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8	SUPERIOR COURT OF TH	IE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
9	FOR THE COUNTY	Y OF SANTA CLARA
10	THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF	Case No.: 20CV372285
11	CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA, and SARA H. CODY, M.D., in her	DEFENDANTS' OPPOSITION TO
12	official capacity as Health Officer for the County of Santa Clara,	PLAINTIFFS' PARTIAL MOTION FOR SUMMARY ADJUDICATION
13	Plaintiffs,	Date: March 14, 2023
14	V.	Time: 9:00 a.m. Dept.: D6
15	CALVARY CHAPEL SAN JOSE; MIKE	Judge: Hon. Evette D. Pennypacker
16	McCLURE; and DOES 1-501-50, inclusive,	Complaint Filed: October 27, 2020
17	Defendants.	
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#### INTRODUCTION I.

For nearly two years, Santa Clara County ("the County") subjected Californians to a draconian regime of unconstitutional public health orders in the name of COVID-19. The County took drastic steps to enforce its orders by issuing staggering fines on non-complying businesses and entities. Pronounced among this constitutional wreckage are Calvary Chapel San Jose and Mike McClure ("Calvary"), who face millions in fines because they chose to hold religious gatherings. The Supreme Court has vindicated Calvary numerous times and even admonished the County. (See, e.g., Gateway City Church v. Gavin Newsom (2021) 141 S.Ct. 1460 ["Gateway"].) Yet, the County claims it did no wrong, and that this Court should grant summary adjudication in its favor. (See County's Mot. for Summary Adjudication and Memorandum of Points and Authorities in Support ["County Br."] on file.) The County is wrong for the following reasons.

First, summary adjudication is inappropriate when additional discovery is necessary to properly support an opposition to summary adjudication.

Second, Calvary is not estopped from challenging the constitutionality of the Social Distancing Protocol ("SDP") and COVID-19 orders. Calvary did not have a full and fair opportunity to litigate its constitutional claims, and the elements of issue preclusion are not met.

Third, the County is not entitled to relief as to the first and third causes of action because the underlying orders are unconstitutional.

Fourth, nuisance per se is inapplicable because the underlying orders were unconstitutional.

Fifth, a triable issue of fact exists as to the amount of the fines. Notwithstanding the factual issues, the County is not entitled to a collection of any fines because the underlying orders violated the First Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment. The County's fine scheme also discriminated against religion by exempting comparable non-commercial activities, like private parties, graduations, and wedding ceremonies.

*Finally*, the County is not entitled to relief because the fines are unconstitutionally excessive, and the County violated the Due Process Clause by not providing Calvary adequate notice of its alleged violations. Thus, this Court should deny the motion in its entirety.

#### II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

#### A. Calvary Chapel San Jose

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Calvary can fit over 1700 people in its sanctuary, easily accommodating the 300-500 congregants that attend Sunday services. (McClure Decl., ¶ 17.) From May 31, 2020 through May 2021, the church provided seating in the gym and entrance hallway. (*Id.*) About five to ten church staff and volunteers were working at the church on the workdays and conducted essential services for the church, such as providing counsel and prayer to visitors. (*Id.*, ¶ 18.) Calvary also held weekly prayer gatherings, which ranged from two to twenty congregants. (*Id.*)

The church building's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system has superior air quality. The filters are maintained for optimized infiltration. (Shepherd Decl.,  $\P$  5.) The system draws 10% of fresh air daily and circulates it back into the entire building and sanctuary. (Id.,  $\P$  6.) Dr. Sara Cody testified, on behalf of the County, that a building's ventilation and occupancy limits impact the spread of COVID-19. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 29, pp. 256-57.)

Calvary's religious tenets require that the church regularly gather *in person* for the teaching of God's Word, prayer, worship, baptism, communion, and fellowship. (McClure Decl.,  $\P$  6.) These religious tenets find support in Hebrews 2:12 and 10:25, Ephesians 5:19, Acts 2:40-47, and Acts 5:40-42. (*Id.*) Scripture demands *in-person* fellowship for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. (*Id.*,  $\P$  11.) Calvary did not force congregants to wear face coverings because it interfered with Calvary's tenets, such as worship, intercession, and counsel. (*Id.*,  $\P$  12-15.) Calvary believes congregants are to approach God with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, and being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, as outlined in 2 Corinthians 3:18. (*Id.*,  $\P$  12.) Calvary did not sign a completed SDP because it required Calvary agree to conditions that infringed on its religious tenets, such as face coverings, a singing ban, and capacity restrictions. (*Id.*,  $\P$  16.)

#### B. The County's COVID-19 Civil Enforcement Program

In August 2020, the County adopted an ordinance, so the County could enforce the COVID-19 orders by issuing fines against entities that violated the orders. (Request for Judicial Notice [RJN] Ex. 27.) The ordinance separated commercial and non-commercial activities and their penalties (*id.*, p. 7), and the County classified a church as a commercial entity (*id.*, p. 4). The County never pursued

violations of non-commercial activities like private graduation parties and gatherings in homes because it had "limited staffing...." (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 30, pp. 165-66.)

When determining the amount of a fine, the County would consider the potential for COVID-19 spread. (*Id.*, p. 176.) The County prioritized super spreader events, which featured a crowded gathering, no social distancing, people present for long periods of time, and poor ventilation. (*Id.*, p. 99; Ex. 33.) During enforcement, though, the County did not require enforcement officers to ask entities about their ventilation system. (*Id.*, Ex. 30, p. 109.) The County's fine matrix also imposed a greater base fine penalty against entities for failing to prohibit singing or impermissible gatherings than for failing to require masks. (*Id.*, Ex. 32.)

