



УКРАЇНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦЕРКВА В КАНАДІ
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**Statement of the Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
on the Fort McMurray, Alberta Wildfire Situation**

Reverend clergy and beloved faithful of the UOCC,

Христос Воскрес! Christ is Risen!

During this Bright Week following the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the thoughts and prayers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada have been with our fellow Canadians affected by the huge wildfire currently raging near Fort McMurray, Alberta.

The massive wildfire, now estimated to be more than 80,000 hectares, has forced the evacuation of 90,000 people from Fort McMurray and four nearby communities. Many have lost their homes and all of their belongings as fire swept through residential districts destroying 1,600 structures. Some of these evacuees are our Ukrainian Orthodox brothers and sisters who have been residing and working in this community. At least 255 firefighters are involved in battling the wildfire along with hundreds of emergency workers and police.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada offers its prayers for the comfort and well-being of the Fort McMurray and area residents. We also pray for the protection and safety of the firefighters, emergency workers and police fighting the fire and organizing the evacuation. We thank the All-Merciful God for the wisdom, leadership and dedication of our politicians and community leaders engaged in protecting the lives of the victims and in charge of the future recovery of the affected communities. We encourage Canadians to open their hearts and generously assist those who are affected by the Fort McMurray fire. This fire and its destructive effects show us that we can only rely on our Lord God to protect us. The UOCC encourages its faithful to make donations to relief efforts, particularly the Red Cross and aid initiatives to assist the evacuees. In this way, we may demonstrate our Christian virtues to those in distress.

O loving and merciful God, our help in time of need, You are our rock and refuge, our comfort and hope. Deliver us from the trouble that now besets us. Blessed is Your name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

With Hierarchical Blessing,

† **YURIJ**, Metropolitan

† **ILARION**, Bishop

† **ANDRIY**, Bishop