

August 2, 2012

An Important Message from the Senior Pastor

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to you today to inform you of a situation and the steps our church has taken to ensure the safety of our children. On Tuesday, July 31st an article appeared on WRAL's home page concerning one of our members, Don Cameron. He was convicted in 2007 on charges of "indecent liberty (towards a) minor" for inappropriately touching young girls.

Don began attending our church in 2008 after serving eight months in prison. Within weeks of attending he came to me to share his history.

After consulting with our staff, Leadership Council, his previous church, and an attorney we decided to allow Don to attend and eventually join our church. We set very clear parameters to ensure the safety of our children. Don is not allowed to serve in any capacity within the children's ministry or youth ministry, sit next to children in the service, or enter areas of the building alone where children or youth ministries are active. In addition he met regularly with a staff member for accountability and gave me access to his counselor and parole officer. During these past years our pastoral staff, several support staff, several Leadership Council members, a few members of our congregation, as well as a few key members of the children's ministry team were made aware of this situation to ensure that Don was honoring the parameters set for him. All agree that Don has kept to these parameters.

In addition, we have worked hard to strengthen church-wide safety policies that guard against the possibility of any abuses, especially among our children and students. This includes a two-worker policy for all classrooms and nurseries, a system to ensure that no child is vulnerable in the bathrooms, a pager system, child and student check-in (which is being further upgraded with electronic check-in coming this Fall), background checks for all who work with children and students, and child/student safety training.

We hope that we have been faithful to the clear commands of Scripture to both welcome sinners with grace into our fellowship and to ensure the care and safety of the children within our congregation. I will be available this Sunday at 5:00 in the sanctuary to answer any questions or concerns any of you may have.

With you in the Grace and Truth of Jesus,

Patrick