

Statement from the Nakonha:ka Regional Council of The United Church of Canada

Homophobia and transphobia have no place in our society

June 3, 2023 (Sherbrooke, Québec) --- As a Christian church with biblical roots and a liberative theology, we speak out against the growth of intolerance and hatred that is being expressed in Québec, in Canada and internationally. We will not be silent.

We are deeply troubled by extremist laws that were adopted this week in Uganda that punish the LGBTQ population and their allies with long jail terms and the death penalty. Uganda is now the twelfth country in the world to create death penalties for the LGBTQ population.

We've also witnessed the increase in homophobia and transphobia in some US jurisdictions, including several regressive laws in a number of states.

This generates fear, anxiety and hatred instead of a society that sees all humanity as God's beautiful and very good creation.

"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." Genesis 1:31 (NRSVUE)

We are, however, not only concerned about what is happening elsewhere in the world.

The health and safety of our children is a of great concern to us. Ensuring that our LGBTQ youth are not faced with violence, hatred and isolation is a top priority for us. We decry destructive and unhealthy messages being circulated by certain public figures in Quebec and other parts of Canada, that spread falsehoods about trans people being a danger to children and youth.

Despite the number of people and certain churches expressing their antagonism towards trans people, we ask them to remember that *in Christ there is no male nor female, no Jew nor Greek* (Galatians 3:28). It is time to build a world inspired by God's dream, *that all may be one* (John 17:21). A world where we are called to *love one another as Jesus loved us* (John 13:34), reminded of how Jesus himself tore down walls of exclusion and expressed an abundant love that exceeds all limited human understanding.

We invite our neighbours in Quebec and Canada to join us in building a world of radical love and inclusion.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things." Galatians 5:22-23 (NRSVUE)

Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council consists of ministry and lay representatives from The United Church of Canada communities of faith across Quebec, supported by regional council staff members.

<https://nakonhakaucc.ca/>