

April 19, 2021

Administration

Secretariat

Dear Pastors, Bible Instructors, and Elders,

Ontario is experiencing a record-high number of COVID-19 positive cases almost daily, and with the grim projection of reaching 20,000 cases per day, it is imperative that the people of Ontario act now, act together and act differently to “flatten the curve” once again.

On April 16, 2021, Premier Doug Ford, in the interest of public health and safety, announced an extension of the state of emergency and provincewide stay-at-home order until at least May 20, 2021. Several new COVID-19 restrictions have been added, some of them coming into effect on 12:01 a.m. April 17, 2021. It is vital to update yourself on the new measures, including the increased scope of law enforcement.

Concerning religious services:

- ***Effective at 12:01 a.m. on Monday, April 19, 2021, religious services, weddings, and funerals will be limited to a maximum of ten (10) people indoors or outdoors, regardless of capacity.***

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that everyone can participate safely, the Ontario Conference and Public health strongly encourage virtual services. Should the church building be used, along with a maximum of 10 persons, all other guidelines remain firmly in place.

An area of great concern is group singing; this practice has been linked to numerous outbreaks in multiple congregations. At this time, it is advisable to use previously recorded music (audio/ video).

- **If there will be groups leading the virtual congregation in singing or rendering special music etc.:**
 - Limit the number of vocalists to no more than three. It is recommended that singers wear masks and or face shields; alternatively, barriers, such as plexiglass, can be installed between vocalists. The barriers must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
 - There is limited evidence to determine an exact safe distance between singers, but a greater distance than 2 meters (6 feet) should be taken to reduce the risk—plan for 2.44 to 3 meters (8-10 feet) of physical distancing.
 - The musicians should all be wearing masks.

May our great God grant you just what you need in each unfolding moment of these challenging times.

Blessings always,

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