

Tim Walz-Appointed Judge Throws Out All Charges Against Woman Accused of Interrupting Easter Service

Destroying the sanctity of one of Christianity's holiest days is not a crime in Minnesota, according to a Tim Walz-appointed judge.

Anti-ICE protesters refused to allow the members of Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ in peace and joy on Sunday, according to Alpha News.

The church, which was the site of a demonstration in January led by Don Lemon and other protesters, has been the site of protests for weeks, even on Easter Sunday.

Emily Heather Phillips, 33, of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, was arrested Sunday and charged with four misdemeanors, including disorderly conduct, interrupting a religious observance, knowingly participating in a noisy assembly, and continuing to disturb the peace.

She did not stay in jail long.

During her arraignment Monday at 9 a.m., Ramsey County District Court Judge Maria Mitchell, who was appointed in 2022 by Democratic Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, threw out the charges, saying there was "no probable cause."



Order Amanda Grace's New Book, "Brace For Impact" on !

That's not how St. Paul police saw it in a statement posted to

X.

"At 8:35 a.m. today, Saint Paul police officers were working contracted overtime at Cities Church when a group of protesters [was] outside of the church during Easter services. The protesters were using a blow-horn and yelling loudly, disrupting the church services," police wrote.

"The protesters were given numerous announcements by officers to stop, or they would be cited and possibly arrested. The majority of the group complied. One person, an adult female, did not comply and was arrested by officers for interference with religious observance, and Saint Paul City Ordinances and ," police wrote.

Trisha Pohland, the attorney for Phillips, said her client had a First Amendment right to ruin a Christian holy day.

"Law enforcement is really cracking down on First Amendment rights," she said, according to the Saint Paul Pioneer Press.

"It's very important that individuals have the right to protest without the fear of going to jail," she added.

Cities Church parishioners continue to be 'hounded' and 'harassed' by anti-ICE protesters, churchgoer says

"They block the sidewalk and are cussing us out as we walk into church," a churchgoer told Crime Watch Minneapolis. "I just want the freedom to worship without [fear] and..."

— Alpha News (@AlphaNews) April 1, 2026

Jonathan Parnell, lead pastor at Cities Church, said he was "disheartened" that the charges were tossed.

"State law protects the right of people of faith to worship in peace, and I call on state and local officials to enforce the

law," Parnell said.

About 20 protesters "gathered in the green space on Summit Avenue in front of the entrance to Cities Church," Parnell said. "They held signs with obscenities and yelled harassing comments at families and individual worshippers."

Parnell said he was "grateful for SPPD's measured response and their efforts to protect the congregation's ability to gather and worship peacefully. While similar protests have continued in recent weeks, the people of Cities Church have sought to respond with patience and kindness."

This article originally appeared on The Western Journal and is reposted with permission.