Dear Premier of Ontario,

Thank you for your service to this province and for your leadership during this time of uncertainty and unrest. God has instituted the civil government for our good and it is during times of crisis that this becomes clear.

We are writing to you in relation to the current restrictions on church services in Ontario. Since the amendment to Ontario Regulation 52/20 on June 12th, 2020 our church has been meeting at 30% capacity in our building, following protocols for hygiene and physical distancing. The passage of Bill 195 has not changed this restriction. More recently, our municipality has mandated the wearing of masks in religious services. [*NOTE: This last sentence should be changed if your church is not in a region mandating the use of masks*]

We cannot overemphasize the importance that we place on the act of worshipping God, together. Psalm 122 expresses our sentiments well, “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD!” However, since March, our congregation has been unable to gather in person together except in very small numbers. As a result, our church community and the work of our church amongst the members is extremely limited by these capacity requirements.

As masks are now required in our facility, [*OR, for where they are not required, say “As masks are now being worn in most enclosed indoor spaces across the province…”]* we respectfully urge the province to grant further expansion for worship services. We believe that a reasonable next step for the Province of Ontario is to remove the current 30% capacity limit as has been done in Alberta, and simply maintain a physical distancing requirement. Because many of our members have families with children – and they can sit closely together due to being a household unit – we can seat many more than 30% capacity while at the same time maintaining physical distancing throughout the worship service with minimal risk.

We particularly appreciate the approach and tone of the Alberta government, as exemplified in this quote: “[The government of Alberta] also recognize that places of worship are structured environments with respected leaders who will work with their congregation to ensure measures are in place. Attendance caps have been removed with the knowledge that each faith community’s leadership will be responsible for ensuring that measures are taken to prevent spread within their community.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

As church leadership, we have the best interests of our members and guests – and our communities and neighbourhoods – at heart. We are well suited and should be trusted to find the right balance between reducing risks to health and safety and ensuring the social, mental, and spiritual benefits of corporate worship increase. Our members have a strong desire to gather safely together for worship. Our constitution (in section 2(a) and 2(c) of the Charter) demands that the civil government make every reasonable effort to honour this request.

Dear Premier, know that we continue to pray for you, your cabinet, the legislature, and health care workers across this province. We ask our merciful Father to give you wisdom and courage during these times to govern well, not out of fear or ambition, but for the wellbeing of all Ontarians.

Respectfully Submitted,

NAME

1. <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)