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Foothills Church Holds Safe, Responsible Worship Services Guaranteed by the Constitution

El Cajon, California – November 18, 2020 – The Constitution of the United States guarantees free exercise of religion and the people’s right to peacefully assemble. The Bible commands God’s people to worship together. And Foothills Church has a mission to safely and responsibly serve our people and our community. Church is essential!

The health and wellbeing of our congregation and our community is a major focus of our mission at Foothills Church. It has been a top priority since we were founded more than 35 years ago. But our mission goes beyond the physical condition of our people and community. We must serve their emotional and spiritual needs as well.

Foothills Church provides vital support to thousands of people in San Diego County and does so responsibly to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We also realize COVID-19 is not the only serious risk to our congregation that must be addressed. Depression, alcoholism, drug abuse, self-harm, marital problems, and domestic violence are issues that become magnified by isolation, loneliness, and fear.

The CDC reports an increase in anxiety disorder, depression and substance abuse associated with COVID-19. Scientific and medical studies show increases in instances and severity of domestic abuse. These facts highlight how critical church is especially

during these challenging times brought on by the outbreak of COVID-19. Foothills Church has a responsibility to be available for our people who may be at risk for these threats that are just as real as COVID-19.

Another reason Foothills Church must continue to meet is that we are compelled by Scripture to worship together.

“Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some...” (Hebrews 10:24-25 NAS)

Outdoor meetings are less viable now than they were over the summer. We could meet outdoors in the evening – and we did. But outdoor services are not sustainable for very long. Most churches simply cannot afford the expensive accommodations that would be necessary to responsibly hold outdoor services in the season we are entering where cooler temperatures inclement weather conditions such as rain and heavy fog are a real threat.

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees us religious liberties that are not superseded simply by the numerous and partial directives of the Governor of California. The law is clear regarding our rights and the CDC warns government to remember those rights when issuing directives. When government violates those First Amendment rights and overreaches its authority over the Church, Scripture is clear how we are to respond:

“We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29 NAS)

When little was known about COVID-19 earlier this year Foothills Church temporarily halted in-person services as a safety precaution to protect our people and community from an unknown threat. We have trained our staff and volunteers to implement protocols for strict social distancing, intensified cleaning, and disinfection of our facilities. We have spent thousands of dollars to comply with the directives and are committed to being good citizens of San Diego County and good caregivers to our people. Today there is abundant data on COVID-19 and how to safely navigate life in the presence of the virus and we are in compliance with all those standards.

As of November 16, 2020, there have been 66,319 confirmed cases of COVID-19. That comprises 2.14-percent of San Diego County’s population of 3.1 million people. There have been 933 COVID-19 deaths confirmed in San Diego County. That represents 1.4-percent of the confirmed positive cases, meaning that 98.6-percent of confirmed cases in SD County were not life threatening. County records also show that churches have not been a significant source of COVID-19 outbreaks.

Foothills Church is committed to doing our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. We encourage those with pre-existing conditions to stay home and watch our services on-line, while still carrying out our mission to serve all the needs of our people and community – physically, emotionally and spiritually. Church is essential. This is always true, especially during challenging times.

Data Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>

<https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2020-08-18/intimate-partner-violence-spiked-80-after-pandemic-lockdown-began>

<https://pubs.rsna.org/doi/10.1148/radiol.2020202866>

https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/status.html

https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/statistics_demographics.html

<https://www.calculator.net/percent-calculator.html?c22par1=933&c22par2=3100000&ctype=22&x=97&y=14#pctcommon>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>

<https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/>