

April 4, 2021

#### Administration

Secretariat

Dear Pastors, Bible Instructors and Elders,

At 12:01 am on Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, for a minimum of four weeks, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, is imposing what is being called a province-wide **emergency brake**. With the "pulling of the emergency brake," come several measures to help reduce the rapid spread of COVID-19 variants, preserve hospital capacity and save lives.

- Regarding weddings, funerals, and religious services, rites or ceremonies, the capacity is limited to 15 percent occupancy per room indoors; this does not include social gatherings associated with these services, such as receptions, which are not permitted indoors and are limited to five people outdoors.

For the sake of public health and safety, the Ontario Conference firmly maintains the position of following the more cautious and safest approach of moving all of our services online until further notice.

- Notwithstanding, at this time, churches that the Conference has already approved for in-person worship may continue with in-person worship, wedding and funeral services, up to 15 percent of the building's capacity to a maximum of 75 people while maintaining physical distancing, wearing masks and all other Provincial, Municipal and Conference guidelines are to remain in place.

In some cases, the Conference's guidance may be more restrictive or call for more safety measures than the governmental bodies.

- It is still our strong recommendation that services be no more than an hour and a half.
- No socializing is to take place after the service. Attendees should leave the building and parking lot promptly.
- Apart from urgent baptisms, all other non-essential special services/events remain suspended until further notice.

We at no time must deviate from the established guidelines. The provincial and municipal governments have ramped up their COVID-19 guidelines adherence inspections; this caution also applies to churches that live stream from their church building. Whatever we broadcast must be seen as conforming to all of the COVID-19 safety requirements.

May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

Many Blessings,

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