From November 9, 2020 to June 21, 2021, the County fined Calvary daily for failing to enforce face coverings even though an enforcement officer did not observe Calvary violating the mask mandate every day. (*Id.*, Ex. 38, pp. 7-8, app. C). The fines total \$2,234,000. (Decl. of Jamila G. Benkato ISO Plfs' Mot. For Summary Adjudication [Benkato Decl.] Ex. 191, on file.) The County issued daily fines for failing to submit a *completed* SDP, which total \$1,327,750. (*Id.*)

## C. The Applicable COVID-19 Orders

The County's Risk Reduction Order generally required individuals to follow social distancing and mask requirements unless they were exempt. (RJN, Ex. 18.) The Order did not require individuals wear an N95 mask, even though, according to Dr. Cody, these masks are superior to cloth masks and surgical masks. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 29, p. 279.) The Order exempted governmental entities from COVID-19 orders that "would *impede or interfere with an essential government function...*" (RJN, Ex. 18, pp. 2-3.) (emphasis added.) The exemption gave governmental entities discretion to define essential governmental functions. (*Id.*, Ex. 29, pp. 202-04.) For instance, firefighters did not have to wear a mask while performing an intense cardio workout with their colleagues – an activity that is required for their job. (Arata Decl., ¶ 2.)

California and the County prevented religious gatherings from singing. (Gondeiro Decl., 29, pp. 216-17; RJN, Ex. 22, p. 8.) The County, however, did not generally ban singing in entertainment studios because "they would not have been gathering a number of people in the same place for an organized event." (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 29, pp. 178-79.)

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The County's Directive for Programs Serving Children or Youth exempted children who could not tolerate a face mask and did not prevent them from singing and changing. (RJN, Exs. 6-7, p. 6.) The County's Mandatory Directive for Dining, Bars, Wineries, and Smoking Lounges allowed customers to remove their mask while eating and drinking at a restaurant (id., Exs. 4, 12-13, p. 4), and personal care services like nail care, hair salons, cosmetology services, facial services, and massage therapy services did not have to adhere to social distancing and masks if doing so would prevent them from performing their service (id., Exs 5, 14-15). Collegiate, professional, and youth athletes competing in sports like basketball were exempt from wearing masks and socially distancing and could sing and chant on the sidelines. (*Id.*, Exs 2, 8-9, 16.)

The County's Directive for Construction provided exemptions from masks and social distancing if such requirements posed a risk during work. (*Id.*, Exs. 3, 10-11, p. 3.) For instance, one construction owner recounts two occasions in June 2020 and September 2020 where his construction workers were working in trenches within six feet of distance and removed their masks because they could not breath. (Shepherd Decl., ¶ 2.) The construction workers, who worked both indoors and outdoors, also had to remove their masks to shout and clearly communicate over the loud construction equipment. (*Id.*)

The County's Revised Risk Reduction Order also required all businesses, including churches, to sign the SDP. (RJN, Ex. 18, pp. 6-7.) The form required entities adhere to the applicable COVID-19 orders. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 36, pp. 4-6.) The County did not accept modified forms.  $(Id., \P\P 9-10.)$ 

#### D. The County's Contract Tracing System

In May 2020, the County implemented a contract tracing system and put together an expanded team to investigate COVID-19 cases. (Id., 46-47.) "[I]t was incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to understand what single modifiable factor caused someone to get sick or could have prevented them to get sick." (*Id.*, pp. 72-73.) It was not the County's practice to ask individuals who contracted COVID-19 whether they were wearing a mask. (*Id.*, p. 74.)

In November through December 2020, the County conducted a quantitative retrospective contract tracing survey to understand where individuals may have contracted COVID-19. (Id., pp.

112-16.) During this limited period, the County did ask whether individuals were wearing a mask when they contracted COVID-19. (*Id.*, pp. 116-17.) However, because the County did not have a comparison group of people who did not get sick, they could not "say whether the people who got sick were more or less likely to wear a mask than people who [did not]...." (*Id.*, p. 117.) The survey did not "meaningfully change" the County's understanding of the "science" regarding "what kinds of activities were causing people to get sick or putting people at greatest risk of getting sick." (*Id.*, p. 120.) The County is "not aware of any cases" attributed to Calvary's church services. (*Id.*, p. 138.)

#### III. LEGAL STANDARD

A court must deny a motion for summary adjudication if there is any triable issue of material fact as to a particular claim or defense. (*Aguilar v. Atl. Richfield Co.* (2001) 24 P.3d 493, 506.) Courts deciding motions for summary judgment or summary adjudication may not weigh the evidence but must instead view it in the light most favorable to the opposing party and draw all reasonable inferences in favor of that party. (*Weiss v. People ex rel. Department of Transportation* (Cal. 2020) 468 P.3d 1154, 1169.) "Summary adjudication is a severe remedy and should be used with caution; thus, doubts about the propriety of granting the motion should be resolved in favor of the opposing party." (*Everett v. Superior Court* (2d Dist. 2002) 104 Cal.App.4th 388, 392.)

When the defendant presents affirmative defenses, summary adjudication is only proper if the plaintiff can negate an essential element of the affirmative defense or establish that the defendant does not possess and cannot reasonably obtain evidence needed to support the defense. (*See Candy Shops, Inc. v. Sup.Ct. (Silva)* (2012) 210 Cal.App.4th 889, 899-900.)

#### IV. ARGUMENT

#### A. Summary Adjudication Is Inappropriate Because More Discovery Is Needed

Section 437c, subdivision (h) of the California Code of Civil Procedure provides: "if it appears from the affidavits submitted in opposition to a motion for... summary adjudication... that facts essential to justify opposition may exist but cannot, for reasons stated, then be presented, the court shall deny the motion, or order a continuance to permit affidavits to be obtained or discovery to be had or may make any other order as may be just." Subdivision (h) was added to section 437c "[t]o mitigate summary judgment's harshness" (*Frazee v. Seely* (2002) 95 Cal.App.4th 627, 634

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[internal citations omitted]), "for an opposing party who has not had an opportunity to marshal the evidence[.]" (Mary Morgan, Inc. v. Melzark (1996) 49 Cal. App. 4th 765, 770.)

