



March 17, 2023

## DEAR MENLO CHURCH,

Over the course of the past few years we have all experienced very difficult challenges and learning to navigate them with grace and truth has been a necessary growth step both individually and for us as a church. We have worked hard to draw a big circle around our kids to make sure that our kids and student ministry environments are the safest places in all the communities that we serve.

Three years ago a thorough investigation into our practices for caring for the next generation was conducted and we have been implementing these changes to help us move forward as a community ever since. During the investigation, it became evident that several instances of abuse from decades earlier had not been addressed in a way that honored the survivors at the time. While staff members were removed from ministerial and other roles at the time, there are still hurts and wounds that remain open and need healing.

When I arrived a couple of months ago, a few of the survivors reached out, and we began a correspondence in an attempt to start a dialogue about the best way to hear from those impacted by the abuse and take the necessary steps to bring truth to light in the process. We are still corresponding, and I hope that this note serves as a way for our whole community to grieve and pray for this group of survivors who have been brave enough to come forward.

The conversation will be ongoing and will hopefully include a mediated conversation for those survivors who are interested in that step and how we can learn from it today. We are also making funds available for care and counseling for these survivors moving forward.

In case you are new or newer to our community, I'm including some of the steps we have taken so far to ensure the safety of our kids and students, as well as some further steps we are taking based on these conversations.

Grace and peace,

Phil

### **Policy Publication and Implementation -**

- Below you will find the reports that were produced from the most recent investigation as well as the ethical misconduct policy and the current state of implementation of those recommendations.
  - [Zero Abuse Report](#)
  - [Zero Abuse Progress](#)
  - [Ethical Misconduct Policy](#)
- We will establish a team to help us update employment contracts at Menlo Church to more clearly communicate the reasons for termination in the event that Child Safety Policies are violated as well as our ability to communicate the details of past abuse.

### **Abuse Reporting Path -**

- All Menlo Church staff including Elders have received extensive child abuse training and are mandated reporters as well as all volunteers that serve with kids and students.
- We have set up an email address for any other survivors or concerned congregants to directly send their concerns to. This email is monitored by Zero Abuse.
  - [menlo@zeroabuseproject.org](mailto:menlo@zeroabuseproject.org)

### **Survivor Counseling Fund -**

- We are making financial resources available for survivors of this abuse at Menlo to pursue care and counseling. To learn more and access these counseling referrals and resources please email . [care@menlo.church](mailto:care@menlo.church)

### **Zero Abuse Project Information -**

- [Zero Abuse Project](#) is a non-profit organization that works to protect children from abuse and sexual assault by engaging people and resources through trauma-informed education, research, advocacy, and advanced technology.
- Zero Abuse conducted a previous assessment for Menlo Church and made a number of recommendations. As part of that work, Zero Abuse created a dedicated e-mail address ([menlo@zeroabuseproject.org](mailto:menlo@zeroabuseproject.org)) for those wishing to contact the organization with relevant information without going through Menlo. At our request, Zero Abuse has agreed to keep this e-mail address open.
- Zero Abuse will not share any information received with Menlo unless the party communicating with Zero Abuse specifically authorizes them to do so. However, if Zero Abuse Project receives a disclosure of child abuse the organization will notify law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.