



GRACE CHURCH IN NEW YORK

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

October 2, 2019

Dear Grace Church Community,

We recently received a letter on behalf of a former Grace Church School student who was also active at Grace Church. Addressed to us, as well to Grace Church School and the Episcopal Diocese of New York, the letter outlines serious allegations of sexual abuse by a former Grace Church lay (i.e., non-clergy) employee. The abuse is reported to have occurred between 1992 and 2000, at church and school premises and elsewhere. The former Grace Church employee left the employ of the Church before 2000.

It is our highest duty to ensure the safety of everyone in this community, both Church and School. We are deeply concerned about the welfare of students past and present, and we are responding to this sobering information in a manner true to the values of our Christian Faith. Our first priority is for the well-being of the former student. Our immediate next priority is determining whether other individuals may have experienced abuse similar to the recent report.

We have convened a team of leaders from both Church and School, and in addition to our respective legal counsels we have engaged trusted outside experts to support us. We have also retained Gina Maisto Smith and Leslie M. Gomez, co-chairs of the Cozen O'Connor Institutional Response Group, to conduct an external, sensitive and expeditious investigation into the reported conduct. Smith and Gomez are both child protection professionals who work closely with institutions to promote the safety and welfare of their constituents.

Toward that end, we ask that if you have information about possible sexual abuse involving Grace Church parishioners and employees — whether occurring between 1992 and 2000 or at any other time — we encourage you to contact Leslie Gomez at Cozen O'Connor (lgomez@cozen.com or 215-665-5546) or the Rev. J. Donald Waring at Grace Church (dwarding@gracechurchnyc.org or 212-254-2000, ext. 127). We will safeguard the privacy of any information you share, consistent with our obligation under state law to report suspected abuse or neglect of a minor. You may also contact [child protective services](#) or local law enforcement to report potential criminal conduct.

While the conduct reported occurred nearly 20 years ago, we are keenly aware that sexual abuse can have lasting impacts for the individuals involved. We also are aware that in today's climate disturbing information, even when historical, can impact everyone's current sense of safety. We wish to assure you that in recent years both the Church and the School have put in place a number of safeguards – training, protocols, reporting systems – to protect everyone on campus.

We are sure that you have questions, and we wish we could provide more answers. Out of respect for the privacy of the former student and the need to allow Cozen O'Connor to complete their investigation, we won't be able to provide further comment at this time. But we will do our best to provide updates on developments as we are able.

With gratitude for your patience and understanding,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Donald Waring". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

The Rev. J. Donald Waring
Rector

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leona Chamberlin". The signature is clear and legible, with a distinct "L" and "C".

Leona Chamberlin
Senior Warden