

# **Church of Scotland speaks out against planned legal action against government**

**The Church of Scotland has issued a statement clarifying their stance on the possible legal action by some individuals against The Scottish Government.**

The action demands a Judicial Review of the latest coronavirus restrictions and the closure of church buildings for the foreseeable future.

The campaign, including a crowdfunder, is headed by Thomas White, Canon of St Andrew's Cathedral and you can hear what he says below. Canon White explains in a video message why he feels it necessary to raise £50,000 for a campaign to instruct Queen's Counsel in a review of the Covid-19 legislation and its impact on the freedom of worship.

The Moderator the Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair has also made a statement on video stating that the Church of Scotland does not support this move:

The statement reads:

"We do not think threatening legal action is the right course to take when the country is under threat from COVID-19.

"We fully accept that the latest pandemic restrictions mean that we have to close churches again for the time being.

“The vast majority of our members understand and support these temporary restrictions.

“We will continue to work with the Scottish Government to ensure that reopening churches will happen as soon as it can be done safely.

“We, along with other faith community leaders, encourage people to take measures that will ensure their safety and the safety of others and be vaccinated when the opportunity arises.

“We look forward to the day we can be together again in church.

“In the meantime we are encouraged by the many church congregations across Scotland who are offering essential support -both spiritual and practical – to their local communities.”

\*Our buildings may be temporarily closed but the Church is open and ministers and worship leaders continue to share the Good News of Jesus Christ online with aplomb and great gusto in addition to supporting people in need in practical ways.”



The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland t Rev Dr Martin Fair

Canon White says that the government’s actions at the beginning of January have had an impact on the freedom of worship. He said: “I as a parish priest do not think these people are immune to Covid, in fact quite the opposite. I have celebrated over 60 Covid-related funerals in this time. The impact on this community has been devastating to say the least. However what I do object to, is that without any evidence, or indeed without any justification or explanation, The Scottish Government has impinged our human rights.”

A statement on the JustGiving page reads: “This crowd funding

page is in reaction to the draft of measure by the Scottish Government that impacts significantly on the right to worship as enshrined in ECHR. The purpose of these funds is to receive Queen's Counsel on the draft of legislation which seeks to impinge on our liberties and furthermore seek to achieve a judicial review of the current regulations which seem to have very little regard for the rights of freedom of worship and family life.

"It is important to be aware that this action is by Canon White as a private citizen and that no church funds or resources will be used to finance, support or facilitate this action.

"The options open to Canon White as a private citizen are very different from those options open to the Bishops of Scotland as Pastors of the Church who are bound to make their decisions with consideration to the wider institution and have their own avenues for interacting with the Scottish Government."

The JustGiving page is [here](#).