

# California Pastor Resigned as City Councilman So He Could Host In-Person Palm Sunday Service

A California pastor says he resigned from his position as a city councilman so he could hold an in-person church service for Palm Sunday.

Rob McCoy, a pastor at Godspeak Calvary Chapel, announced his resignation as Thousand Oaks city councilman on Sunday, April 5, reports say. He announced his decision ahead of time to defy the Ventura County Public Health Official's order that listed his church as "nonessential" and said it should remain closed.

McCoy, who is also former mayor of Thousand Oaks, said he resigned because he didn't want city leaders "to have to endure the fallout of my decision." He made his sermon available via livestream before opening the church doors for Communion.

"It's very important theologically that Communion not be taken alone," said McCoy, according to Reuters. "What we are doing is exercising our inalienable rights. Communion is non-negotiable for us."

Thousand Oaks Mayor Al Adam confirmed McCoy's resignation with the following statement:

"Rob was a voice of strength and healing as the city recovered from two simultaneous tragedies – Borderline and Woolsey Fire. I appreciate his contributions and wish him and his family well. While these circumstances are unfortunate, the remaining members of the Council and I are very much focused on moving

forward.”

He says he encouraged his congregation members to remain 6 feet apart from each other. He also reportedly had the sanctuary cleaned and limited the number of seats in his church to 10 even though it could seat 400. The bread and grape juice were set up so that people could partake without making contact with anyone else.

According to Jennifer Van Laar, who says she attended the service, people were outside the church during the service to protest. One photo she took shows a man holding a sign that says, “Fake Christians 666.” Another photo shows the same man holding a sign that says, “Real Christians Would Care.”

“As we were talking one of the residents couldn’t help herself,” Laar writes. “She had to express her opinion on my friend’s mothering skills, telling my friend that she was bringing her children to an illegal gathering, that it was going to get people killed, that she was putting her children in danger, and, ‘Shame on you.’”

Emily Valdez, a reporter and anchor for KNX 1070 News Radio, posted a video on Twitter of the order-defying Communion service:

*Thousand Oaks Cchurch Godspeak violates state and county stay-at-home orders, offering public communion on Palm Sunday. Ventura County Sheriffs letting it happen. Residents outside outraged, protesting. [ ]@KNX1070[ ] #Coronavirus*

*– Emily Valdez (@EmilyValdezKNX) April 5, 2020*