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# GRACE CHURCH IN NEW YORK

802 BROADWAY NEW YORK, NY 10003 (212) 254 - 2000

January 14, 2020

Dear Grace Church Community,

We are writing to update you on the latest developments regarding Grace Church's response to a report of sexual abuse by a former lay employee during the 1990s.

As you may recall from our [October 2<sup>nd</sup> message](#) to the community, the former parishioner, who at the time was a student at Grace Church School, notified the Church, the School, and the Episcopal Diocese of New York of these allegations in a letter in September. He has since filed a lawsuit against the Church, the School, and the Diocese, naming former Choirmaster Bruce McInnes as his abuser, and alleging that all three entities failed to protect him. The description of the abuse outlined in the lawsuit is deeply disturbing, and we are committed to gaining a full understanding of the facts as they relate to the abuse and what information may have been known by the Church and School in the 1990s.

As was shared with you in the October letter, we engaged child protection professionals from Cozen O'Connor to conduct an external investigation to gather the facts in this matter in a trauma-informed, sensitive and impartial manner. In accordance with best practices for such investigations, Senior Warden of Grace Church Leona Chamberlin, and Head of School George Davison voluntarily recused themselves from any oversight of the investigative process, as both held leadership positions at the School during the time period in question. Cozen O'Connor has sought to interview former students, parents, Church and School employees, Vestry members, and others who may have information relevant to the review.

Cozen O'Connor's investigation will help us determine what happened, whether or not any others were abused, and what decisions were made and actions taken based on information available at the time. At the completion of the review, the Vestry will then consider next steps, including a response to the lawsuit and a report to the Church community.

To ensure the investigation is as comprehensive as possible, once again we ask anyone with information about potential sexual abuse or misconduct involving Church or School employees – whether occurring during the years from 1992 through 1999 when McInnes was employed at the Church, or at any other time – to contact Leslie Gomez at Cozen O'Connor ([lgomez@cozen.com](mailto:lgomez@cozen.com) or 215-665-5546), or the Rev. J. Donald Waring at the Church ([dwarding@gracechurchnyc.org](mailto:dwarding@gracechurchnyc.org), 212-254-2000 x127). You also may contact [child protective services](#) or local law enforcement to report potential criminal conduct.

Our highest duty is to maintain a safe environment for everyone who comes through our doors. Nothing is more important. While the alleged abuse in this case ended long ago, we want to assure both Church and School communities that safeguards are in place to detect and prevent predatory behaviors, including protocols and reporting systems, background

checks for all new hires, and training that exceeds what is currently mandated by law. We strive to maintain the best practices from across the nation's churches and schools to uphold our commitment to the safety of all.

We are heartbroken by the allegation that a person suffered abuse while entrusted to our care. We are committed to understanding what transpired and to addressing forthrightly any situation in which we failed to fulfill our sacred responsibility.

We will continue to share information as promptly and fully as we are able. In the meantime, if you have questions or concerns, please reach out to us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Donald Waring". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

The Rev. J. Donald Waring  
Rector

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen R. Boger". The signature is cursive and somewhat compact, with a large initial "O" and a distinct "B" and "G".

Owen R. Boger  
Warden of Grace Church