

September 2022 Statement of WLGBC related to Don Ogden

In March of 1993, our church family was shocked to learn that Don Ogden had been arrested in Kansas and accused of sexual misconduct. Upon learning about this, church leadership immediately and permanently relieved Don of his part-time ministry position at the Winona Lake Grace Brethren Church and commenced a discipline and restoration process that lasted over a year and included a public confession. At the time it was thought that this confession was accurate and complete.

Almost three decades later, a family member of Don informed the church that Don may have hidden a wider pattern of inappropriate sexual behavior. Upon learning of this, the current leadership of the church was concerned at even the prospect of anyone having been abused sexually by someone who had been employed by the church. In response to these allegations, the church took the following actions.

Church leadership made a public statement, verbally and by email, to the church family which included:

- An acknowledgment that Don's confession was not, as previously believed, accurate and complete, as well as regret that the discipline and restoration process in 1993 had not been more thorough.
- The offer of professional Christian counseling, anonymously and at our cost, to anyone who might have been abused or impacted by Don in his function as music minister at the church.
- An explanation of the third-party investigation initiated by Grace College and a plea to anyone who knew anything to talk with the investigator.

The public statement was followed up with a mailing to all former male church members who had participated in music ministry during Don's tenure, communicating these same things.

Church leadership supported and cooperated with the formal, third-party investigation initiated by Grace College. The church also determined to initiate a separate and parallel third-party investigation if the existing investigation surfaced any information connected to the church.

To date, none of these efforts has resulted in any evidence pointing to victims at the church in relation to Don's function as part-time minister of music. Nevertheless, the church continues to offer help—professional, anonymous, and at our cost—to anyone who might have been impacted by Don in his capacity as part-time music minister at WLGBBC.

WLGBBC is committed to supporting victims of sexual abuse by calling sexual abuse what it is: reprehensible, inexcusable, and deserving of punishment from both civil and church authorities. We will never knowingly harbor or cover up for a perpetrator of sexual abuse. We are committed to providing courage to victims of abuse by creating safe ways for them to disclose abuse without fearing that they will be dismissed, disbelieved, shamed, or blamed. We review our policies and procedures on a regular basis in order to ensure that abuse of any kind cannot take place in the context of church ministries.

WLGBBC