard Bott

Moderator

The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada

cc: Majid Jowhari, Majid.Jowhari@parl.gc.ca
James Maloney James.Maloney@parl.gc.ca