



Religion is Essential: COVID Lockdowns and Unjust Religious Discrimination

COVID-19 made 2020 an incredibly hard year, but governors and mayors made it worse by shrinking religious freedom. Across the U.S., as restrictions on travel and in-person gatherings were created, many localities trampled on religious freedom by treating religious gatherings more harshly than their secular counterparts. These unfair restrictions, ultimately deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, took a toll on both religious liberty and public health. Social isolation and “deaths of despair” had been declared a public health crisis even before the pandemic, and these unfair restrictions barred people from one of the strongest antidotes to loneliness: communities of faith. [Click here to view the event page.](#)

“Don’t take our supernatural strength away from us. It’s not the American way. People fled other countries for this freedom. [...] It happens to be our right — this is about religious liberty now.”

-Kathryn Jean Lopez, [Please, Gov. Cuomo – don’t take away the Mass again](#)

Speakers



Garry Leist
Pastor, Calvary Chapel
Dayton Valley



Matt Sharp
Senior Counsel and State
Government Relations National
Director, Alliance Defending Freedom



**Rabbi Chaim
Dovid Zwiebel**
Executive Vice President,
Agudath Israel of America



Special Guest Moderator:
Kathryn Jean Lopez
Senior Fellow,
National Review Institute



Host:
Emilie Kao
Director, DeVos Center for
Religion & Civil Society,
The Heritage Foundation

What You Can Do

Read these articles:

- [Is now the time for churches to reopen after coronavirus shutdown? | Pro/Con](#)
- [America’s faith-based groups: Helping neighbors in a time of crisis](#) by Emilie Kao and Andrea Jones
- [Discrimination Against Churches Didn’t Have a Prayer at the Supreme Court](#) by Emilie Kao
- [Politicians embracing lockdown tactics should be required to ‘show their work’](#) by Kevin Pham

Watch Emilie Kao’s interview on The Ben Shapiro Show:

- [Constitution Defends Religion Freedom Like Christmas Displays](#)

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