Niagara Regional Council
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

July 17, 2020

Re: Proposed Mandatory Mask Bylaw

Dear Honourable Members of Regional Council,

As church situated in Grassie, we wish to affirm our respect for you and your fellow governing officials. We want you to know that we are praying for you, your staff, and also the entire Ontario government as you and they protect us during this pandemic.

In Stage 2, we were once again able to meet for public worship (although it looks very different than prior to the pandemic starting) and have followed the Ontario government’s guidelines when it came to restricting the building capacity to 30%, as well as ensuring that physical distancing is in place during the worship services. To that end, we have done the following:

- Divided the church membership to be within the 30% building capacity
- Ensured that members from other households sit at a minimum 6 feet from each other (that includes to the sides, front, and back of each family unit)
- Keep attendance records to aid in contact tracing should the need arise
- Have made it a requirement that any member who may have been or has been exposed to the virus to withhold themselves from worship for at least 2 weeks.

We are happy to say that with those measures, we have returned to some sense of normalcy in worship and have not had any reported cases of the virus. Provided that we continue to physical distance, we do not believe that a mandatory mask bylaw is necessary.

Regarding the proposed bylaw (reference page 76 – 78 of your agenda from your July 8th meeting), we noted that Section 1.6.c. includes churches and other places of worship as one such “enclosed public place”, and not in Section 1.8 (the places that are not included as an enclosed public place). Section 1.8 includes schools, post-secondary institutions, hospitals, government offices etc... 

We respectfully ask that you:

1. Do not vote yes to a mandatory mask bylaw. As cited by many documents in your agenda package, masks offer little, if any, protection from infection
2. If Council votes yes, to then include churches & other places of worship in section 1.8 of the bylaw, and not section 1.6.
Finally, we will continue to uphold you in our prayers, asking God to grant wisdom to you and all those in authority over us. We are pleased to do so as this is in keeping with God's command in 1 Timothy 2:1-2. We trust the Lord will hear and answer our every prayer!

We thank you for your service and leadership. The Lord be with you!

On behalf of the Council of Covenant Canadian Reformed Church in Grassie, Ontario

William Ravensbergen – chairman

Mark VanAndel - clerk