In July 2022, Calvary learned that the County did not fine non-commercial activities. (Gondeiro Decl., ¶ 19.) In November 2022, Calvary received an excel spreadsheet of specific

complaints regarding non-commercial activities like private gatherings and wedding receptions. (Id., ¶ 24, Ex. 41.) Calvary has sought to depose the District Attorney's Office to determine what

efforts it made to prosecute private gatherings and have sought information regarding the nature of

the private gatherings sent to the Office. (Id.,  $\P$  25.) Additional discovery is also necessary to

determine the identity of the random person the County supposedly served the November 9, 2020

notice of violation (NOV) on. (Id., ¶ 27.) This information supports Calvary's affirmative defenses.

(Id., ¶ 27.) Accordingly, this Court should deny summary adjudication pursuant to Section 437(c),

subdivision h until this critical information is provided.

### Calvary Is Not Precluded From Challenging The COVID-19 Orders

Estoppel does not apply because Calvary had no opportunity to litigate its constitutional affirmative defenses fairly and fully, and the elements of issue preclusion are not met.

1. Calvary did not have a full and fair opportunity to litigate its constitutional claims

Collateral estoppel does not apply when the underlying administrative proceeding is not of the requisite judicial character, or a party did not have a "full and fair opportunity to litigate" the issue. (Pac. Lumber Co. v. State Water Res. Control Bd. (2006) 126 P.3d 1040, 1054-55 [discussing requisite judicial character]; Parklane Hosiery Company, Inc. v. Shore (1979) 439 U.S. 322, 332-333 ["Shore"] [discussing full and fair opportunity to litigate].) To that end, the courts have recognized that certain circumstances exist that so undermine the confidence in the validity of the prior proceeding that the application of collateral estoppel would be "unfair" to the defendant as a matter of law. (Kremer v. Chemical Construction Corporation (1982) 456 U.S. 461, 481 ["Redetermination of issues is warranted if there is reason to doubt the quality, extensiveness, or fairness of procedures followed in the prior litigation"].) These circumstances include when "without fault of [its] own... [the defendant] was deprived of crucial evidence or witnesses in the first litigation" (Blonder-Tongue Lab'ys, Inc. v. Univ. of Illinois Fund (1971) 402 U.S. 313, 333

["Blonder-Tongue"]), when the defendant does not have incentive or opportunity to vigorously litigate the issue in the prior action (*Roos v. Red* (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 870, 880 [internal citations omitted]), and when the second action "affords the defendant procedural opportunities unavailable in the first action that could readily cause a different result." (*Shore, supra*, 439 U.S. at p. 331.)

#### a) OCHO administrative hearing

In the fall of 2020, Calvary appealed \$327,750 in COVID-19-related fines to the Office of the County Hearing Officer ("OCHO"). (Higuera Decl.,  $\P$  2.) The fines were based on Calvary's Sunday gatherings and failure to submit an SDP from August 2020 through October 2020. (*Id.*) **The fines for failing to enforce face coverings based upon the November 9, 2020 NOV were not at issue.** (*Id.*) Calvary was prohibited from conducting written discovery, deposing Dr. Sara Cody, or cross-examining Dr. Cody during the OCHO hearing regarding the constitutionality of the COVID-19 orders (Higuera Decl.,  $\P$  3), as evidenced in the Administrative Law Judge's (ALJ) order. (*Id.*,  $\P$  2.)

The only issue litigated in the OCHO hearing was whether the fines were warranted under Urgency Ordinance No. NS-9.291 ("Urgency Ordinance") because the California Constitution explicitly divests administrative entities of the ability to rule on the constitutionality of statutes. (Cal. Const., art. III, § 3.5.) Litigants do not "waive the issue of the constitutionality of [a statute] by failing to raise it in the administrative agency." (Hand v. Board of Examiners (1977) 66 Cal.App.3d 605, 619–20.)

Thus, Calvary, "without fault of [its] own," had no opportunity to litigate its constitutional affirmative defenses. (*Blonder-Tongue*, *supra*, 402 U.S. at p. 333.)

#### b) Review by the superior court

Calvary subsequently appealed to this Court. When a superior court is reviewing an administrative decision, review is limited to the administrative record to "examine the administrative record for errors of law and exercise its independent judgment upon the evidence." (*JKH Enterprises, Inc. v. Department of Industrial Relations* (2006) 142 Cal.App.4th 1046, 1057.) The Court addressed the constitutionality of the \$327,750 in fines and capacity restrictions on the limited administrative record but never substantively ruled on the constitutionality of the social distancing

requirements, singing ban, and face covering guidance. Judge Lie's order only referenced social distancing and face coverings to demonstrate how Calvary's case was different from other cases because Calvary was not enforcing social distancing or face coverings. (Higuera Decl., Ex. 48.)

Calvary mistakenly believed it could conduct discovery related to the constitutionality of the orders, as evidenced by its case management conference statement. (Gondeiro Decl., ¶ 15, Ex 39.) The Court did not allow any additional discovery and only requested that the administrative record be lodged with the court within 15 days. (Id., ¶ 16.) Calvary could not produce evidence revealing how the SDP and orders burdened its religious tenets, nor could it depose and/or serve Dr. Cody with discovery regarding the County's disparate treatment of religion. (Id.) Calvary declined to cross-examine the enforcement officers on the same issues presented during the OCHO hearing but never abandoned discovery or cross-examination related to the constitutional issues. (Id.)

Since the decision affirming the ALJ's order, Calvary has uncovered information related to the County's disparate treatment of religion and its justification, or lack thereof, for its orders, including the SDP, singing ban, and social distancing and mask requirements, during Dr. Cody's deposition and discovery produced in this case. (*Id.*, ¶¶ 20-22.) This evidence was critical to adequately prove Calvary's constitutional claims and show that the religious gatherings were comparable to other exempt entities and activities from a public health standpoint.

Calvary could not have discovered or produced "crucial evidence" that supports its constitutional claims regarding the COVID-19 orders because discovery was prohibited, whereas such discovery is available here and could "readily cause a different result." (*Shore*, *supra*, 439 U.S. at p. 330.) Thus, collateral estoppel does not apply.

