



Canadian Pastors Who Refused to Close Church During Covid Lockdown Win in Court

Description

The Crown has dropped 24 tickets totalling \$55,200, issued in connection with COVID-19 public health orders to three pastors.

The Justice Centre represented Pastor John Koopman of Chilliwack Free Reformed Church, Pastor James Butler of Free Grace Baptist Church, and Pastor Timothy Champ of Valley Heights Community Church, who have all received tickets for holding services during the pandemic.

“For participating in worship in accordance with their religious beliefs, while implementing the same safety measures applicable to other in-person settings that were legal in BC, such as indoor gatherings in stores, restaurants and gyms, Pastor Koopman was facing charges on 23 tickets totaling \$52,900, Pastor Butler on 25 tickets totalling \$57,500, and Pastor Champ on 18 tickets totalling \$41,400,” a Justice Centre [statement](#) reads.

On May 4 and May 6, 2022, approximately one year after the last tickets were issued, the Crown directed a stay of proceedings of the charges against the pastors as follows: Pastor Koopman saw seven tickets dropped; Pastor Butler saw 11 tickets dropped; and Pastor Champ saw six tickets dropped, for a total of 24 tickets withdrawn.

According to the Justice Centre, there are still more than 20 tickets issued against pastors and churches in the Fraser Valley that remain outstanding. “The Justice Centre will vigorously defend pastors and churches against these charges in future appearances in Provincial Court,” the statement continues.

To date, the Crown has dropped more than four dozen tickets issued to BC [churches](#) represented by the Justice Centre.

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By Angelo Isidorou

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