



**LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN PRESBYTERIAN
RECOMMENDATIONS**

JANUARY 4, 2021

netgrace.org

Independent Investigation of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings of this investigation, GRACE proposes several recommendations for the leadership of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church:

Addressing the Past

- GRACE recommends that LMPC provide funding to assist all known reported victims of Paul Warren and Tony Marcano associated with LMPC.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC leadership work with GRACE to develop a plan that demonstrates authentic repentance¹ to the individuals who were sexually victimized by representatives of LMPC, and to all survivors of any form of sexual misconduct who have been negatively affected by this matter.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC leadership seek professional assistance in providing ways to minister to those within LMPC whose faith and trust have been negatively impacted by the issues raised in this investigation.
- GRACE recommends LMPC publicly offer to contact every known survivor of sexual misconduct by an LMPC representative. During this process, the LMPC leadership is encouraged to listen to the experiences of each victim and to acknowledge its responsibility for and repentance of its inadequate responses. GRACE will be willing to communicate this offer directly to the known reported victims.

Addressing the Present

- GRACE recommends that LMPC leadership provide a copy of the executive summary to the Chesapeake Presbytery.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC make the executive summary publicly available online.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC send a letter to all of Paul Warren's known former employers and ministries notifying them of Paul Warren's reported sexual abuse history along with a link to the executive summary so that they can inform individuals in their respective congregations/ministries who may be impacted by these alleged crimes.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC leadership provide the Baltimore City Board of Education and all of Tony Marcano's known former employers a link to the executive summary. This should be accompanied by a cover letter that explains the basis for why this information is being provided to them.

¹ Repentance, when founded on truth and humility, is best illustrated by: 1) empathy for those who have been wronged and damaged by sin and failures, 2) an awareness that the offense is against the goodness and holiness of God, not merely a behavior that hurt others, and 3) a desire to make restitution. Words of apology, though good and necessary, are not sufficient evidence of a true turning away from prior wrongdoing. Authentic repentance will be demonstrated by an equally authentic transformation over a period of time where individuals and institutions work to ensure future behaviors no longer harm others. This definition is adapted from an article written by Diane Langberg. See "An Inward Look (Part One and Part Two)," Christian Counseling Today Vol. 9 No. 2 (2001).

Moving Forward

- GRACE recommends that LMPC implement necessary changes to its safeguarding policies and response protocols as previously discussed with GRACE Director of Safeguarding Initiative.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC develop a Safeguarding team that will:
 - Include at least one survivor of sexual abuse.²
 - Facilitate a support ministry for survivors of sexual abuse.
 - Work with child protection experts in developing safeguarding policies and response protocols for the church that satisfy best practice standards.
 - Conduct annual audits of the safeguarding policies and response protocols, and revise as needed.
 - Facilitate ongoing safety training for children and adults.
 - Play a central role in responding to reported safeguarding policy violations.
 - Develop relationships with community partners who work in the field of addressing issues related to adult and child maltreatment.
 - Work with child protection experts to identify and address all known sex offenders in the LMPC community.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC conduct a comprehensive screening³ of every individual who has regular or routine contact with minors.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC staff and Session receive annual training on how to understand, identify, and respond to issues related to abuse, perpetrators, and victimization.
- GRACE recommends that the greater LMPC community receive ongoing education and training on issues related to abuse protection, identification, and response.
- GRACE recommends that the students at LMPC receive training on how to identify and report all forms of sexual misconduct.⁴
- GRACE recommends that all LMPC pastors complete a seminary course on child sexual abuse.
- GRACE recommends that LMPC leadership articulate ways the LMPC community can have more transparent and healthy conversations that address all forms of abuse, including sexual abuse, family violence, non-physical/verbal abuse and its effects. This should include, but not be limited to, informed sermons on abuse related issues and inviting abuse experts to present and educate church members on all forms of abuse.

²Some of the best experts in the area of sexual abuse are survivors because of the fact they have endured these painful dynamics. Listening to them is one of the most important components in abuse prevention. As many survivors explain, “if you haven’t experienced it, it’s hard to understand.” This sentiment underscores the importance of asking survivors to lead and allowing their voices to be heard. So many of these “overcomers” understand all too well the dynamics of secrecy, shame, blame, loss, grief, reasons for delayed disclosures, grooming tactics, the misuse of power, deception, and so very much more. Survivors can be incredibly intuitive and are often the first to recognize the danger signs of abuse, and the church is therefore wise to listen to them.

³ Screening checks include a criminal background check, a references check, an interview, and checking publicly available sources as needed, including social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, etc. They should be developed with the assistance of law enforcement and child protection experts.

⁴ This should include minor on minor abuse. GRACE encourages LMPC to consider using Lauren Book’s Safer, Smarter Kids curriculum for teaching kids. This curriculum is from pre-K through 12th grade and meets Common Core standards.

- GRACE recommends that LMPC review the resources on the LMPC campus to be sure that resources exist for families impacted by all forms of abuse. This should include books⁵ and links to appropriate counseling in which a licensed clinician is able to provide evidence-based therapy and, within that setting, to also address the spiritual impact of all forms of abuse and misconduct.

⁵ E.g., Vieth, V. I. (2018). *On this Rock: A Call to Center the Christian Response to Child Abuse on the Life and Words of Jesus*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock.