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July 29, 2020

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John MacArthur, Pastor
Grace Community Church
132848 Roscoe Blvd.
Sun Valley, CA 91352

Re: Notice of Violation of Public Health Orders

Dear Pastor MacArthur :

The County of Los Angeles (the “County”) has been advised that Grace Community Church held indoor in-person worship services on July 26, 2020. Media coverage of the services included photographs depicting hundreds of persons within the Grace Community Church. An online recording of the indoor service is also available on the Church’s website. As of July 13, 2020, indoor worship services are prohibited within the County. The County requests that you immediately cease holding indoor worship services or other indoor gatherings, and adhere to the Health Officer Order directives governing activities at houses of worship. If you or Grace Community Church continue to hold indoor services in violation of the law, you are subject to criminal and civil liability.

The County is facing an unprecedented public health crisis due to the spread of COVID-19. As of July 28, 2020, there were over 178,000 known cases of COVID-19 and more than 4,400 deaths in the County. Statewide, there are more than 466,000 confirmed cases and 8,500 deaths. COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease that is easily spread when persons are in close contact, especially in indoor settings. By holding indoor services for hundreds of persons during this pandemic, you are placing the health and safety of not only the persons attending the service, but also the community at large at risk.

Beginning in March 2020, federal, state, and local authorities issued a series of emergency orders to try and slow the spread of COVID-19 and avoid overwhelming the healthcare system. On March 4, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency in California as a result of COVID-19. The County Board of Supervisors proclaimed a local emergency the same day.

On March 19, 2020, the Governor issued the State’s “Safer at Home, Stay at Home” Order—Executive Order N-33-20—and directed the Office of Emergency Services to take

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necessary steps to ensure compliance with the order. A copy of Executive Order N-33-20 is available at <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/Executive-Order-N-33-20.pdf>. The Governor's order required almost all establishments, including houses of worship, to close.

On April 14, 2020, the State Public Health Officer ("SPHO") issued the State's "Resilience Roadmap" for a phased reopening. The Roadmap includes four stages of reopening. The March 19 Stay-at-Home order was dubbed Stage 1, while Stage 4 would mark the end of the Stay-at-Home Order and all restrictions. A copy of the Resilience Roadmap is available at <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Update-on-California-Pandemic-Roadmap.pdf>.

On May 4, 2020, Governor Newsom indicated that the State would enter the initial phases of Stage 2 on May 8th and gradually begin reopening establishments across the State. That same day, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-60-20, which directed the SPHO to establish criteria and procedures for counties to seek a variance to allow them to move more quickly through Stage 2. A copy of Executive Order N-60-20 is available at <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/5.4.20-EO-N-60-20-text.pdf>.

Under the State's Resilience Roadmap, counties could submit a variance form attesting that they met certain performance metrics relating to COVID-19. The County submitted a variance form, and the State granted a variance on May 29, 2020.

After the State granted the County's request for a variance, Dr. Muntu Davis, the County Health Officer issued an order on June 18, 2020 allowing reduced-capacity indoor operations at houses of worship. A copy of the Health Officer's June 18th order is available at http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/HOO_COVID-19_Safer_at_Work_and_in_the_Community-Phase%203_06182020_WITH_APPENDICES.pdf.

Subsequently, the situation in the County deteriorated significantly. Case numbers, hospitalizations, and deaths rose at an alarming rate. On July 13, 2020, the SPHO issued an order prohibiting indoor operations at a variety of establishments, including houses of worship. A copy of the SPHO's July 13th order is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

In accordance with the new statewide order, the Dr. Davis revised the County order on July 14, 2020. The revised order prohibited indoor services at houses of worship. A copy of the County Health Officer's July 14th order is attached hereto as **Exhibit B**.

The County Health Order was last revised on July 18, 2020. Under the current order, indoor worship services remain prohibited. A copy of the County Health Officer's July 18th order is attached hereto as **Exhibit C**.

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As explained in the Protocol for Places of Worship accompanying the County Health Order, “[i]ndoor religious services and cultural ceremonies at places of worship are prohibited until further notice.” A copy of the Protocol for Places of Worship is attached hereto as **Exhibit D**.

While having the ability to conduct outdoor and virtual services, Grace Community Church conducted indoor in-person services on July 26, 2020, violating the State and County health orders. Violating these orders is a crime punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and imprisonment of up to 90 days. Cal. Health & Safety Code § 120295. Each day that you conduct indoor services is a separate offense. Pursuant to the State and County health orders, Grace Community Church must immediately cease holding indoor worship services.

The County again request Grace Community Church’s assistance and adherence to the health and safety protocols listed above as we collectively continue trying to close the spread of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County. Please note that unless written confirmation is received by 5:00 p.m. on July 30, 2020 that Grace Community Church will comply with the law, the County will pursue further action through all available avenues of relief.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, I encourage you or your counsel to contact me immediately to schedule a call.

The County looks forward to your immediate cooperation and compliance.

Sincerely,



Jason H. Tokoro

JHT:OA