

April 8, 2021

**Administration**

Secretariat

Dear Pastors, Bible Instructors and Elders,

In his April 7th, 2021 press conference, Premier Doug Ford put it plainly "I can't stress this enough. Things are extremely, extremely serious right now. And I'm extremely concerned." As a result, starting at 12:01 am on Thursday, April 8th, 2021, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, is declaring a third provincial state of emergency and is issuing a stay-at-home order.

The rapid increase in COVID-19 transmission, the danger to our province's hospital system capacity, and the risks to public health and safety due to COVID-19 variants are of great concern to all of us. We strongly encourage each member to acquaint themselves with the stay-home order measures and to govern themselves accordingly.

Regarding weddings, funerals, and religious services, rites or ceremonies, these can continue at 15% capacity indoors; this does not include social gatherings associated with these services, such as receptions, which are not permitted indoors and limited to five people outdoors.

The Ontario Conference continues to hold the position that moving all of our services online until further notice is the safest approach. Nevertheless, at this time, churches that the Conference has already approved for in-person worship may continue with in-person worship, weddings and funeral services.

Services should be kept to one room at 15% capacity to a maximum of 75 persons while maintaining physical distancing, wearing masks and all other Provincial, Municipal, and Conference guidelines are to remain in place.

- Our strong recommendation remains 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.
- Proceeding with baptisms should be carefully considered.
- All other non-essential special services/events remain suspended until further notice.
- All attendees must be pre-registered and pre-screened, and the records kept securely for a minimum of 30 days; this is critical if there is a need for contact tracing. You may have heard of establishments being fined \$1,000 for not having documentation of the persons who had been in their space. Please be vigilant.

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May the Lord bless and keep you as you lead His church through these uncharted waters.

Many Blessings,

Mansfield Edwards  
President

Jakov Bibulović  
Executive Secretary

Virene Meikle  
Treasurer