



PO Box 71440 • Madison WI 53708
608-256-3228 (Madison) • 888-378-0440(toll-free) • 608-256-3370 (fax)
info@wifamilycouncil.org • www.wifamilycouncil.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, October 12, 2026

Contact: Daniel Degner, President – 608-256-3228
Fax: 608-256-3370
Email: info@wifamilycouncil.org

**WISCONSIN FAMILY COUNCIL ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF THREE-PART
DOCUMENTARY EXAMINING 2020 CHURCH SHUTDOWNS AND CONSTITUTIONAL
EMERGENCY POWERS**

MADISON, WI- Today, Wisconsin Family Council (WFC) officially released its new three-part documentary series, **Deemed Non-Essential: When Wisconsin Locked the Church Doors**. The investigative series provides a detailed historical and constitutional examination of the state-level administrative decrees that restricted religious assemblies while liquor stores were deemed “essential” across Wisconsin during the unilateral executive orders of 2020.

Produced as an educational resource by Campaign Now, the series uses firsthand interviews with affected clergy to examine how emergency mandates disrupted religious practices, impacted community ministries, and created confusion for local law enforcement.

The series is divided into three focused episodes:

- **Episode 1: When the Church Can’t Be the Church** (Fond du Lac) focuses on Trinity Baptist Church and School. Senior Pastor Dan Leeds and School Principal Jeremy Shaeffer explain the spiritual, emotional, and developmental consequences of mandated closures on congregations and Christian education.
- **Episode 2: A Local Misunderstanding Became a Public Controversy** (West Bend) documents the law enforcement response at Pilgrim Evangelical Lutheran Church on April 5, 2020. The episode features Pastor Joseph Fisher recounting how a state administrative FAQ document led officers to remove people from a church service.
- **Episode 3: Congregations Dispersed** synthesizes the testimonies of pastors from both West Bend and Fond du Lac to emphasize equality, asserting that houses of worship do not seek special privileges, but rather equal standing under the law alongside secular commerce. If liquor stores can remain open, then churches should be able to as well.

WFC President Daniel Degner reports, *“This series shows us a glimpse of how Wisconsinites suffered because government forced churches to lock their doors while it kept liquor stores open.”*

The complete docuseries, along with episode companion articles and research archives, is available for public streaming at FreedomToWorship.org as well as [Wisconsin Family Council’s YouTube page](https://www.wifamilycouncil.org/youtube).

###

Wisconsin Family Council, Inc. is a statewide organization whose vision is to Transform Wisconsin for Biblical Influence.