

Pastor John MacArthur Files Declaration Against LA County's Repeated Attacks to Shut Down Church

Los Angeles County is returning to court today, Aug. 24, 2020, attempting—for the fourth time—to get a court order to shut down indoor worship services at Grace Community Church.

As the judge noted last week, the county simply refuses to accept the reasoned decisions of the California court. Judge Mitchell L. Beckloff, who will preside over today's hearing, told Los Angeles County attorneys from the bench on August 20, "As I see it, Judge Chalfant said no to you, and the Court of Appeal declined to make the order that you requested."

MacArthur's declaration to the court states in part:

Worship-bans appear to take the position that we should lock our doors and force our congregants to gather to worship the Lord in parking lots, in parks or perhaps beaches—but never in any church. From Grace Community Church's perspective, this is nonsensical, and we view it as a direct ban on engaging in the worship which our faith requires. The size of our congregation means that there is no place for it to meet outdoors; the summer heat makes meeting outdoors unhealthy and even dangerous; our experts have refuted that meeting indoors significantly aids in the spread of the coronavirus; and most principally, Grace Community Church's sanctuary itself is a spiritual refuge for our congregants—a refuge of which the county has no right to deprive them."

Thus, the county's and state's July 13 and 14 worship-bans burden my and Grace Community Church's free exercise of

religion by criminalizing activity directly required by our faith. As a church, we have a moral and religious obligation to continue allowing our congregants to gather in our sanctuary to worship the Lord.

This church is the core of life for thousands from nursery to seniors. Our church is not an event center. It is a family of lives who love and care for each other in very intensely personal ways. So essential to personal well-being that people rushed back as soon as they could. The utter unnecessary deprivation of all our people by completely shutting down the mutual love and care that sustains our people in all the exigencies, pressures and challenges of life, was cruel. And after 63 years of sacrificial, kindness to our city, to be repeatedly threatened with court-ordered efforts to shut Grace Community Church down when no one is sick, reveals an inexplicable preference for a mostly harmless virus over the life-enriching and necessary fellowship of the church. Our leaders and congregation see no real health threat to warrant such restraint. We see this action against us as an illegitimate misuse of power.”

Read the full Declaration of Pastor John MacArthur, filed on his behalf by Thomas More Society attorneys on Aug. 23, 2020, in Superior Court of the State of California—County of Los Angeles—Central District in County of Los Angeles et al. v. Grace Community Church et al. [here](#). {eo}

The Thomas More Society is a national not-for-profit law firm dedicated to restoring respect in law for life, family and religious liberty. Headquartered in Chicago, Omaha and Fairfield, New Jersey, the Thomas More Society fosters support for these causes by providing high quality pro bono legal services from local trial courts all the way up to the United States Supreme Court. For more information, visit [tmsociety.org](#).