

Oregon city agrees to pay \$400,000 after church wins lawsuit to preserve feeding ministry

by [Episcopal News Service Staff](#)

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Bernie Lindley sorts bread for the food ministry at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Brookings, Oregon. (Courtesy photo)

An [Episcopal church in Oregon](#) that successfully fought a city ordinance limiting its homeless feeding ministry has won a \$400,000 settlement in its lawsuit against the city of Brookings.

The city agreed to pay \$375,000 to cover St. Timothy's Episcopal Church's legal fees in the 2022 lawsuit and an additional \$43,000 to the Oregon Justice Resource Center, according to [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#). The settlement comes after a federal judge [ruled in favor](#) of St. Timothy's and the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon.

Brookings is located about 10 miles north of the California border along the Pacific coast. At the time of the March 27 judgment, St. Timothy's was serving an average of 73 free meals a day, four days a week, in defiance of the city's ordinance that had

attempted to restrict the meals to two days a week.

The congregation and diocese had argued in their lawsuit that the ordinance violated the church's rights under the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000. The judge agreed.

St. Timothy's provides a variety of resources to people who are often unhoused and have a history of being abused—ministries that church leaders argued were critical in a city that offered few other services for those people. Through the church's Brookings CORE Response team, St. Timothy's also provides showers, a clothing closet, a community garden, a variety of vaccinations and tests including for COVID-19, a place where about 100 people get their mail, and space where people can just get a cup of coffee and talk to others.

"We're really glad that the whole thing's over with and we can get back to . . . getting to the needs of the marginalized in our community without the distraction of this lawsuit," Bernie Lindley, vicar at St. Timothy's, told Oregon Public Broadcasting. —Episcopal News Service