Hello Redemption Hill Family

Last week Governor Newsom called for singing to be cancelled in public worship services. Our leaders determined it was right and best for us to meet on Sunday and include congregational singing. Our overseers met on Monday of this week and after much discussion and prayer, we believe it is important for us to continue offering on-campus worship ministry that includes congregational singing. All other safety protocols directed by the government will remain in place. We care very much for the safety of our church family and community and want to be helpful and kind in all our interactions. Our highest responsibility, however, is to God—and singing is an integral part of gathered worship.

Gathered worship is central to our lives—something our government has acknowledged. Redemption Hill Church is fundamentally a worshipping community with a mission in the world. Living out this reality requires a rhythm of gathering to challenge, support and encourage one another; it is sustained through regular engagement with God’s word; and it includes group worship, with congregational singing as a central component. These are foundational. We cannot lay them aside and remain faithful to God. There can be seasons of creative alternatives, but these are brief and exceptional.

This pandemic is exceptional so we have willingly adjusted our patterns for a season. We cancelled “live” services for 15 weeks and made significant adjustments when we returned. We continue to encourage any who have particular vulnerabilities to worship from home and we have invested large sums of money to sustain online ministry. For on-campus ministry we will continue to modify services—reducing attendance, shortening singing and sermons, continuing health protocols and eliminating or adjusting numerous long standing practices. Most meetings are now online or outdoors. The church office is closed. We have cancelled or adjusted mission trips, camps and conferences; and made major adjustments to next year’s ministry plan. We continue to willingly respond as helpfully and graciously as possible, because we want to be part of the solution—not add to the problem.

At this time, however, we believe it is essential for on-campus ministry to continue, including congregational singing. Our world is struggling with health questions that transcend a singular focus on physical health—we need economic health, we need emotional health, and we need spiritual health. Bringing these together is particularly challenging during this season, but we believe we can gather in worship—promoting spiritual health in our family and offering hope to our world—and give extra care to guarding physical health for all involved. We realize in person worship is not the best choice for everyone and urge you to make wise decisions for yourself and be careful for the sake of everyone. Online and telephone ministry will continue.

Our political leaders are working very hard and face many difficult decisions, but when the State excluded singing from gathered worship they crossed a line and we cannot follow this particular directive. Our first allegiance is to God. He must decide what worship looks like, not our government. The State’s intentions may be good but this requirement is not biblically appropriate. It also appears to place a greater burden on churches than other groups our government has already identified as similar under the first amendment.

God has a plan he will work through this season—a plan for our world, our church, our families and ourselves. We will continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments to life at RHC as appropriate. We believe this is the best and right course of action at this point, but understand other changes may be warranted at some point—particularly as new threats or opportunities emerge. We commit to remain anchored in scripture above everything else and to seek to respond prayerfully and helpfully at every moment. We ask you to do the same.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to any of our overseers. We love you and continue to pray for you. While this season is hard, we are filled with anticipation at what God is already doing and will yet do in us!

On behalf of the overseers,

Pastor Robert