#### 2. The elements of issue preclusion are not satisfied

Issue preclusion applies (1) after a final adjudication on the merits (2) of an identical issue (3) actually litigated and necessarily decided in the first suit and (4) asserted against one who was a party in the first suit or one in privity with that party. (*DKN Holdings LLC v. Faerber* (2015) 352 P.3d 378, 387.) "These elements are conjunctive, meaning that if just one is unsatisfied, issue preclusion cannot apply." (*Tukes v. Richard* (2022) 81 Cal.App.5th 1, 21.) The County fails to satisfy the first three elements.

First, the decision affirming the \$327,750 in fines was not a final judgment on the merits of Calvary's constitutional claims and the \$2.87 million the County seeks to collect here. An "adjudication is on the merits if the substance of the claim or issue is tried and determined." (Parkford Owners for a Better Community v. Windeshausen (2022) 81 Cal.App.5th 216, 227 (internal quotation omitted.) Neither the ALJ nor this Court considered the constitutionality of the face covering guidance, singing ban, social distancing requirements, or the November 9, 2020 citation. Because this Court's review was "limited to examining the administrative record...," the only judgment this Court can consider is the finding that Calvary violated the public health orders. (JKH Enterprises, Inc., supra, 142 Cal.App.4th at p. 1056–1057; See § V(B)(1), supra.)

Second, this case does not pose an identical issue as the OCHO appeal. This element considers whether identical factual allegations are at stake in the two proceedings, not whether the ultimate issues or dispositions are the same. (Thompson v. Crestbrook Insurance Company (2022) 81 Cal.App.5th 115, 126.) Simply put, "the factual predicate of the legal issue decided in the prior case must be sufficient to frame the identical legal issue in the current case, even if the current case involves other facts or legal theories that were not specifically raised in the prior case." (Ibid.)

The factual predicate in the OCHO appeal was whether the \$327,750 in fines were warranted under the Urgency Ordinance, while the factual predicate here concerns whether the SDP, singing ban, social distancing and mask requirements, November 9, 2020 citation, and \$2.87 million in fines are constitutional. (*See Alpha Mechanical, Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc. v. Travelers Casualty & Surety Co. of America* (2005) 133 Cal.App.4th 1319, 1333 [characterizing defendant's affirmative defenses as issues for determining whether collateral estoppel applied].)

Third, Calvary's constitutional affirmative defenses were not actually litigated or necessarily decided. An issue is actually litigated "[w]hen [it] is properly raised, by the pleadings or otherwise, and is submitted for determination, and is determined." (People v. Sims (1982) 651 P.2d 321, 331.) Again, the only issue raised in the ALJ hearing was whether the \$327,750 in fines were warranted under the Urgency Ordinance. The constitutionality of the SDP, face covering and social distancing requirements, November 9, 2020 citation, and \$2.87 million in fines were never actually litigated in the administrative hearing or on appeal. Thus, estoppel is inapt.

Finally, in California, issue preclusion is not applied automatically or rigidly, and courts are permitted to decline to grant preclusive effect to prior judgments in deference of countervailing considerations of fairness, particularly where preclusion "would result in manifest injustice." (*F.E.V. v. City of Anaheim* (2017) 15 Cal.App.5th 462, 465.) It "would not comport with the policies of preserving the integrity of the judicial system" to allow the OCHO decision to stand when neither the ALJ nor this Court afforded Calvary a full and fair opportunity to litigate its constitutional claims, the \$2.87 million in fines, and the November 9, 2020 citation. (*Id.* at p. 476.)

#### C. The County Is Not Entitled To Relief As To The First And Third Causes Of Action

As a threshold matter, this Court cannot grant the County the relief requested in the first and third causes of action because the COVID-19 orders are a moot issue. Even if this Court entertains these causes of action, the County is still not entitled to relief because the COVID-19 orders violated the First Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment.

1. This Court has no jurisdiction to consider the first and third causes of action because the COVID-19 orders are moot

The repeal or expiration of a statute or regulation during the pendency of a cause of action "will render further consideration thereof moot." (*In re Schuster* (2019) 42 Cal.App.5th 943, 953.) An "action that originally was based on a justiciable controversy cannot be maintained... if all the questions have become moot by subsequent acts or events." (*Building a Better Redondo, Inc. v. City of Redondo Beach* (2012) 203 Cal.App.4th 852, 866.) This Court has "no duty to proceed to determine the rights and duties of the parties" where "questions presented by an action for declaratory relief are, or have become, moot." (*Pittenger v. Home Sav. and Loan Ass'n of Los Angeles* (1958) 166 Cal.App.2d 32, 36.)

Here, the County has requested declaratory relief on its first and third causes of action. But the County has since rescinded the COVID-19 orders at issue, including the Revised Risk Reduction Order and SDP requirement. Courts in California have consistently dismissed similar COVID-19-related cases on mootness grounds, including the Northern District of California in the parallel federal action nearly a year ago. (See., e.g., Calvary Chapel San Jose v. Cody (N.D. Cal., Mar. 18,

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# 2022, No. 20-CV-03794-BLF) 2022 WL 827116, at \*8.) Thus, the County is not entitled to relief as to the first and third causes of action.

#### 2. The COVID-19 orders were unconstitutional

California Constitution. The face covering and social distancing requirements, singing ban, and capacity restrictions violated the California Constitution because they burdened Calvary's religious exercise. "[T]he religion clauses of the California Constitution are read more broadly than their counterparts in the federal Constitution." (Carpenter v. City and County of San Francisco (9th Cir. 1996) 93 F.3d 627, 629.) Courts "therefore review [a] challenge...under the free exercise clause of the California Constitution in the same way [they] might have reviewed a similar challenge under the federal constitution after Sherbert... In other words, [they] apply strict scrutiny." (Catholic Charities of Sacramento, Inc. v. Superior Court (2004) 32 Cal.4th 527, 562 (citations omitted).)

Calvary's religious beliefs require that the church gather in person, worship (i.e. sing) with unveiled faces, intercede for one another, and lay hands on one another in prayer. (McClure Decl., ¶¶ 6-16.) The County burdened Calvary's religious tenets when it ordered congregants to wear masks, refrain from singing, and socially distance, as these requirements inhibit fellowship, worship, and intercession – activities required by Calvary's religious tenets. (*Id.*, ¶¶ 12-15.) As explained below, these requirements fail strict scrutiny.

