



Albany
UPDATE
NEW YORKERS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOMS

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March 31, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Re: COVID-19

Dear Gov. Cuomo:

We write in regard to the COVID-19 outbreak and the response to that outbreak from churches and other faith communities in the State of New York.

During this difficult and painful season, New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms wants be part of the solution to the coronavirus crisis. To that end, we have supported your administration's reasonable and temporary limitations on public gatherings. We have also encouraged the 6,400 New York churches with whom we communicate to explore live streaming and similar options in lieu of holding in-person church services. We also understand that many churches and congregations are finding it difficult to function without holding in-person services, that not all churchgoers have access to the internet, and that many desire to begin gathering together again as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

One possibility that some upstate churches have explored is the option of holding church services at drive-in theaters or other venues with sizeable parking lots. This approach would allow congregations or multiple congregations to gather for worship in one location while maintaining social distancing. However, such venues are not permitted to open for any purpose at this time. We ask that you kindly consider making an exception to the COVID-19 limitations on non-essential businesses to allow these types of venues to open for the purpose of hosting religious services. We believe this would serve

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as a reasonable religious liberty accommodation while maintaining legitimate public safety needs.

Given the rapidly approaching Easter holiday, we view this request as a time-sensitive one and ask that your administration contact us as soon as possible to discuss the possibility.

Thank you for your consideration.

In His Service,



Rev. Jason J. McGuire
Executive Director