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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Bethany Community Church is Niagara's Latest Certified Living Wage Employer**

The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network is pleased to announce that [Bethany Community Church](#) has become a certified living wage employer at the Champion level.

Bethany Community Church is a local church that has been around since 1899. As a church in the Niagara Region, they see themselves as part of the Region's strategic plan for creating healthy and vibrant communities. They are 100% about people, and doing our part through the mission to which God has called them. They currently employ 20 full time staff, five part time staff, and 25 contract staff.

"We believe that each and every person is created in the image of God. We also believe that each and every person should be paid a fair wage for a fair day's work. Anything else is simply unjust. Our value as a church is that people matter! We, as an employer, can do our part to honour this. Therefore, we do as much as we can to provide and support services in the Niagara Region to help people get out of poverty. Paying our employees a living wage is part of this strategy. Being a donor-based organization, we often have more priorities and needs arise than actual donations; however, this is not an excuse to under pay our employees. Rather, it is a call to be wise stewards with each and every dollar! This is our commitment to our staff and donors," says Andrew Epp, Executive Pastor, Bethany Community Church.

"I'm really excited about this because this decision is based on our commitment to follow Jesus and love our neighbors as ourselves. As followers of Jesus, we strongly believe in pursuing justice, which means paying a fair wage. This is one of the ways that we can practically put into practice the wisdom of Micah 6:8: "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God," says Andrew Mills, Lead Pastor, Bethany Community Church.

"We are very pleased to see so many local employers who recognize the value and benefits of paying at least a living wage. Paying a living wage takes direct action to tackle poverty and to help people afford their cost of living expenses," says Glen Walker, Past Chair of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network.

A living wage reflects what earners need to be paid based on the actual costs of living and being included in the community. A living wage is not the same as the legislated minimum wage. It is a voluntary commitment that employers can make to compensate directly-employed and contract-employed full-time and part-time workers. The 2019 living wage for Niagara region has been calculated to be \$18.12/hour. If an employer's total compensation package includes benefits such as dental and prescription drugs, the living wage can be lowered by at least \$1.00/hour. Learn more about Niagara's living wage at [www.wipeoutpoverty.ca](http://www.wipeoutpoverty.ca)

Niagara-area employers interested in becoming living wage certified can contact the Ontario Living Wage Network for more information at [www.ontariolivingwage.ca](http://www.ontariolivingwage.ca)

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The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network is a collective of over 30 agencies and individuals working to wipe out poverty in Niagara through education, collaboration, and advocacy to address poverty's root causes.

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