



May 6, 2020

Dear LMPC,

As a pastor, I find enormous delight in proclaiming the good news of Jesus. In these days of global pandemic, there is a lot of bad and sad news that is very hard for us all. Sadly, I write to you now with very hard news about the effects of sin in a broken world.

In June 2019, an inquiry concerning potential past sexual abuse by an individual previously associated with LMPC came to me. Immediately, I formed a small committee, which was soon approved by the Session, to investigate further. After careful internal investigation, we learned of multiple incidents of alleged abuse from a summer youth intern over 35 years ago who was also a volunteer during the school year. The alleged offender, whose name is Paul Warren, is now a member of a Presbytery in another state, within our denomination.

I was able to meet with the alleged victims to listen, to offer pastoral support, and to provide professional counseling assistance should they desire it. As is common among victims of abuse, they had never reported the abuse to anyone outside their circle, and they asked that I keep their identities confidential. I have honored their request.

Our Actions as a Result of the Meeting

- We immediately sought counsel as to our legal reporting requirements and followed the counsel we were given.
- We asked the alleged victims to give us a written report, and we submitted a summary of the abuse allegations to the alleged abuser's Presbytery.
- We contacted GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in a Christian Environment) to discuss next steps. In recent years, GRACE has worked with various Christian institutions and abuse survivors in addressing allegations regarding sexual misconduct and abuse. As a result of conversations with them, we contracted with them in early October to conduct an **independent** investigation. **That investigation is currently ongoing.** We are fully cooperating with GRACE in their investigation and are following their lead and advice on any further steps we need to take.

Three Primary Goals of the Investigation

1. to discover if there were any more alleged victims;
2. to decipher what, if anything, the church leadership knew at that time and determine if it acted upon any knowledge; and
3. to give a report to the alleged abuser's Presbytery.

Our Commitments

As always, our deepest commitment is to glorify God as we seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness. We believe the best way to glorify God in this is to have our **primary commitment** to be the care of the alleged victims. We want to fully acknowledge what happened over 35 years ago, and to express sorrow for these incidents and contrition toward the victims and their families. Before the face of God and according to his Word, sexual abuse in any form is unacceptable. We want to say, to any and all victims of any and all sexual abuse: we grieve with you.

Second, we are committed to discovering what we may not know for the sake of redemption and healing. Therefore, we invite anyone who may have been sexually abused at LMPC, or anyone who has information regarding such abuse at LMPC to contact GRACE in confidence. **The investigation is being led by Danielle O'Malley with GRACE and she can be reached directly at danielle@netgrace.org. You can also contact her associate on this case, Larry Shorter, at larry@netgrace.org. Please be assured that any contact with these two individuals would remain completely confidential.**

Finally, if we discover that church leadership at the time of the abuse was aware and did not act, we are committed to confess and repent publicly. Please do be assured that no current or recent staff members were previously aware of the alleged abuse or the alleged abuser.

Our Current Child Protection Policy

We want to reassure you that our current Child Protection Policy is rigorous, and that any changes we make to it will only strengthen it further. Our Child Protection Policy has been in place for over 20 years and is updated almost annually. At our request, GRACE reviewed our current policy, and we have already begun the process of making improvements based upon their review. Please know that we consider it one of our greatest callings to make every effort possible to ensure the safety of minors while they are in our care.

Questions and Concerns

We understand that this letter will probably raise many questions. In that light, we have scheduled a **Town Hall Meeting on May 17, 2020, at 4:00 p.m.** which we will hold virtually via the digital platform Zoom. You will soon receive an email with a registration link for the Zoom meeting. Throughout this process, I (Brian Salter) will be your **only** point of contact. However, please understand that until the independent investigation is complete, we will be very limited in information that we are able to share, and we will always protect the alleged victims in every way, including their request for complete confidentiality. Please also know that we will hold a follow-up, in-person meeting after the investigation is complete and after we are able to meet publicly. You will be able to ask any questions you may have at this meeting.

Our Hope and Need

I know that the weeks and months ahead will be challenging for our church family, but our God is a strong refuge and risen Redeemer. He will hold us fast! Together may we rest in his loving, sovereign care and also trust in his powerful, redeeming work.

Please make a commitment to pray faithfully and consistently for this difficult process. Pray for healing, repentance, justice, wisdom, and discernment. Through this turbulent storm, may God grant us strength to live by faith, with hope, and in love because of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Tearfully and prayerfully,



Brian