United States Constitution. The orders violated the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution because they were not neutral and generally applicable and treated numerous secular entities and activities more favorably than churches. (See Roman Catholic Diocese Brooklyn v. Cuomo (2020) 141 S.Ct. 63 ["Brooklyn Diocese"].) In Brooklyn Diocese, when finding New York's capacity restrictions unconstitutional, the Supreme Court emphasized the disparate treatment of churches in comparison to non-analogous places such as transportation facilities, campgrounds, acupuncture facilities, and manufacturing plants. (Id. at pp. 66–67.)

In Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley v. Sisolak (9th Cir. 2020) 982 F.3d 1228, 1233, the Ninth Circuit noted that the Supreme Court's approach in *Brooklyn Diocese* "arguably represented a seismic shift in Free Exercise law." Like *Brooklyn Diocese*, the Ninth Circuit, when finding Nevada's orders were unconstitutional, compared churches to a wide array of entities and activities

like "[c]asinos, bowling alleys, retail businesses, restaurants, arcades...." (*Ibid.*) The Supreme Court subsequently enjoined California's at-home religious gathering ban, comparing churches to "hair salons, retail stores, personal care services, movie theaters, private suites at sporting events and concerts, and indoor restaurants...." (*Tandon v. Newsom* (2021) 141 S.Ct. 1294, 1297 ["Tandon"].)

There is no doubt the County's capacity restrictions are a dead letter. The Supreme Court has already admonished California and the County. (*See Gateway, supra*, 41 S.Ct.)

As to the remaining restrictions, they, too, are unconstitutional. The County exempted government entities and their contractors *at their own discretion* from social distancing, wearing masks, or any other restriction "to the extent that such requirements would impede or interfere with an essential government function…" (RJN, Ex. 18, p. 3.) This exemption applied to firefighters working out without a mask. (Arata Decl., ¶ 2.) The County provided exemptions from the social distancing and mask requirements to construction workers, personal care services, restaurants, youth programs, and athletes competing in sports like basketball, football, and wrestling. (*Id.*, Exs. 2-3, 6-11, 16.) Entertainment studios, childcare facilities, and sporting events were also allowed to sing and chant unlike churches. (*Id.*, Exs. 2, 6-7 at p. 6, 8-9, 16; Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 29, pp. 178-79.)

The Supreme Court has clearly demonstrated that these entities and activities are comparable for purposes of the First Amendment, and there is simply no evidence that churches posed a greater risk of COVID-19 spread than any of these activities. (*See Tandon, supra*, 141 S.Ct. at pp. 1296-97.)

Strict Scrutiny. Because the orders were neither neutral nor generally applicable, they must satisfy strict scrutiny. (Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. v. City of Hialeah (1993) 508 U.S. 520, 546 ["Lukumi"].) "Where the government permits other activities to proceed with precautions, it must show that the religious exercise at issue is more dangerous than those activities even when the same precautions are applied." (Tandon, supra, 141 S.Ct. at p. 1297.)

The County has no evidence churches are inherently more dangerous than the exempt entities and activities, justifying harsher treatment. Calvary's expert, Dr. Ram Duriseti, explains that "there was no reason for a regulation to be applied more stringently to a high-ceiling gathering place with fresh air flowing during services and a modern ventilation system than exempted establishments

with less favorable circumstances." (Duriseti Decl., ¶ 26.) Indeed, Dr. Stephen Petty also explains that Calvary was far safer than other secular entities considering its superior ventilation system. (Petty Decl., ¶ 57.)

Moreover, Dr. Sarah Rudman has already testified on behalf of the County that it was difficult, if not impossible, to determine the source of COVID-19 transmission, and there is no evidence that Calvary's church services contributed to the spread of COVID-19. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 31, p. 138.) In fact, with respect to masks, Dr. Rudman testified that it was not clear "whether the people who got sick were more or less likely to wear a mask than people who [did not]...." (*Id.*, p. 117.) This statement is fatal. There is no triable issue of fact that Calvary's services posed a greater threat of COVID-19 transmission than essential government actors, restaurants, childcare facilities, construction sites, personal care services, entertainment studios, and athletic events.

The County's suggestion that other, non-capacity restrictions are constitutional because the Supreme Court mentions social distancing and wearing masks as acceptable precautions in *Brooklyn Diocese* and *South Bay* is a red herring. (County Br. at p. 19.) Justice Gorsuch mentioned wearing masks and social distancing in his concurrence in *Brooklyn Diocese* to highlight the unnecessarily harsh capacity restrictions imposed on churches. (*Brooklyn Diocese, supra*, 141 S.Ct. at p. 69 ["Churches and synagogues are limited to a maximum of 25 people. These restrictions apply even to the largest cathedrals and synagogues, which ordinarily hold hundreds. And the restrictions apply no matter the precautions taken, including social distancing, wearing masks, leaving doors and windows open, forgoing singing, and disinfecting spaces between services."]) That was the extent of the Court's discussion of masks and social distancing. In fact, when holding New York did not employ the least restrictive means, the Court specified that a less restrictive measure could include tying the "maximum attendance at a religious service...to the size of the church or synagogue" but did not suggest masks and social distancing. (*Id.* at p. 67.)

