



Pastor Reverend Cristian Ionescu  
Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church  
4850 N. Bernard Street  
Chicago, IL 60625

May 15, 2020

Dear Pastor Reverend Cristian Ionescu:

As you know, we are in unprecedented times. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO), characterized the current outbreak of COVID19 as a pandemic. Here in Chicago, as of May 14, 2020, we have seen more than 33,000 reported cases of COVID19 and more than 1,500 deaths.

It is against this backdrop that the State of Illinois remains under a "Stay at Home" order which was initially issued by Governor Pritzker on April 30, 2020, and subsequently extended. The intent of that order is to ensure the maximum number of people self-isolate in their places of residence to slow the spread of COVID-19 to the greatest extent possible. Let there be no doubt, despite the Stay at Home order and the cooperation and commitment of Chicago residents, Chicago is still seeing a rise in COVID19 cases and death. While we are bending the curve, we are not yet seeing a decline in daily cases. It is not just those that are deemed high-risk that are getting ill, even young and healthy people have been diagnosed with COVID19 and become ill.

The Stay at Home order permits individuals to leave their homes, however, in order to slow the spread of this disease, such exercise must comply with social distancing requirements which includes limiting gatherings of more than ten people. Thus, traditional faith-based services of more than ten individuals are not permitted at this time. Such religious services if held can result in the unintentional spread of the disease to our most vulnerable residents. Individuals attending such services may come into contact with an asymptomatic individual who may transmit the virus to others in attendance.

The City has announced a phased-in reopening plan that will allow for more interaction, when appropriate and following strict guidance. We are aware of, and sensitive to, the impact this order is having on the economy and communities but our over-riding goal is to protect our health system and residents, and we must continue to follow the proper guidance. Again, we remain under the Stay at Home order and must continue to comply with it.

It is important to note that if you, as the leader of your congregation, do not adhere to the order, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has the authority to cite you or may cause any building or any premises to be cleansed, disinfected, or closed to visitors, investigated or

vacated. 8-4-010; 2-112-200; 2-112-210; 2-112-220 Municipal Code of Chicago, Ill. Similarly, the Governor's Executive Order has the force of law and is enforceable by law enforcement agencies in Chicago and throughout the state. The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has the authority, pursuant to the Department of Public Health Act (20 ILCS 2305/1-1.1 et seq.), the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois (Department of Public Health Powers and Duties Law) (20 ILCS 2310/1 et seq.) and the Control of Communicable Diseases Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 690), to order that a location be closed and made off limits to the public "to prevent the probable spread of a dangerously contagious or infectious disease... until such time as the condition can be corrected or the danger to the public health eliminated or reduced in such a manner that no substantial danger to the public's health any longer exists." 20 ILCS 2305/2(b). The process of issuing such an order is set forth in 20 ILCS 2305/2(c).

As the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health for the City of Chicago, I consider the health, safety, and welfare of all Chicagoans as my utmost responsibility. I implore you to consider the deep responsibility you hold as a resident and as a pastor to those that depend upon you as leader.

I am hopeful that you, as a religious leader, share my goal of ensuring the safety of Chicago residents and your congregants in a collective and collaborative response to this disease and not hold in-person services until such time as the science and guidance from public health officials dictates that it is safe to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Allison Arwady, MD".

Allison Arwady, MD  
Commissioner  
Chicago Department of Public Health