

Dear Board of Supervisors,

Having submitted multiple requests to the office of the governor of California and to our state senators, I now write to petition you for our desperate need for indoor worship.

As a local church, we understand the importance of adhering to public health orders. We have a great desire to love our neighbors by practicing safe protocols in this age of COVID-19.

We also have a deep desire to love God and to gather for worship. Under the current health order, being that we are still in the "Purple/Widespread" category under the new California Plan to Reduce COVID-19, we are in the only tier that disallows indoor worship.

At the same time, due to our surrounding wildfires, our air quality has been so unhealthy that we cannot -- out of love for our congregants and our neighbors -- force individuals to persevere through unhealthy outdoor conditions.

So I plead, would you please petition the state of California on our behalf? Or -- together with our county's Health Director -- could you please make exceptions for places of worship as we continue to experience the devastation of wildfires?

*Our need, desire, and right for corporate worship is being prohibited at a time when outdoor worship is simply not safe.*

Without the need for lengthy litigation, the solution seems quite simple: **The temporary allowance for indoor worship until the air quality returns to healthy levels (or until we advance to the next tier), following all the rules under the "Red/Substantial" Tier (opening indoor services at 25 percent capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer), while practicing safe social distancing and the wearing face coverings.**

We desire to worship, but we also desire to worship safely as we all play our part in helping to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

At best, our state authorities have been silent on these obvious issues. At worst, they have been actively ignoring these needs for places of worship within the "Purple/Widespread" Tier and simultaneously affected by the wildfires. As your constituents, we are pleading for your action on our behalf. Perhaps, with the aid of your voices, our state authorities could make the necessary adjustments that are greatly needed at this time. Or, out of your love for the people of Ukiah, you might simply authorize these needed exceptions for our county on a momentary, as-needed basis.

We are relying on you for your help.

With sincere respect and hope,

Martell Sánchez  
Lead Pastor  
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