Similarly, in *South Bay*, the concurring justices mention social distancing and masks to show how California's capacity restrictions on churches were not narrowly tailored. Specifically, they wrote, "[n]or, again, does California explain why the narrower options it thinks adequate in many secular settings – such as social distancing requirements, masks, cleaning, plexiglass barriers, and

the like – cannot suffice here." (*South Bay United Pentecostal Church v. Newsom* (2021) 141 S.Ct. 716, 718-19 ["South Bay"].) Stated another way, the Court did not find that the complete ban on churches was narrowly tailored when public transit businesses and retailers could remain open while observing "narrower options." (*Ibid.*)

In sum, the County cannot show that Calvary's services and prayer meetings were more dangerous than exempt entities. Thus, the face covering and social distancing requirement and singing ban also violated the Free Exercise Clause to the United States and California Constitutions.<sup>1</sup>

Social Distancing Protocol. The SDP is unconstitutional as it impermissibly infringed on Calvary's right to free exercise under the First Amendment. The SDP required all entities to agree to all public health orders. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 36, pp. 4-6.) Calvary did not agree to all conditions in the SDP because it interfered with the "[c]hurch's religious tenets...." (McClure Decl., ¶ 16.) The County did not accept modified forms. (Id.) The SDP violated the Free Exercise Clause because it penalized Calvary for engaging in lawful religious practices. (See, e.g., Gateway, supra, 141 S.Ct; People v. Calvary Chapel San Jose (Ct. App. 2022) 298 Cal.Rptr.3d 262².) This Court need only find one COVID-19 order unconstitutional to void all the fines related to the SDP because they were combined together and are therefore non-severable. (Id. at p. 278.)

Further, because the SDP punished Calvary for exercising its constitutional rights, it also violated due process. (*In re Lewallen* (1979) 23 Cal.3d 274, 278.) "To punish a person because he has done what the law plainly allows him to do is a due process violation of the most basic sort...." (*Bordenkircher v. Hayes* (1978) 434 U.S. 357, 363 [citing cases].) Thus, the County is not entitled to the fines for Calvary's failure to sign the SDP because they violate the Due Process Clause.

Further, the SDP form amounted to an unconstitutional condition. The unconstitutional condition's doctrine "vindicates the Constitution's enumerated rights by preventing the government

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Because the face covering requirement violated Calvary's rights under the Free Exercise Clause, the Court must conclude that it violated the Equal Protection Clause because it "jeopardize[d] the exercise of a fundamental right." (Nordlinger v. Hahn (1992) 505 U.S. 1, 10; accord Ashaheed v. Currington (10th Cir. 2021) 7 F.4th 1236, 1251 [equal protection claim triggered strict scrutiny because it alleged "a deprivation of free exercise, a fundamental right," and a classification based on religion].)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> A ruling in an appellate court is binding on all inferior courts in all subsequent proceedings related to the same parties in the same action. (*Morohoshi v. Pacific Home* (2004) 34 Cal.4th 482, 491.)

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from *coercing* people into giving them up." (*Koontz v. St. Johns River Water Management Dist.* (2013) 570 U.S. 595, 604 [emphasis added] ["Koontz"].)

This Court previously held on demurrer that this doctrine does not apply because there was no withholding of a "benefit." (Demurrer Ruling at p. 10.) However, that is a distinction without a difference. The actual injury is that Calvary was punished for not agreeing to unconstitutional conditions. It is irrelevant how the government chooses to coerce people into "forfeiture of [their] constitutional rights." (*Koontz, supra, 570 U.S.* at p. 608.) The government could do so by withholding a benefit OR imposing fines. Thus, the doctrine applies.

## D. The Doctrine of Nuisance Per Se Is Inapplicable Because The Underlying Public Health Orders Were Unconstitutional

Calvary's constitutional defenses render the doctrine of nuisance *per se* inapplicable (first cause of action). In discussing nuisance *per se*, the County fails to state a vital part of the applicable legal standard. (County Br. at pp. 15-16.) Importantly, actions only constitute a nuisance *per se* if the underlying statute is constitutionally valid. (*City of Bakersfield v. Miller* (1966) 410 P.2d 393, 398; *People ex rel. Dept. of Transportation v. Outdoor Media Group* (4th Dist. 1993) 13 Cal.App.4th 1067, 1076-77 ["when a nuisance per se is shown to exist, the only issues before the trial court in an action to enjoin the nuisance are whether a statutory violation exists and whether the underlying statutes are constitutionally valid."].) Because the underlying public health orders were unconstitutional, as established above, the County is not entitled to summary adjudication as to the first cause of action.

#### E. The County Is Not Entitled To Relief As To The Fourth And Fifth Causes Of Action

The County is not entitled to a collection of fines for numerous reasons. As a threshold matter, triable issues of fact exist as to the amount of the fines. Second, the fines related to not enforcing face coverings (November 9, 2020 NOV) and SDP are predicated upon unconstitutional orders, as established above. (See § V(C)(2), supra.) Third, the Urgency Ordinance (i.e., fines) violated the First Amendment because it discriminated against religion. Fourth, the fines are

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27 28 unconstitutionally excessive in violation of the Excessive Fines Clause. Finally, the County is not entitled to the fines related to face coverings because the County did not properly serve Calvary.

#### 1. There are triable issues of fact as to the amount of the fines

A triable issue of fact exists as to the amount of the fines, specifically concerning the County's observance of alleged health order violations and the legitimacy of the County's November 9, 2020 NOV. First, the Urgency Ordinance requires that every fine be based on an individual violation of the public health orders. (RJN, Ex. 27, § 4.) The County required physical observation. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 42, pp. 85-88.) From November 9, 2020 to June 21, 2021, the County fined Calvary daily for failing to enforce face coverings even though an enforcement officer did not observe a violation every day. (*Id.*, Ex. 38, pp. 7-8, app. C.) These facts create a triable issue of fact as to the daily fines related to face coverings.

Additionally, the November 9, 2020 citation is in dispute because former pastor Carson Atherley, who was acting as the agent of CCSJ, was never personally delivered, emailed, or mailed a NOV on November 9, 2020. (Atherley Decl., ¶¶ 2-5.) Atherley was unaware of any other authorized agent of CCSJ at the time. (Id.,  $\P$  2.) Neither Calvary nor its counsel received the notice via email. (Higuera Decl., ¶ 5, Ex. 49; Gondeiro Decl., ¶ 8, Ex. 35.) The only NOVs received in November 2020 were dated November 8, 15, 22, and 29. (Id.) The first time Calvary received the notice was in discovery. (*Id.*) Thus, summary adjudication is inappropriate.

#### 2. The Urgency Ordinance unlawfully discriminated against religion

A regulation is not neutral if it discriminates against a religious practice on its face, or if in its real operation it targets a religious practice. (Lukumi, supra, 508 U.S. at p. 534.) Additionally, a regulation is not neutral and generally applicable where it "treat[s] any comparable secular activity more favorably than religious exercise." (Tandon, supra, 141 S.Ct. at p. 1296 [emphasis in original].)

