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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ECCLESIASTICAL INSURANCE WARNS THAT LIGHTNING STRIKES ARE AN EVER-PRESENT THREAT TO PLACES OF WORSHIP

TORONTO, ONTARIO (June 2010) Colin Robertson, Risk Control Manager for Ecclesiastical Canada, encourages every place of worship, and especially those with steeples or bell towers, to review their level of lightning protection and to ensure its proper maintenance.

One of Winnipeg's oldest places of worship (a designated Manitoba heritage site) was struck by lightning in the early hours of May 28th. A boulder-sized chunk of Tyndall stone was knocked off the bell tower and sent crashing down the front steps of the church and into the street below where it narrowly missed several vehicles. Thankfully, no one was killed or injured.

With the weather warming up, the risk of lightning strikes increases. Some, but not all provinces, have legislation in respect to lightning protection for places of worship. The Canadian Standards Association rates places of worship in the highest risk category because of their height, construction, size and the presence of spires or steeples and bell towers. As lightning releases its energy, it typically seeks the highest point in the landscape - often, the highest point will be the bell tower or steeple of a place of worship. Without the appropriate protective measures in place, a lightning strike can be devastating, but regular inspection and maintenance of existing lightning protection systems is equally important. Lack of maintenance resulted in the total loss of a heritage church in New Brunswick recently.

Existing customers of Ecclesiastical Insurance are encouraged to visit their dedicated area of the website www.ecclesiastical.ca and access the [Risk Control Kit for Faith Communities](#). The kit contains detailed guidance on lightning protection for places of worship. Others are invited to contact one of our Regional Offices (details on the website) and ask for a free copy of our Loss Control Bulletin on Lightning Protection.

About Ecclesiastical Insurance

Ecclesiastical Insurance is the insurer of choice for Canada's places of worship, and a specialist insurer of retirement homes, education facilities, museums and galleries, charities, non-profit organizations, and heritage properties.

Established in the United Kingdom in 1887, Ecclesiastical has been present in Canada since 1972. The company is owned by a charitable trust, and is committed to serving the needs of its customers and the larger community. Apart from funds required for business operations, group profits are redistributed for the benefit of faith and charitable initiatives. Ecclesiastical is rated “A” by A.M. Best, and “A-“by Standard and Poor’s.

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For information about Ecclesiastical’s specialized products, risk control and claims service, please contact:

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