

CN Morning Rundown: Illinois Ramping Up Irrational Church Restrictions

Here's a quick summary of the top stories on :

Illinois Government Continues to Impose Irrational Restrictions on Churches

Earlier this week, the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) filed a friend of the court brief with the Supreme Court in *Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church v. Pritzker*, another case in which state officials have imposed discriminatory restrictions on religious worship in the name of protecting against the coronavirus. As we have reported here, many states have attempted to fight the coronavirus pandemic by clamping down on religious worship. One would think that the virus's favorite victims are the religiously devout.

Like so many other leftist government officials, the governor of Illinois issued an order that singled out churches for worse treatment than other comparable organizations. On top of that, the order restricted in-person worship services to 10 persons within churches but allowed unlimited numbers to assemble in the same building for other purposes.

The order permitted church members to provide meals and shelter for an unlimited number of people but religious services for only 10 of those same people. One hundred people could eat a meal in the church, but only 10 could receive Communion. When church members were providing secular services, they could serve, for example, 100 people. But once a religious worship service began, 90 of those same people had to leave.

The lower court upheld that irrational and unconstitutional

arrangement. Our amicus brief urged the Supreme Court to issue a summary reversal of the lower court's ruling. The court will summarily reverse when a lower court ignores an established principle of law. No oral argument is held.

Canadian Police Block Driveways, Issue Tickets at Drive-in Church Services

Churches in America aren't the only ones heading to court to fight for the freedom to worship. As a show of force and enforcement, Canadian Mounties are blocking the driveways of churches to enforce bans on church gatherings, even those where attendees remain in their vehicles and tune into a radio station for sound.

Wednesday, Springs Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, filed a lawsuit in the Court of Queen's Bench against Manitoba Province calling for a stay of the public health order that prohibits people from attending its drive-in service. The church was issued four \$5,000 tickets over the weekend for each of the drive-in services it held over Saturday night and Sunday morning.

Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Brent Roussin said, "The message has been clear—people need to stay home when they can."

Drive-in services were permitted in the spring lockdowns but banned in the latest round of health orders. The government issued the newest order Nov. 22.

The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedom (JCCF) has issued a warning letter to Premier Brian Pallister for violating the freedoms of faith communities in the province. The letter states that declaring drive-in religious services outlawed by a public health order violates the fundamental freedoms of religion and peaceful assembly.

Christian School Faces COVID Challenge With Virtual 'Out of

the Box' Student Experience

Orlando's One School of the Arts has found a unique way to bring creative, real-life learning and community to the virtual classroom.

COVID-19 has brought with it many challenges. But out of those challenges have come many creative ideas. This is particularly true for the field of education, where school administrators and teachers have had to tackle everything from socially distanced classrooms to online learning to hybrid (online and classroom) learning and more. One School of the Arts (OSOTA), a private Christian school in Longwood, Florida, has faced this challenge with innovation and developed an amazing way to connect with families that has helped grow the school in a difficult season.

Pastor Ron Johnson of One Church, the school's sponsoring church, says, "When we began to get into this season, and we had to figure out education all over again, that was a huge, huge challenge. We—like many churches that have good Christian schools—we've had success. There have been times where it's been challenging. But God has helped us and given us incredible grace in the middle of it. But we were not expecting a COVID-type circumstance to ever hit us.

"And so when this came, we were suddenly confronted with a huge shift in our student population," Johnson says. "We were losing scholars; families were fearful, as church leaders and school leaders across the country are experiencing. And so in the middle of that we were confronted with a huge problem: Would we just simply try to do school as normal? Or were we going to take a step in another direction?" {eoa}