

Church Disruptor, Former CNN Host Don Lemon Arrested by Federal Agents

Former CNN anchor Don Lemon was arrested by federal agents following his involvement in a coordinated disruption of a Sunday morning worship service at Cities Church, an incident that has since drawn national scrutiny and a federal investigation, USA Today reports.

Lemon's arrest stems from his presence and participation in a protest that forced its way into the church during worship on Jan. 18. While Lemon has attempted to frame his actions as journalism or protected protest, video evidence and witness accounts show he accompanied protesters into the sanctuary as they intentionally disrupted a religious service on private property.

BREAKING: Don Lemon has been arrested for storming Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is facing conspiracy against rights charges and violation of the FACE Act.

– Benny Johnson (@bennyjohnson) January 30, 2026

In livestream footage from Lemon's own YouTube channel, roughly 30 protesters entered the church chanting slogans while congregants were gathered to worship. The demonstrators targeted pastor David Easterwood, accusing him of hypocrisy because of his alleged work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Lead pastor Jonathan Parnell repeatedly asked the group to leave. "This is unacceptable. This is shameful. It is shameful to interrupt a public gathering of Christians in worship,"

Parnell told Lemon during the disruption.

Lemon responded by invoking the First Amendment. "There is a Constitution. There is a First Amendment of freedom of speech and freedom to assemble and protest," he said. Parnell answered plainly, "We are here to worship Jesus. That is the hope of the world."

Pastor Jack Hibbs later addressed the incident, warning that it should concern Christians far beyond Minnesota. Hibbs said the disruption was deliberate, premeditated and unlawful, stressing that the service was held on private property. "This was a church service on a Sunday morning on private property," Hibbs said. "Outsiders came in to private property to disrupt a religious church service, which is against the law."

Hibbs rejected claims that the First Amendment justified the invasion, arguing that the Constitution protects worship, not its interruption. "You cannot hinder or restrict the expression of religious freedom in the United States of America," he said. "It's a felony." He warned the incident was a test of Christian resolve. "This is a testing of the water to see what Christians will do," Hibbs said. "If there's no pushback, it will continue."



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Federal authorities confirmed the seriousness of the incident. The Department of Justice said it is investigating potential civil rights violations, including possible violations of the FACE Act.

Harmeet Dhillon underscored the legal boundaries, stating that a house of worship "is not a public forum for your protest" and is protected by federal law.

A White House statement issued by Karoline Leavitt said President Trump "will not tolerate intimidation or harassment

of Christians in their sacred place of worship.”

Lemon later attempted to justify the disruption by comparing it to Jesus cleansing the temple, a claim widely criticized as a misuse of Scripture.

This was not journalism or peaceful protest. It was an intentional disruption of worship. Lemon entered the sanctuary with the protesters and remained as congregants were harassed. His arrest reflects a necessary line being drawn.

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a background in journalism from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of *The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary* and a contributor to *Charisma magazine*.