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To all active and retired clergy of the Diocese of British Columbia

RE: Wet'suwet'en Land Dispute

Dear friends,

As you are aware, there is a crisis developing on the unceded territory of the Wet'suwet'en nation. Last week the RCMP began its enforcement of a BC Supreme Court injunction in the traditional territory of the Wet'suwet'en Nation along the Morice West Forest Service Road. This action has been taken despite calls from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Amnesty International Canada, amongst many others, to cease work until there has been resolution to the conflict. The establishment of an "Exclusion Zone" further contravenes the inherent right of First Nations to have unobstructed access to their traditional territories, as per the UNDRIP.

The hereditary chiefs and their supporters have remained resolute in their opposition to the BC Supreme Court injunction asserting Wet'suwet'en law and are demanding that the province and federal government come to the table to sort out their rights and title to the territory. They have further called on settler allies to join them in their defense as an act of solidarity and witness.

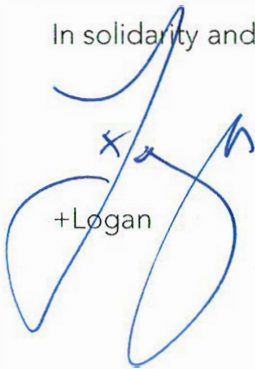
As you will remember, by motion of Synod 2018, I was asked to prayerfully consider public and vigorous support of the unanimous decisions taken by the First Nations with respect to industries placed and operated on the traditional territories within the Diocese of British Columbia. Although some might argue this is not a "unanimous decision," I believe it is our responsibility to support the traditional hereditary leadership of the Wet'suwet'en people, whose law and traditions pre-date Canadian law and is their inherent right to hold and practice. They are facing real-life hardship and danger and we must, in word and deed, show our gratitude to them for their commitment to and defense of creation for all of us. As people called to be peacemakers, I believe we are called to stand with them in acts of "public and vigorous support."

I am therefore inviting you and other faith leaders of this region to join me in a walk of solidarity on Wednesday, February 12 at 12 PM. I will begin my walk from the steps of our cathedral church at 911 Quadra St (where I ended my Sacred Journey walk in 2016) and will end the walk

with a circle of support around the land defenders currently occupying the grounds of the legislature. I hope you will join me in that circle. If you are unable to join us here in Victoria, please consider organizing similar walks in your own community.

I have written a letter to the premier expressing my concern over the situation and calling on his government to return to the table with the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and to recall the RCMP until this work has been completed in a spirit of true reconciliation. I have also put my name to a letter from the Provincial House of Bishops calling on the same. I hope you too will find ways to honour and respect the rights of Indigenous people as set out in the UNDRIP as it relates to this issue.

In solidarity and witness,



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