

27 Church Members Jailed After Singing 'Amazing Grace' to Stop ICE Arrest

Twenty-seven church members were jailed Friday after they hindered an arrest by surrounding an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) van and singing "Amazing Grace."

Members of the CityWell United Methodist Church in Durham, North Carolina, were accompanying Samuel Oliver-Bruno—an undocumented immigrant—to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in Morrisville, according to *The Washington Post*.

What was supposed to be a routine legal visit soon turned into a protest when ICE officers arrested Oliver-Bruno. For three hours, congregants and community members blocked the ICE van while singing "Amazing Grace," reports *The Hill*.

Oliver-Bruno, whose wife suffers from lupus, has been living for 11 months in a Sunday-school classroom in the CityWell United Methodist Church to avoid deportation. The church's pastor, Cleve May, says the congregation was afraid Oliver-Bruno would be arrested during his appointment, which is why they accompanied him.

"It was presented as a legitimate appointment, but ICE utilized due process as bait," says May. "So we went to the appointment with him, to offer protection, knowing that ICE could not be trusted. We were thinking we would be in and out in 30 minutes."

Oliver-Bruno's son Daniel, a U.S. citizen, was arrested during the incident under charges of assaulting a government officer and trying to prevent an arrest.