

Peaceful Pentecostal Intercessors and Worshipers Tear-Gassed by Indianapolis Police

On Pentecost Sunday, a peaceful church gathering in downtown Indianapolis to worship and pray over the city and mourn the death of George Floyd was hit with tear gas. A Facebook Live video by user Lydia Watson shows tear gas being fired into the crowd, whose members were praying in tongues and singing “Way Maker” at the time. The tear gas, fired by local police, was reportedly intended for nearby protesters but instead hit the peaceful churchgoers.

The group came from Liberty Tabernacle, a United Pentecostal church in New Whiteland, Indiana. Its pastor, Brian Lane, shared in a Facebook video that they were joined by pastors from other local churches as well.

“We felt led of the Lord to go downtown to Indianapolis,” Lane says. “This is our city ... and we’re responsible for this city as a church. There are hurting people in our city. There are angry people in our city. There are people that are frustrated. And it’s our job as the church to be the peacemakers in our city. So we went down tonight to pray, to unify.”

According to RTV6, Indianapolis Police Chief Randal Taylor has said the tear gas was used in an attempt to break up a group of vandals, but that it “spread by the wind” toward the church group. Liberty Tabernacle Pastor Brian Lane says he believes police were not targeting his group.

“At no time was anybody in any danger,” Lane said that night on Facebook Live. “Never felt threatened by the police. Never

felt threatened by the protesters at all. We were having an incredible, incredible event. What happened is, just so that everybody knows, a large group of protesters started coming up Meridian Street toward where we were at. There was a small—and I want to emphasize this—a small portion of protesters, a very tiny amount, that were throwing things at the police. They were trying to cause disruption, trying to cause damage to buildings. A very, very small amount. They were throwing water bottles, a few things. So the police, in order to control them, shot tear gas at them, and in doing so, the tear gas came in our direction. Of course, we were affected by that. During that time, there were protesters that came and helped some of our people out of where the tear gas canisters were being let loose.”

The Facebook Live video shows a tear gas canister dropping in front of a lady in a wheelchair and spreading throughout the crowd.