

RESPONSE TO PREMIER SMITH: TRANSGENDER CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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REGIONAL LETTER RESPONDING TO PREMIER SMITH'S FEBRUARY 1, 2024 ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING TRANSGENDER CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As you do for the least of these...

In a familiar story in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus reminded the people that how we treat those around us is how we are treating Jesus, God. In my reading of this passage I hear that it is in supporting the most vulnerable that we have the opportunity to be our most compassionate, to choose to do what will give someone else support, hope and life.

The announcement from Premier Danielle Smith treats Two Spirit, transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse people – some of our most vulnerable folk- with such disrespect that it is unimaginable.

In these decisions, despite the Premier's claims that the proposed legislation respects them, some of our most vulnerable children are being sacrificed to an ideology that is discarding their worth and value.

Medical services are being withheld for youth below the age of 15, and mental trauma is being exacerbated. Parental rights are also being manipulated by the government as they can't make decisions for their children under the age of 15 to engage in medical therapies such as puberty blockers, because the government doesn't think they have the capacity to consult, assess and respond appropriately to their children's needs.

The statement quotes the Premier as saying this is preserving choice. I disagree. I believe that this removes choices from families, parents, children, health care professionals, and the education system.

In these decisions the government has decided that it knows better than the folk who are living with family members who identify as transgender. For those who have supportive family or community units, this proposed legislation takes away the ability to fully accompany them in their journey. For those who do not have those avenues of support, it takes away the ability to find the support they need.

This is not compassionate.

This is not caring. This is inhumane. These decisions remove support, remove hope, remove life.

Listen to the people that this impacts the most. Hear the despair, fear and anger they feel in this move that devalues them as people.

We must do better for those who are the most vulnerable. We need to speak out against this atrocious flaunting of power at the cost of lives, safety, and dignity. We need to be the places of support and hope and to show them that they are valued and loved for who they are, as they are.

Look at what we are doing "for the least of these".

Rev. Helen Reed,

Chair of the Executive, Northern Spirit Regional Council

Northern Spirit is an Affirming Region of The United Church of Canada and, together with Affirming Communities of Faith, we know that all of God's people are to be held, valued, affirmed, accepted and loved for who they are.