



HARVEST BIBLE CHURCH WINDSOR

2001 Spring Garden Rd., Windsor, ON N9E 3P8 | 519.250.5520 admin@harvestwindsor.ca

December 15, 2020

His Worship Drew Dilkens

Mayor of Windsor and Chair of the Windsor Police Services Board

350 City Hall Square West, Suite 510

Windsor, ON. N9A 6S1

Ms. Pamela Mizuno

Chief of Police for the Windsor Police Service

150 Goyeau St.

Windsor, ON. N9A 6V2

Dear Mayor Dilkens and Chief Mizuno:

On October 29, 2020 three worshippers in a French church were knifed to death because they were Christians. One was nearly beheaded. These three are among hundreds of thousands of Christians who are persecuted every year around the globe, with one Christian being killed every two hours simply because they identify as followers of Jesus Christ.¹

We are aware that Windsor-Essex has entered into a period of lockdown due to COVID-19, just prior to the most important event in the Christian calendar: Christmas. Our church has been conscientious throughout the spring, summer and fall months to implement health protocols resulting in zero outbreaks traced to our church. We are also aware that both our Mayor, who is also the Chair of the Windsor Police Services Board, and our Chief of Police, who is the highest-ranking officer in our police service, attended public protests in June of this year to stand up against global racial injustice, stemming from a traumatic incident in the United States. Several clergypersons from our city also attended. These protests, attended by high-ranking public law-enforcement officials along with up to 2000 citizens, took place during the spring lockdown in contravention of provincial restrictions limiting social gatherings to five people prior to June 12 and ten people subsequent to June 12. We can only assume that law officials, including our Police Chief and Mayor, believe that protesting global injustice is of higher priority than absolute obedience to all lockdown measures. We believe this is a reasonable conclusion since, in doing so, officials potentially subject themselves to an investigation by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIRPD).

We agree that matters of global injustice are of utmost priority and are hereby inviting you to participate in, or at least be supportive of, our worship services over the next three weeks which will dually serve as public protests against the persecution, imprisonment and murder of Christian people all over the world. Even locally, many of our parishioners could produce evidence of verbal slurs and mockery that they have received as a result of their Christian faith. We plan to hold services on December 20th, Christmas Eve and December 27th for this

¹See <https://htp.org/>



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purpose. We may choose to extend these protests into the new year, depending on public interest. Service times will be posted at harvestwindsor.ca and we will be following the same public health protocols and abiding by the 30% occupancy mandates which we personally negotiated with the Premier's office this spring.²

We are certain that as public officials committed to equality, anti-discrimination and the fair and impartial exercise of your duties that you will be fully supportive of our efforts and our absolute resolve to continue meeting in person to worship King Jesus and stand against the injustice of Christian persecution. To do so would be a wonderful means of sending a message to all Canadians that injustice against any identifiable group is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Finally, it has been a painful experience to witness the dismissive spirit that many civil authorities have demonstrated toward the Christian church. Officials have failed to respond to our requests for medical evidence, failed to consider our work essential, failed to respond to several of our letters and backtracked on our reopening negotiations without any dialogue. While this has put us in an incredibly difficult position, we want you to know that we are model, tax-paying, law-abiding citizens who fully support a well-funded police service and are grateful for their work in our region.

Respectfully,

Rev. Dr. Aaron Rock, Lead Pastor

on behalf of the Elders Council & Directors:

Robert Bobek, Andrew Robertson, James Palancki, Glen Adams, Glenn Grainger

²See www.reopenontariochurches.ca