

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
Eastern Division**

ELIM ROMANIAN PENTECOSTAL)
CHURCH, LOGOS BAPTIST)
MINISTRIES,)

Plaintiff,)

Case No. 1:20-cv-02782

v.)

JAY ROBERT PRITZKER, in his)
official capacity as Governor of the)
State of Illinois,)

Defendant.)

**SUPPLEMENTAL DECLARATION OF PASTOR CRISTIAN IONESCU
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR
TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER AND PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**

I, CRISTIAN IONESCU, being first duly sworn and cautioned, hereby testify as follows:

1) I am over the age of 18 years, I have personal knowledge of the matters set forth in this declaration, and if called to testify upon these matters I would and could do so competently.

2) I am Senior Pastor of Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church, one of the Plaintiffs in this action. I submit this Supplemental Declaration to supplement the verified facts in Plaintiffs' Verified Complaint, and to bring to the Court's attention some factual developments since that Complaint was filed.

3) Today, Sunday May 10, 2020, Elim Church held a religious service on its premises (hereinafter "Sunday service"), as we indicated to Governor Pritzker that we would in our pre-suit communication, in which we requested that he permit us to hold the service subject to strict social distancing and health precautions that we indicated we would voluntarily undertake. (Dkt. 1-12).

4) Elim Church strictly complied with each of the 10 safety points on page 3 of our letter to Governor Pritzker. (Dkt. 1-12 at 3).

5) Because we wanted to be beyond reproach, and because we care deeply about the health and safety of our members and congregants, we even went many steps farther than we indicated in our letter.

6) For instance:

- a) On Saturday, May 9, we cordoned off with yellow tape approximately 85% of the 750 seats in our auditorium, leaving only approximately 120 seats (15%) available for attendees of our Sunday service, so that we can be sure that attendees are spaced at least 6 feet apart. The first 1 minute and 40 seconds of the video available at this link accurately depicts the auditorium with the blocked seats: <https://youtu.be/Ccwq9BTdUPc>.
- b) On Saturday, May 9, 2020, the day before the service, we hired a professional industrial cleaning company to thoroughly clean and disinfect our premises, including treatment for microbial and virologic agents. The first 1 minute and 40 seconds of the video available at this link accurately depicts the cleaning company at work in our auditorium: <https://youtu.be/Ccwq9BTdUPc>.
- c) In advance of the service, we requested any person with any symptoms of communicable illness, any person exposed to anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, and any person advanced in age or with secondary immunological conditions to refrain from attending our service.

- d) At the entrance to our Sunday service, we had our personnel take the temperature of each person wishing to be admitted into our service, with contactless thermometers. We are aware of commercial companies, such as Frontier Airlines, taking their customers' temperatures and refusing service to customers with temperatures above 100.4 degrees. (See <https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2020/05/07/frontier-just-became-first-us-airline-require-passenger-temperature-screening/>). Because we wanted to be extra-safe and beyond reproach, we instructed our personnel to refuse admittance to anyone with a temperature of above 99.5 degrees.
- e) At the Sunday service, we had to and did turn away several people after our designated capacity of 15% (120 seats) was filled.
- f) At the entrance to our Sunday service, we provided complimentary hand sanitizer, gloves and masks for anyone wishing to use them.
- g) At the Sunday service we created and strictly enforced a six-foot bubble zone around each person attending the service. Because we knew that media and other people would be watching our service and would be unaware of which people belong to the same household, and because we wanted to be above reproach, we even asked family members from the same household, who are not otherwise socially distanced off our premises, to generally maintain the six foot separation on our premises, so that no one will be confused or doubt our commitment to the health and safety of our congregants. Although there may have been a parent and child **from the**

same household that did come closer to each other than six feet, no persons who are not living together came closer to each other than six feet.

- h) The following picture accurately reflects our choir members, appropriately distanced, during our Sunday service:



- i) The following picture accurately reflects our congregation, appropriately distanced, during our Sunday Service



j) During our service, we requested our attendees to sing and pray in much lower and softer voices than they might otherwise.

7) Even though we voluntarily took these extensive precautions, we were extremely concerned that our service would be interrupted by law enforcement, and that I and other members would be arrested and hauled off to jail, because our service was held in violation of Governor Pritzker's 10-person limit that is discriminatorily applied against churches such as hours but not against other non-religious entities deemed essential, and because Governor Pritzker and law enforcement agencies promised enforcement through arrests, fines and other punitive and criminal measures.

8) Because the Governor's 10-person limit on churches – without regard to size or capacity, and without regard to any social distancing or safety measures – remains in effect, we continue to be very concerned that law enforcement agents will interrupt and interfere with our future services, and will arrest me and other members of the church.

9) The concerns we have about being fined, arrested, hauled off to jail or subjected to other punitive measures have interfered with and diminished our collective worship experience, to a much greater extent than COVID-19, and the precautionary measures we have voluntarily employed, ever could. Because of the threat of criminal arrest and punishment, we are unable to gather in peace and to worship God freely and without intimidation, according to our conscience.

10) The measures we voluntarily took for this Sunday service, we are willing to voluntarily take again – and will take again. No one is more concerned about the safety and health of our church members and attendees than we are.

11) We do not seek to make a political statement. We do not seek special treatment, such as to be able to meet for worship free of any precautionary measures. We only seek to be

treated equally with other “essential” places, so that – with proper safety precautions and social distancing that meet or exceed what the others are doing – we can corporately and collectively worship God according to our religious mandates and our conscience.

12) As long as Governor Pritzker’s 10-person limit remains in effect against our 750-seat church, and as long as the threat of criminal punishment hangs over us, we will not be able to do that freely, in peace and without intimidation. And thus, we will not be able to enjoy the freedom that many of our members fled an oppressive regime to be able to enjoy in this country.

I DECLARE under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

EXECUTED this May 10, 2020.

/s/ Cristian Ionescu
Pastor, Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church