

Anti-ICE Mob Storms Minnesota Church to Target Pastor: 'Despicable'

The Department of Justice says it is investigating an anti-ICE protest after demonstrators busted into a St. Paul church, interrupted Sunday morning services, and accused one of the pastors of working with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

In live stream video footage from former CNN anchor Don Lemon, about 30 protestors with the Racial Justice Network stormed into Cities Church, yelling, "Hands up, don't shoot" and "ICE out."

According to Fox 9, the group went to the church, which is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, to confront a man named David Easterwood. He is one of the pastors at the church, but also allegedly an active field officer director for ICE in Minnesota.

Public records reveal that Easterwood is listed as a defendant in a January 12 lawsuit filed by the state of Minnesota to stop ICE operations that led to the confrontation between Good and ICE agents, the Union-Bulletin reports.

In a Facebook post, protestors said they went to the church to demand justice for Renee Good and "inform the congregation of what they described as their pastor's double-mindedness when it comes to the word of God and not loving thy neighbor with his work as a field director for ICE."



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"This cannot be a house of God while harboring someone directing ICE agents to wreak havoc on our community,"

attorney Nekima Levy-Armstrong told Lemon during his livestream, explaining why the group was at the church. "I am a reverend on top of being a lawyer and an activist, so I come here in the power of the almighty God."

Easterwood was not at Sunday's service. However, the church's lead pastor, Jonathan Parnell, said the disruptive display was "shameful."

"We have asked them to leave, and they have obviously not left," Parnell told Lemon. "This is unacceptable. This is shameful. It is shameful to interrupt a public gathering of Christians in worship."

"There is a Constitution. There is a First Amendment of freedom of speech and freedom to assemble and protest," Lemon replied.

"We are here to worship Jesus," Parnell responded, "that is the hope of these cities. That is the hope of the world is Jesus Christ."

The pastor then asked Lemon to leave if he was not there to worship.

The DOJ is investigating the incident for potential violations of civil rights laws, including violations of the FACE Act, which prohibits the use of force to prevent people from exercising First Amendment rights at a place of worship.

"A house of worship is not a public forum for your protest! It is a space protected from exactly such acts by federal criminal and civil laws! Nor does the First Amendment protect your pseudo journalism of disrupting a prayer service," wrote Harmeet Dhillon, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the DOJ, on X. "You are on notice!"

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