

## **Update on Capitol Hill Baptist Church's Lawsuit**

On September 22, 2020 the Capitol Hill Baptist Church ("CHBC") filed a lawsuit through its lawyers at WilmerHale LLP and First Liberty Institute seeking the ability to hold outdoor church services in the District of Columbia while masked and socially-distanced. On October 9, 2020, the United States Court for the District of Columbia granted CHBC a preliminary injunction, enjoining the DC government from prohibiting such a gathering. The following statement may be attributed to Justin Sok, a pastor of CHBC:

We have been thankful for the opportunity to meet outdoors in Virginia over the last few months and are thankful that the court has granted us the ability to enjoy the same rights and privileges in our own city. With this ruling in hand, we are speaking with the operators of a variety of outdoor venues to move our weekly gathering from Virginia to DC.

We continue to appreciate our mayor and her dedicated efforts to protect the public health of our city while balancing the importance of various First Amendment rights. With this ruling, our government is restoring equity by extending to religious gatherings the same protections that have been afforded other similar gatherings during this pandemic. We trust that this will be a blessing not only to our congregation but to the rest of our neighbors in DC.

Our congregation continues to pray for God's mercy in ending the ongoing pandemic, that He would protect the lives and wellbeing of our neighbors, and that many in our city in the coming months would experience the far greater freedom that comes from forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

A church is not a building that can be opened or closed. A church is not an event to be watched. A church is a community that gathers regularly and we are thankful that such communities are once again being treated fairly by our government.

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