

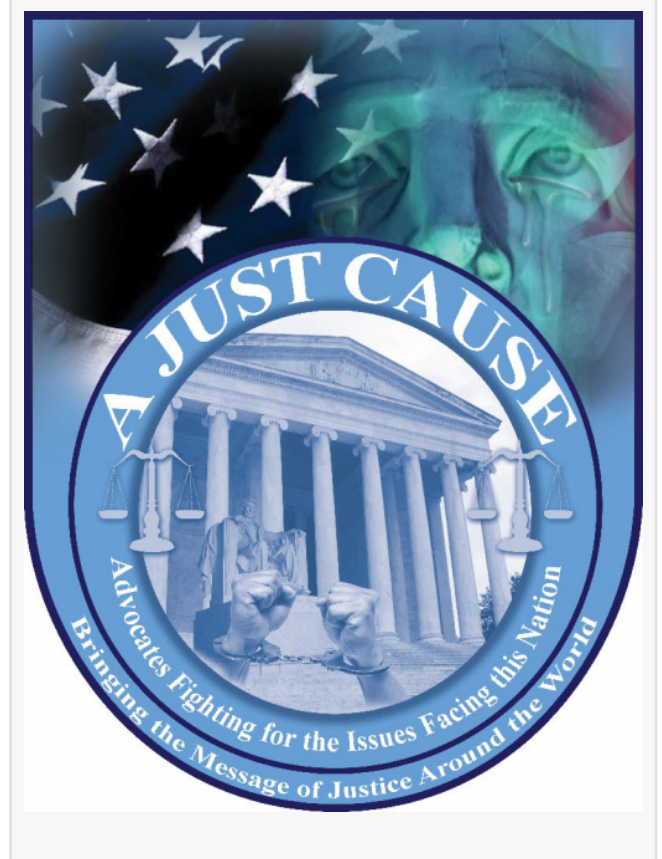
Colorado Church Praised for Supporting Law Enforcement Becomes Victim of Biased Police Detective

Pastor and parishioners grapple with unfair treatment by police department after extending kindness to officers

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO, USA, March 18, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Pastor Rose Banks and the predominantly African-American Colorado Springs Fellowship Church (CSFC) has a history of supporting and showing kindness to the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD). The church is baffled by bias from a CSPD detective and the department's failure to not only hold him accountable but also a failure to protect church property from a thug who took advantage of the church's kindness.

When police departments and officers around the country were being broadly assailed following Eric Garner being choked to death by a NYPD officer, Pastor Rose Banks didn't want Colorado Springs police to feel they weren't appreciated so she reached out to CSPD Chief Peter Carey to reassure him that she and her African-American parishioners didn't feel all police were bad people. And to prove that appreciation, Pastor Banks and parishioners followed up by delivering breakfast and lunch to hundreds of police officers and deputy sheriffs across the city. A 20-year veteran of the department responded by telling a church volunteer that he was deeply moved by the kindness of CSFC and that no organization or church had ever honored the police in such a way.

Pastor Banks also launched CSFC's 'Let's Talk' initiative where she used the church to host a forum between the Colorado Springs residents and city and county law enforcement to discuss the public's policing concerns and to foster greater understanding and empathy between the police and the community. During the 'Let's Talk' program, both Chief Carey and El Paso County Sheriff Bill Elder expressed profound gratitude to Pastor Banks and CSFC for their kindness to police and the opportunity to build stronger bonds with the people they protect and serve. (View



Let's Talk video excerpt at <https://vimeo.com/525015105>).

CSFC's LovingKindness has not only been extended to CSPD and the El Paso County Sheriffs Office, but also to Colorado Springs firefighters, EMTs, hospitals, schools, the military and many others in the community—all of whom have expressed great appreciation for the church's kindness and support (See letters of appreciation at <https://bit.ly/3a6BuZd> & <https://bit.ly/3758wHw> & <https://bit.ly/2LDNMPs>) and a video of Pastor Banks giving a struggling mother \$1000.00 to buy gifts for her children. (<https://vimeo.com/510932730>). But when the church called CSPD for help with a gun-menacing thug attempting to steal church property, they had no idea that a biased CSPD detective would not only abuse his power by charging CSFC parishioners with felony crimes, but also permit thousands of dollars' worth of church property to be stolen.

As part of its LovingKindness community outreach program CSFC extended a hand of kindness to a financially-distressed family of four (husband, wife and two children) by allowing them to reside in the church's fully furnished corporate apartment. After the couple violated church rules prohibiting drug use and guns in the apartment, seven men from the church went to the apartment to secure church property (including furnishings) that totaled nearly \$20,000.00. After parishioners arrived at the apartment, they were invited in by the adult male occupant for a cordial conversation. Instead of surrendering the church's property, the male occupant pulled a gun with his minor child present in the house. Parishioners called the police who arrived on scene, conducted a brief investigation and sent parishioners home without their property. The police played right into the couple's scheme who moved out of the apartment and took all church property with them.

Instead of charging the couple with felony theft of church property, CSPD Detective Brian Corrado shockingly charged CSFC parishioners with felony burglary and stalking charges without originally conducting a single interview of parishioners who were present the day the thug pulled a gun on them.

"Truth really is stranger than fiction," says Lamont Banks, Executive Director of A Just Cause and CSFC Board Member. "How do church members who are being menaced with a gun call the police for protection and assistance with securing their property get charged with a crime while the drug using, gun menacing criminal gets away scot free with \$20,000.00 worth of church property?" muses Banks. "The bias against CSFC is bigger than Pikes Peak and no one has any idea why Mr. Corrado hates the church or wants to abuse its parishioners," adds Banks.

Both CSFC and their attorney sent a letter of complaint to CSPD Chief Vince Niski and/or Mayor John Suthers requesting an immediate investigation into Detective Corrado's dubious actions against church parishioners with hopes city leaders would rightly intervene (See letters at <https://bit.ly/3vAlgzi> & <https://bit.ly/30W2Xr6>). Although the church was finally told CSPD was opening an internal affairs investigation, Pastor Banks and parishioners struggle with feelings of ambivalence towards the department since Chief Carey is no longer in leadership.

"CSFC's role as a community peacemaker who advocates for balancing the police's mission to protect and serve against protests that unfairly condemn the entire police department for the rogue actions of a few should be respected and valued by CSPD," says Banks. "The national response decrying the gratuitous killing of George Floyd is evidence that the country has reached a boiling point with police not being held accountable for their wrongful actions," adds Banks. A failure to hold Detective Corrado accountable for conducting a biased investigation and mistreatment of these parishioners will damage CSFC's trust in the integrity of CSPD and eviscerate the collaborative efforts by Chief Carey and Sheriff Bill Elder to rebuild community trust," concludes Banks.

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