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Peace be with you as you continue to faithfully offer pastoral leadership and vital ministry during this pandemic.

As the church prepares to mark Christian Family Sunday, I am aware of how hard ministry personnel and lay leaders have been working for the past weeks to support the body of Christ and the kin-dom of God in their local contexts. This time with new learning, juggling of work and family responsibilities, and uncertainty about the pandemic has been taxing on everyone. Recent government statistics report that the mental health of Canadians has declined during the last seven or eight weeks.

For the last year, I've been working with staff colleagues and elected members on the Mental Health Working Group, which arose out of a proposal to the 43rd General Council for the church to respond to issues of mental health in our communities of faith and among ministry personnel. Before the quarantine, you may have participated in a survey about how communities of faith engage in ministry to those with mental health challenges. As the group continues to work, they are collecting resources from partners, like the United Church of Christ and the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is now providing access to a number of free resources for Canadians. You might find a one-page summary on stress, anxiety and substance abuse helpful for yourself or helpful to share with members of your faith family (<https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2020-04/CCSA-COVID-19-Coping-with-Stress-Anxiety-and-Substance-Use-Infographic-2020-en.pdf>). Again, you might find their Wellness Together portal helpful for yourself or members of your faith community (<https://ca.portal.gs/>). I have found it helpful to follow the Moderator's advice and participate in a four-week managing your mental health online course from a University of Toronto psychology professor (<https://www.coursera.org/learn/manage-health-covid-19>).

I often found certain phrases of scripture helpful during different points in my life. One text that I keep coming to this year, and especially in these last two months, is from Paul's letter to the Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). As we serve during this pandemic, I trust that the Risen Christ is strengthening you.

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