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Canada
November 27, 2005

Skyline Presbyterian Church
6301 Westgate Blvd.
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Dear Session members and Pastor Hogue,

I know this letter of concern will not have the same impact as one coming from an active member, but I am a member nonetheless and feel it is still my duty to speak up when I see something of concern in my church. The church not being open on Christmas day has me deeply concerned both as a church member and as a Christian in general. I am confused by the lack of and weak rationale in this choice. From what I have heard (and this is second hand so I would gladly hear something to the contrary from one of you), the main rationale for not having service on Christmas Sunday was either the worry that no one will come to church or that it could cause strife in families trying to decide whether to go to church or stay home with family in the morning. I feel these reasons are not appropriate or sufficient considering the role of the church. It is not the role of the church to decide for its members (or visitors) if they should or should not come to church. Assuming people will not come suggests that you do not feel the church body can make correct decisions which then implies that 1) the church can make that decision for them and 2) the church has failed in its mission to build up the body of Christ and to make Godly decisions.

For the following reasons (along with those mentioned above), I feel that there is no rationale that warrants the closure of the Church on Christmas Sunday:

- It is Sunday. “God has appointed one day in seven to be kept holy, set aside as the occasion for the people of God to worship corporately” (W-3.2001). It is understood that there is an 11:00pm Christmas Eve service, but that service does not constitute a normal worship service.
- It is Christmas. “The Church thus has come to observe the following days and seasons... Christmas, a celebration of the birth of Christ...” (W-3.2002). I believe it is inappropriate to deny the celebration of the day of Christ’s birth.
- Christmas Sunday is the culmination of Advent. “The Church thus has come to observe the following days and seasons... Advent, a season to recollect the hope of the coming of Christ, and to look forward to the Lord’s coming again...” (W-3.2002). I believe it is inappropriate to have a season of Advent if Christmas Sunday, with its Christ candle, does not happen.
- The Church is missional. Christmas and Easter are two of the busiest days in the Church. Many people who would not normally come to a church service (either non-believers or “nominal” Christians) do come on these two days. It should be

recognized that quality discipling and witness should be evident on both of those days so as to encourage non-believers to place faith in Christ and to encourage those that claim faith to grow towards a more mature belief I believe it is inappropriate to ignore the need for Christ's Word to be heard in the local community, especially at Christmas (it would be unthinkable to be closed on Easter morning, yes?) After all, we are to respond to "the growing need to witness and proclaim the love, truth, and grace of Jesus Christ" (SPC website).

It is also understood that the Session has the right and power to democratically choose when the Church meets (W-1.4004), but that in no way invalidates my reasons above. Let people decide whether or not to come to Church, that is between them and God, the Church has no place deciding that for them. Regardless of how many people want to come to Church that morning, it should be open. This is not meant to suggest that there needs to be anything elaborate. Reading from the Gospels, prayer, a short message, and some worship songs would surely suffice. Granted, Session had the power to make this decision but with something this significant I believe it would have been prudent for the church body at large to be included in this decision. I hope you do not take this letter as being one of hostility, but merely me voicing my concerns about what this will do to the Church and its community. I pray that you would please take this to heart.

God Bless,

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November 28th, 2005