



GRACE CHURCH IN NEW YORK

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March 29, 2022

Dear Members and Friends of Grace Church,

In previous letters since the fall of 2019, we have shared with you the reports from former choristers of Grace Church and students of Grace Church School that they were sexually abused in the 1990s by then-Choirmaster Bruce McInnes. In response to the first such report, the Church and School commissioned child protection professionals at the law firm Cozen O'Connor to conduct an external investigation and urged anyone who experienced such abuse—or may have information to share—to report it to the investigators.

In all, five former choristers filed lawsuits arising from the 2019 New York Child Victims Act against the Church, the School, and the Episcopal Diocese of New York, asserting that all three institutions failed to protect them from McInnes's predatory behavior. As of January, all five cases against the Church and the School alleging abuse by McInnes have been settled through mediation and resolved. We were committed to doing this as quickly and sensitively as possible so these former choristers could put the legal process behind them and focus on healing and reconciliation.

In addition to helping us care for the survivors, we looked to Cozen O'Connor to provide us with a full and independent understanding of the circumstances that contributed to the Church's failure to protect them. And so, consistent with our commitment to full transparency, we are sharing the final report of the Cozen O'Connor [External Investigation](#) and its [Executive Summary](#).

The report sets forth a difficult and heartbreaking set of circumstances, including serious missteps and mistakes made by the Church and School that contravene the moral and spiritual principles of our faith. As Cozen O'Connor carried out the investigation, we instructed them to reach out to all former Boys' and Girls' Choir members during McInnes's tenure. The final report was based on direct conversations with 58 individuals, including 24 members of the Boys' Choir under McInnes, and available contemporaneous documents, including documents maintained by the Church, its former Wardens, outside legal counsel, and by the School. In addition to the five individuals who brought lawsuits, the report references three other former students who experienced misconduct by McInnes.

For over 200 years, the mission of Grace Church has involved the promotion of health and wholeness in all people within our reach. The report reveals an inexcusable failure of Church leaders at that time to protect children in their care and to live up to the high values of our Christian faith and abide by its guiding principles. We are profoundly saddened by what we have learned. On behalf of Grace Church, we offer our deepest apologies to the survivors of McInnes's abuse and their loved ones. We owe a debt of gratitude to the courageous individuals who stepped forward, and to the many others in our community who assisted in the investigation.

We are committed to ensuring that no child or adult is subjected to this or any kind of abuse. In the thirty years since these terrible events began, much has changed at both the Church and the School. Over time, numerous safeguards, policies, and protocols have been instituted to ensure the safety of choristers, students, and everyone in the Grace Church community. These measures include more rigorous vetting of all potential employees, mandatory ongoing training for all clergy, staff, and youth leaders, and additional security cameras throughout the campus. Also, we have implemented a new, [direct reporting](#) mechanism on our website that everyone in the congregation can use—confidentially if they so choose—to report concerns of any kind.

In addition, to ensure that we are doing all we can in this regard, the Church and School formed an external review committee to conduct an assessment of our policies on sexual misconduct and harassment. The External Review Committee was composed of five independent professionals with expertise in church safety, school safety, parenting, physical plant security, and the survivor experience. The Vestry and School Trustees charged the [External Review Committee](#) with broad latitude to examine the policies, culture, and systems of accountability relating to sexual misconduct and harassment currently in place at the Church and School. Today we are sharing the report of the External Review Committee in addition to the Cozen O'Connor report. We have already made progress in acting on the recommendations of the External Review Committee and will continue to implement improvements, both independently and jointly with the School, in order to ensure the safety and well-being of our community members, present and future.

Finally, though the McInnes cases have been resolved from a legal standpoint, we understand that the legacy of his deplorable behavior may be ongoing in the lives of former choristers and their families. If you have pastoral needs in this regard, or related to any other instance of abuse at Grace Church, we encourage you to be in touch with the Rev. J. Donald Waring (dwarling@gracechurchnyc.org or 212-254-2000). We are also providing the contact information of our lead investigator Leslie Gomez at Cozen O'Connor (lgomez@cozen.com or 215-665-5546) should anyone have additional information to share.

May God bring peace and healing to all.

Sincerely,



The Rev. J. Donald Waring
Rector



Owen R. Boger
Warden of Grace Church