



January 8, 2021

Dear LMPC,

On May 6, 2020, I wrote to you concerning an inquiry I received about possible past sexual abuse at LMPC. At that time, I informed you that we had subsequently contracted with GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in a Christian Environment) in October 2019 to conduct an independent investigation concerning sexual abuse allegations involving a former youth intern from the 1980s, Paul Warren. After that investigation began, on May 26, 2020, we worked with GRACE to broaden the scope of the investigation, based on new information revealed to them, to include reported sexual abuse in the 1970's by another LMPC college intern, Anthony (Tony) Marcano.

After a long and thorough investigation, we have received their findings. Our hearts are flooded with grief, but we are also fiercely determined, with God's help, to handle these findings with integrity and transparency. **In light of our commitment, we are sharing the full report at the link below.**

Though called an executive summary, please understand this is the only report we received from GRACE. Due to the graphic nature of the report, we ask that reader discretion be strongly considered and practiced and that parents encourage their children to refrain from reading the report.

We are thankful for the thoughtful and helpful recommendations from GRACE. Please know that we have received the recommendations with the seriousness they deserve and will be acting quickly to implement all of them. You can find their recommendations as well as our Session-approved plan of response for each recommendation at the link at the bottom of this letter.

Now, some words for specific groups of people impacted by this difficult report.

To the Survivors

Our deepest apology is to you. Before the face of God and according to his Word, sexual abuse in any form is abhorrent. The fact that your life has been shaped by trauma and wounds from the very ones who were to give you the truth and life of Jesus is deeply tragic and absolutely wrong. **As a church, we failed you.** We failed to protect, lead, heal, nurture, care for, and honor you according to the way and word of our Savior. For the ways in which we missed or ignored warning signs, **we are heartbroken.** For the ways in which we neglected your voice as you cried for help, **we deeply grieve.** For the ways in which we failed to follow through with wise and protective actions such as reporting and notification of authorities, **we are deeply troubled.** For those who have left the faith or lost faith because of how you were sinned against by those entrusted to help you, **I am eager and ready to listen to you at any time.**

Brian E. Salter | *Lead Pastor*

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To the survivors who participated in the investigation, thank you for your courage to walk into a very hard and emotional process. I simply cannot imagine the pain this process has unleashed in you and upon you. For those who were not comfortable sharing or participating in the investigation, we fully respect your decision. We desire to contact every known survivor of sexual misconduct by any LMPC representative, to listen to your story and to offer genuine repentance. As a church, we are willing to confidentially get you any help you need for healing. From the outset, we declared that this investigation is for you. Our prayer is that this arduous process will yield abundant redemption and healing for each of you. Our invitation to help you will remain open-ended. You can send an email to me at investigation@lmpc.org or call 423-821-4528. Your email will be seen only by me.

To the Outside Community

I apologize to our mountain community and to our city that these serious violations happened at our church. In our past, by hurting and manipulating the vulnerable people that God entrusted to us, we have failed to embody the hope that we profess. We stand resolved that this will never happen again. As Jesus has called us, we commit afresh to rightfully embodying him in the midst of a broken world by standing against abuse as evil, by welcoming with healing hope all who have been abused, and by offering shelter, protection, and refuge for the young and the vulnerable entrusted to us.

To the LMPC Community

A fellow pastor friend of mine said: "We are committed to promoting God's righteousness over our reputation." We will promote the advancement of righteousness no matter the cost to us. You may be led to believe that this is the end of this difficult process. Please understand - **this is just the beginning**. In the coming days, weeks, and years, we are firmly committed not only to addressing our past but also to addressing our present and the future. We have much work before us if we are to faithfully respond with righteousness and carry out the recommendations given to us by GRACE. As we go forward together, please do not be tempted to think that this process is unnecessary since these actions were a "long time ago." For abuse survivors, the abuse is **present now** no matter how long ago it occurred. We give thanks that God brought to our attention what sadly happened many years ago. We receive his rebuke and are hopeful for redemption. Together, let us remain humble, wise, tender, and vigilant.

To the Media

Our leadership has named me as the exclusive point person for all things media, so I am the only one free to comment. You may contact me directly on this issue at investigation@lmpc.org.

Please join in praying for the survivors and all those hurt by this situation. Once again, for anyone impacted by this investigative report or impacted by sexual abuse in any way at any time, I stand ready to listen as God enables me and to prayerfully be a healing agent in your life because of the hope of Jesus Christ.

Tearfully trusting in Jesus, our Redeemer,



Brian Salter
Lead Pastor