In November 2022, the County sent Calvary a list of complaints received from the public regarding non-commercial activities. (Id., ¶ 24, Ex. 41.) These complaints reported homes hosting large, maskless gatherings with live bands in violation of the County's orders. (*Id.*) One complainant reported a house hosting several wedding receptions in its backyard for months during the height of the pandemic. (*Id.*) The County never cited these activities for violating COVID-19 orders. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 30, pp. 165-66; Ex. 38, p. 5.) The County has no rational, much less compelling, justification for levying fines against Calvary for holding church services and prayer meetings but not large, maskless private gatherings. Thus, the County is not entitled to the fines.

#### 3. The fines are unconstitutionally excessive $\frac{3}{2}$

A fine violates the Eighth Amendment's Excessive Fines Clause if it "is grossly disproportional to the gravity of a defendant's offense." (*U.S. v. Bajakajian* (1998) 524 U.S. 321, 334.) The Supreme Court considers the following factors: (1) the defendant's culpability; (2) the relationship between the harm and the penalty; (3) the penalties imposed in similar statutes; and (4) the defendant's ability to pay. (*Id.* at pp. 337–38.) The California Supreme Court also summarizes these factors. (*People v. Lowery* (2020) 43 Cal.App.5th 1046, 1057.)

First, Calvary did not exhibit a high degree of culpability. While the County frames Calvary's violations of the public health orders as "blatant" and a "refus[al] to comply," Calvary did not have any nefarious or reckless motives. (County Br. at p. 21.) Rather, Calvary acted in adherence with its sincerely held religious beliefs – beliefs the Supreme Court has vindicated numerous times. (McClure Decl., ¶¶ 4-16; See, e.g., South Bay, supra, 141 S.Ct.) As a matter of law, that is not culpable conduct. (Cf. Newland v. Achute (S.D.N.Y. 1996) 932 F.Supp.529, 534 [explaining that, in Eighth Amendment excessive force context, culpable conduct does not include behavior conducted in good faith].)

Second, the County's super spreader myth is speculative and has been repeatedly rejected by the Supreme Court. (See, e.g., Brooklyn Diocese, supra, 141 S.Ct. at p. 67.) The County's speculative theories as to Calvary's gatherings cannot be accepted as fact on a motion for summary adjudication. "Expert declarations cannot create a triable question of fact if the expert's opinion is based upon factors which are remote, speculative, or conjectural." (Travelers Cas. & Sur. Co. v. Superior Court (1998) 63 Cal.App.4th 1440, 1462.) Dr. Cody's declaration is insufficient for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Calvary is not estopped from litigating this claim because it was never litigated and raised before Judge Lie. (County Br. at p. 21.) Judge Lie considered whether the fines were excessive under the Urgency Ordinance, not the Excessive Fines Clause. (Gondeiro Decl., ¶ 17.)

summary adjudication purposes because the County cannot prove that congregants were exposed to COVID-19 at Calvary's church gatherings as opposed to somewhere else. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 31, p. 138; *See also Millipore Corp. v. Travelers Indem. Co.* (1st Cir. 1997) 115 F.3d 21, 34.)

Moreover, based upon the County's own civil enforcement procedure, the continuing, daily fines levied against Calvary for not enforcing face coverings are excessive. The fines are duplicative because the County had already levied a continuing, daily \$5,000 fine against Calvary for not agreeing to all conditions in the SDP, which required the church agree to enforce face coverings. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 36, pp. 4-6.) Considering the County's arbitrary enforcement against Calvary, the duplicative fines, and the lack of evidence of actual harm, the fines are grossly excessive.

The proportionality factor also weighs in Calvary's favor because its good faith adherence to its religious beliefs renders its culpability low. (See Pimentel v. City of Los Angeles (9th Cir. 2020) 974 F.3d 917, 923.) The County's reliance on City and County of San Francisco v. Sainez (2000) 77 Cal.App.4th 1302, 1322–23 ["Sainez"] and other analogous cases does not support a different conclusion. (County Br. at pp. 22-23 [citing cases].) In Sainez, the plaintiff was not willingly accumulating penalties in adherence to his constitutional rights. (Sainez, supra, 77 Cal.App.4th at pp. 1315–16.) In fact, conflating this case with Sainez and like cases would have a devastating effect on the rule of law. It would allow government officials to brazenly violate the Constitution by threatening citizens with staggering fines if they do not agree to forego their constitutional rights. Such conduct is unconstitutional. (See Koontz, supra, 570 U.S. at p. 604.)

*Third*, contrary to the County's claim, its fines scheme is not like other counties. (County Br. at pp. 23-24.) The County's Urgency Ordinance differs because it treats churches as commercial activities while other counties do not. (RJN, Ex. 19, pp. 8-9; Ex. 20, pp. 9, 11; Ex. 21, p. 4.) Consequently, the County assessed the maximum \$5,000 penalty against Calvary for commercial entities instead of the maximum \$500 penalty for non-commercial activities. (*Id.*, Ex. 27, p. 7.)

Finally, the County need not raise the "ability to pay" factor because "Bajakajian does not mandate the consideration of any rigid set of factors." (U.S. v. Mackby (9th Cir. 2003) 339 F.3d 1013, 1016.) In any event, this factor weights in Calvary's favor because the fines would substantially handicap Calvary's ability to serve the public and church community. (McClure Decl.,

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under both the United States and California Constitutions.

¶¶ 19-20.) Thus, the County is not entitled to the fines because they are unconstitutionally excessive

#### 4. The County violated the Due Process Clause

The County violated the Due Process Clause by: 1) failing to give Calvary proper notice of the November 9, 2020 NOV and related fines; and 2) arbitrarily enforcing its Urgency Ordinance.

First, fines are unlawful if the penalized party is not afforded procedural due process. To satisfy proper notice, due process requires that a person must receive fair notice of both the "conduct that will subject him to punishment" and the "severity of the penalty that a State may impose." (BMW of North America, Inc. v. Gore (1996) 517 U.S. 559, 574["BMW"].) The Urgency Ordinance requires that a NOV be served "upon the owner or other Responsible Party" by personal service, certified mail, or email. (RJN, Ex. 27, § 7.) A Responsible Party is "any individual or legal entity, or the agent or legal guardian of such individual or entity...." (Id., § 2.)

The County never served the November 9, 2020 NOV on a proper party. Melissa Huerta, a county enforcement officer, claims she served an unidentified person who she saw on another occasion and figured was "the representative of the church." (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 42, pp. 119-20.) The County did not properly serve an officer or representative of Calvary based upon the evidence on the record. (*See Destfino v. Reiswig* (9th Cir. 2011) 630 F.3d 952.) Pastor McClure is considered the owner and/or person in charge, and he was never served with the citation. (McClure Decl., ¶21.) Former assistant pastor Carson Atherley was acting as the agent for Calvary. (Atherley Decl., ¶¶ 2-3.) No other party was authorized to accept service on behalf of Calvary. (*Id.*) The County never served Atherley or his attorneys by email, certified mail, or personally (*id.*, ¶ 5; Higuera Decl., ¶ 5, Ex. 49; Gondeiro Decl., ¶ 8, Ex. 35), nor did the County follow up to ensure Atherley received the November 9, 2020 NOV, even though Ms. Huerta testified that "he was always the person that would address [her] at inspections and lead the inspections." (*Id.*, Ex. 42, pp. 32-33, 38-39, 121). <sup>4</sup> Summary adjudication is therefore improper because Calvary was not properly served.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Even if the County served Calvary via email, the service would still be insufficient. (*See* Code of Civil Procedure, sections 414.10, 1013; Health & Saf. Code § 260207; *Lasalle v. Vogel* (2019) 36 Cal.App.5th 127, 138 [discussing email as an insufficient service method].)

Second, to comport with due process, a statute must provide sufficiently definite guidelines "in order to prevent arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement." (People v. Heitzman (1994) 9 Cal.4th 189, 199 ["Heitzman"].) A law is violative of due process when it impermissibly delegates basic policy matters to policemen, county enforcement officers, and judges "for resolution on an ad hoc and subjective basis." (In re Sheena K. (2007) 40 Cal.4th 875, 890.)

Here, the broad language of the Urgency Ordinance enabled the County to "pursue [its] personal predilections," as the ordinance did not establish sufficient guidelines regarding how and when an enforcement officer could issue NOVs. (*Heitzman*, *supra*, 9 Cal.4th at p. 199; RJN, Ex. 27.) Specifically, the County singled out Calvary for discriminatory treatment including continuing and indefinite maximum fines, while treating other businesses, who had also repeatedly violated the Urgency Ordinance, more favorably.

For example, Ms. Huerta drafted and issued multiple NOVs to Dolce Espresso for failing to enforce face coverings on staff and customers. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 42, at 127-140.) Pursuant to these NOVs, Dolce Espresso's fines accrued for a maximum of five or thirty days, respectively, despite the restaurant being a repeat offender of the public health orders. (*Id.*) North Valley Baptist Church was also a repeat offender but only received single day violations for unlawful Sunday gatherings. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 46.) However, the November 9, 2020 NOV, which was also drafted and issued by Ms. Huerta, included a continuing, indefinite accrual period – resulting in millions of dollars of accrued fines to Calvary. (*Id.* at pp. 112-16, 140; Benkato Decl., Ex. 191.) Ms. Huerta also chose to focus on face coverings by issuing a continuing, daily fine on November 9, 2020 even though she was aware that Calvary was violating other COVID-19 orders. (Gondeiro Decl., Ex. 42, p. 105-06; Ex. 43.) She also has no explanation as to why she waited until November 9, 2020 to issue the NOV. (*Id.*, Ex. 42, p. 113.) The November 9, 2020 NOV was the result of "arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement." (*Heitzman, supra*, Cal.4th at p. 199.) Thus, summary adjudication is inappropriate.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Considering the foregoing, this Court should deny the County's motion in its entirety.

1	DATED: February 28, 2023	ADVOCATES FOR FAITH & FREEDOM
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3		By: Mariah R. Gondeiro, Esq.
4		Attorneys for Defendants Calvary Chapel San  Jose and Mike McClure
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		21 DINTS AND AUTHORITIES IN OPPOSITION TO SUMMARY ADJUDICATION
	DEFENDANTS' MEMORANDUM OF PO	INTS AND AUTHORITIES IN OPPOSITION TO SUMMARY ADJUDICATION

#### PROOF OF SERVICE 1 The People of the State of California v. Calvary Chapel San Jose 2 Santa Clara Superior Court Case No. 20cv372285 3 I am an employee in the County of Riverside. I am over the age of 18 years and not a party 4 to the within entitled action; my business address is 25026 Las Brisas Road, Murrieta, California 5 92562. 6 On February 28, 2023, I served a copy of the following document(s) described as 7 DEFENDANTS' OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFFS' PARTIAL MOTION FOR SUMMARY 8 **ADJUDICATION** on the interested party(ies) in this action as follows: 9 SEE ATTACHED SERVICE LIST 10 X BY E-MAIL OR ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION. Based on a court order or an 11 agreement of the parties to accept service by e-mail or electronic transmission, I transmitted copies of the above-referenced document(s) on the interested parties in this action by electronic transmission. Said electronic transmission reported as complete and without 12 error. 13 BY UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE. I am readily familiar with the practice for 14 collection and processing of correspondence for mailing and deposit on the same day in the ordinary course of business with the United States Postal Service. Pursuant to that practice, I sealed in an envelope, with postage prepaid and deposited in the ordinary course of business 15 with the United States Postal Service in Murrieta, California, the above-referenced 16 document(s). 17 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the 18 foregoing is true and correct and that I am an employee in the office of a member of the bar of this 19 Court who directed this service. Devan S. Konney 20 21 Susan Y. Kenney 22 23 24 25 26 27

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