

## DEAR MENLO CHURCH FAMILY,

Today, [Zero Abuse Project](#), an independent third party, published its final report with findings from the supplemental investigation and recommendations for Menlo Church. Zero Abuse spent months fact finding, investigating leads, and conducting over one hundred interviews, and we have much to learn from the report. We encourage you to read the [full report](#) for yourself and to see the recommendations and conclusions. Once you review it, we know you will have questions about the report and how Menlo Church will address the recommendations. Please note that our staff are receiving the report at the same time as the rest of our church, and staff will need time to read and reflect.

To answer questions and discuss the report as a church family, this Sunday, October 17 at 1pm, we will have an online Town Hall. Please join us by [using this link to log on](#). This is the start of a conversation we will be having in the months to come. We will not be presenting any summaries, the report should speak for itself. Please come with questions from reading the report. We also know that this report may surface pain and we want to let you know that [Monte Fisher](#), our Associate Director of Healing and Recovery, is available to offer support, guidance, and resources.

Most significantly, the investigation by Zero Abuse Project concluded that they found no disclosure or other direct evidence of child sexual abuse by the volunteer in question. While this is welcome news, these events have put a divisive strain on all involved. During this process, our leadership has learned a lot about the need to prioritize compassionate discernment, as well as about the importance of listening with care. Moving forward, our desire is to grow from our mistakes, to continually improve our processes based on best practices, to find resolution with truth and grace, and to pray for healing as we enter a new chapter together.

We thank the Zero Abuse organization for their passion, expertise, and thoroughness in this investigation. We thank our Students and Kids ministry teams for their tremendous work under incredibly complex and difficult circumstances, while conducting themselves with the utmost professionalism and love during the course of this investigation. We also thank the Supplemental Investigation Advisory Committee ([SIAC](#)) for their volunteer service as they worked with staff, Session, and Zero Abuse to ensure the investigation was thorough and unbiased.

This report will help move us to the next stage of restoration and continued discernment to ensure that Menlo is a safe environment for kids and students to know the love of Jesus. We take the safety of all, especially of our children, as our sacred duty. We know that you entrust us with your children in faith and we take that responsibility prayerfully and seriously. We are tremendously thankful for the dedicated and loving volunteers in our programs as they pour their love of God and knowledge of scripture into our children, adding to their foundation. While we have had a robust vetting process for

our volunteers in place, in the last two years, we have added steps to improve the safety of our children:

- We have scheduled a mandatory two-day staff training with Zero Abuse employees, which will delve into recognizing and preventing abuse. This training will take place in Spring 2022 and will complement the [Parents and Caregivers Seminar](#) we had in March 2021.
- We now run background checks on our volunteers every two years instead of every three.
- We now require every member of our staff complete mandated reporter training, with renewal every other year.
- Last summer, we implemented a new data management system that allows our staff to better vet and onboard new volunteers.

In addition to measures already taken to improve the safety of kids and students in our care, as leaders, we are committed to reviewing and evaluating all of the report's recommendations. Please note that if you would like to contact Zero Abuse directly, they have generously offered to keep their dedicated email available for another month, so you can reach them at [menlo@zeroabuseproject.org](mailto:menlo@zeroabuseproject.org).

These last two years have demonstrated that we are all fallible, that even when we prayerfully seek to follow God, we fall short. We acknowledge that how we handled different aspects of the process damaged trust with many. While prayerfully deliberating and resting in the counsel of God and others, as called overseers and leaders of Menlo Church, we missed the mark in communications, listening well, and prioritizing the welfare of our church family as a whole. We are sorry. You expect more and we will learn together and strive to be our best selves for God's church. These have been trying times for all who are victims of abuse and those who have suffered with them, for many of our congregation and staff, and for the extended Ortberg and Lavery families. We mourn the hurt we have caused, and we hope the completion and findings of this investigation are the next steps in a healing journey.

Our prayer is that God will work through us and this process so that we can model Christ's compassion and that Menlo Church can be a place of healing for the broken. May this also be an opportunity to seek forgiveness, restoration, and unity. God hurts when we hurt and God rejoices when only through his grace and spirit, there is true humble repentance and reconciliation. Moving forward, may we keep our eyes on Jesus and his great plan for his church in the Bay Area and beyond, so that the world experiences the church as a place of acceptance, love, compassion, and healing – even in our differences and hurts, united by our shared love of Christ.

In prayer with you,

**JOHN CROSBY, TRANSITIONAL PASTOR**  
**DAVID KIM, SESSION CHAIR**

