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## **CUC Reaffirms Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en**

February 2020

The recent RCMP raids of Wet'suwet'en land defenders in northwestern British Columbia have provoked widespread rallies, blockades and protests, world-wide media coverage, public statements by First Nations, politicians, industry, labour, and the public. In view of these developments, we think it timely and important to restate the initial position taken by the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) on *January 10, 2019*:

### ***CUC Pledges Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en***

*"The Canadian Unitarian Council has joined thousands of organizations and individuals pledging solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs, who are blocking the development of a Coastal GasLink pipeline on their traditional territories in northwestern British Columbia:*

- 1. WE COMMEND the courage and vision of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and their community of activists.*
- 2. WE ARE WATCHING across the province, country and internationally.*
- 3. WE DENOUNCE any attempt by Coastal GasLink Pipeline, the federal government, provincial government or RCMP to interfere in the rights of the Wet'suwet'en to occupy, manage or maintain their lands;*
- 4. WE URGE that any and all actions taken by the federal and provincial government, industry, and policing agencies must be consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Anuk Nu'at'en (Wet'suwet'en laws) and collective Title;*
- 5. WE PLEDGE support to the frontline land defenders and affirm the collective hereditary governance of the Wet'suwet'en who are enforcing Wet'suwet'en laws on their unceded lands."*

Obviously, the situation has continued to evolve since January 2019. We recognise this is a complex matter and many of us bring strong opinions and passionate voices to the conversation – we are following a long Unitarian Universalist tradition for acting on injustices. We recognise, as well, quoting the Afro-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass, that "if there is no struggle, there is no progress" for "power concedes nothing without a demand."

While we reaffirm the January 10, 2019 CUC Statement pledging solidarity with Wet'suwet'en, **we urge Canadian Unitarian Universalists** to reflect on how we live our faith and convictions when interests and constituencies are polarized. We urge each other to live our principles. May our actions be guided by respect for each other's dignity, by compassion and empathy, by



the voice of conscience and reason, by a desire for justice and equity, and by a deep respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

**We urge Canadian Unitarian Universalists** to read and become familiar with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)—our nation is a signatory to this Declaration; many of UNDRIP’s articles clarify and promote the work of reconciliation and de-colonialization, which we are working to keep alive in Canada.

*~ From the CUC’s National Voice Team: UU Ministers of Canada President, Rev. Steven Epperson; CUC Board President, Margaret Wanlin, and Executive Director, Vyda Ng.*