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## THE COMMITTEE TO SAVE CHRISTMAS

PRESS RELEASE

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### CHRISTMAS HAS BEEN SAVED, CASE WON!

**Wilmington:** Today, the Committee To Save Christmas announced that its member, Rev. Dr. Christopher Bullock, to his satisfaction and for the benefit of the small Black churches in Delaware who he represented, has settled his federal civil rights case against Governor John Carney challenging his closing down religious worship in Delaware in March and commandeering historic religious rituals.

At the start of the COVID-19 emergency Governor Carney in March relied upon his Council of Faith-Based Partnerships which, while politically correct in its composition, still lacked members from clergy to represent historic Protestant and Catholic Christianity. So all churches were closed, but for 10 members, which did permit public worship by 10 adults in the *minyam* of Judaism, but did not permit core Sunday assembly and worship in Christianity. Baptisms also were forbidden but not Jewish circumcisions, day care workers holding infants or physicians treating them. Holy Communion was banned but not handling fruit at the grocery store. Adults over 65 could be arrested at church but not at the liquor store or Walmart. And, preaching from the pulpit had to be through a mask or with a pastor's back to the congregation, but the Governor always spoke weekly to the press without a mask. It went on and on, treating religious freedom different from secular acts which had no First Amendment protections.

Governor Carney now has settled his dispute with Rev. Dr. Bullock who had the courage to fight alone for historic religious liberties, going back to 1792 in Delaware's Constitution, and the right to meet of very small Black churches who had neither the finances nor the technology to try to worship God on-line, and who were not willing to give up the command to Baptize or celebrate the Lord's Supper.

The parties have agreed to dismiss Bullock's federal case, set for trial in September 2021 and, as his lawyers and the federal judge concluded, the Governor in any future emergency now will be bound by the law found in the First Amendment and he always must treat churches and religious worship in a neutral manner, and in all instances only with rules of general applicability that apply to all citizens, not just churches. Employ. Div. v. Smith, 494 U.S. 872, 876-90 (1990).

The terms of their settlement include: (1) use of the previous 10 person attendance limit in houses of worship is forbidden in the future and, if "essential businesses" or essential activities are in the future listed, churches will be included as "essential;" (2) restrictions solely applying to religious rituals such as Baptism or Communion are forbidden; (3) no age based attendance limits can be imposed solely on religious worship; (4) mask wearing and social distancing cannot be applied solely to church; (5) no church can be limited to just one service a week; (6) no limits on other use of its building can be imposed solely on churches, such as its other charitable ministries; and (7) no specific time limit on length of the service can be imposed solely on church use of its building.

"This is a Christmas miracle" said attorney Thomas Neuberger, "the Governor made many mistakes here but it was an emergency. No one questions his good faith, he just got bad advice from his purported expert religious advisors." Tom can be reached at 302-383-1040. Attorneys Tom Crumplar, Martin Haverly and Steve Neuberger assisted. Rev. Dr. Bullock can be reached for interviews.