



5/28/2020

Dr. Sara H. Cody, MD Health Officer, Public Health Director
976 Lenzen Avenue
San Jose, CA 95126

Dear Dr. Cody and the officials of the Santa Clara Health Department,

First, we want to thank you for your efforts in guiding us through this pandemic. We know it is difficult with many competing viewpoints and with lives on the line. We are grateful for you who are taking this on. Our prayers for wisdom and strength are with you.

Our appeal is that you would reconsider the current guidelines and align them with the new state of California guidelines. We think this is in the best interests of all.

Before we get into the reasons, you should know that we are two congregations that are health and medically aware. We have many medical professionals in our midst. We made the hard and unprecedented decision to shut down our church services before the county and the state orders went out. You might say we were ahead of the curve in that regard.

But having these medical personnel in our midst we are also very aware that the actions taken by the people of this county have flattened the curve to its original objective of not overwhelming the hospitals. Medical staff are being sent home from many hospitals because there is not enough work for them. Changing the objective from flattening the curve to shrinking the curve is increasing the problems with no clear end in sight. Other health issues and financial factors need to now be factored in more prominently in our decision making.

There is a risk reward analysis that we know must be done. But from our observations we have passed the point where the current county guidelines are doing more good than harm. Harm is starting to take the ascendancy. We are seeing a growing damage to trust in our institutions, damage to jobs and people's ability to provide, and damage to health in all regards – physically, mentally, and spiritually. We personally know of people in our congregations that are struggling with loneliness and depression due to months of social isolation. We believe that in-person church fellowship plays an essential role in meeting our innate social and spiritual needs.

Our ability to guide our congregations would be greatly strengthened if the county and the state spoke with one voice. We are hearing from our people, "The president said we can meet under certain guidelines"; "The governor said we can meet under certain guidelines". We would like to be able to say that the county also says we can meet under those same guidelines. We want to work with you to re-open in a safe and wise manner observing current mitigation strategies as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

The leaders of Hillview Bible Chapel and Grace Bible Chapel

Kennick De Vaul

Steve Caldwell

Dave Johnson

Dave Westwood

John W. Shum

Dan Johnson