

Central Church of Christ
2052 North Church Street Place
Spartanburg, SC 29303
November 2, 2018

Dear Central Church Family,

In recent days it has come to our attention that in the late 1970's an intern employed by our congregation had inappropriate and sexually abusive physical contact with two minor children of families belonging to our church. We appreciate the courage of the one who informed the leaders of this. We want to inform you about what we know and what we are doing.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- In addition to one who came to the leaders, one other person has come forward, via social media, to state that the same intern, while employed at Central, similarly abused them.
- Both of these abusive acts reported to us can be described as "forced, inappropriate and illegal touching" and were carried out at locations other than at Central. Yet clearly, these are acts of sexual abuse of a minor, actions severely condemned by God and not to be tolerated in any form by the church.
- The intern served for less than 2 years in the late 1970's (1976-1977) and soon after moved to another state.
- We are currently unaware of any other accusations of this nature during this intern's time at Central. However, many additional accusations of abuse perpetrated by this individual have lately been reported where the person now lives. Additionally, the individual's family has confirmed that this person has recently admitted guilt in many of these matters.
- We are greatly grieved that even one such abuse ever took place. While we have no reason to believe anyone in leadership or membership of Central at that time had any idea it had occurred, and this happened over 40 years ago, it is still a reason for "tears, sorrow and deep grief" (James 4:9) for us all.

WHAT WE ARE DOING:

- We want you to be certain of the priority we place on and the concerted effort we give to ensuring the safety and security of all people at Central, especially our children and our youth.
- We have strong safety and security policies at Central. They include required background checks on any who teach, co-teach or lead our children's classes and activities, a minimum of two adults at all times with children, windows on classroom doors, and many other security provisions. We built the Perry-Hortman building with safety and security as a top priority.
- On Sunday, January 20, 2019, we plan to host a Children & Youth Safety & Security Seminar following worship. We will discuss additional safety policies for us and also share information aimed at helping our parents teach and equip their children to be safer in all areas of their lives.

TO ANY VICTIMS:

Our deepest apology is reserved for you. We have prayerfully wept on multiple occasions at the thought of any child or teen being attacked. We are so sorry. We want to say, to any and all victims of any and all sexual abuse, we grieve with you. We also pray the current investigation carried out by law enforcement will insure that this individual will never be in a position to inflict abuse on anyone ever again. We are grateful to the ones who have come forward now and pray for your healing. Again, we are so sorry.

If anyone has any questions on this matter, please feel free to discuss it with one of the Central elders.

Thank you for your prayers for all of us and all involved.

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