

Mississippi church commits to 'more thorough response' for 1980s abuse case

MADISON, Miss. (BP) – In speaking to worshippers at Broadmoor Church Oct. 30, lead pastor Josh Braddy presented several action steps toward addressing a decades-old case of sexual abuse to which he and other church leaders believe “a more thorough response was warranted.”

The case centers around a former member of Broadmoor’s youth group who approached church leaders recently over abuse she suffered from the youth minister during the 1980s. Allegations include abuse and inaction by staff.

Current church leadership has committed itself to investigating the charges, updating current policies and procedures, and if need be assisting in the survivor’s legal defense should there be a lawsuit brought over violating a non-disclosure agreement with the alleged perpetrator.

“Many times we ask ourselves, ‘What in the world, God, do you want from me?’” Braddy said toward the end the morning worship service. “I always go to one verse that leads me to that place.

“It’s from the prophet Micah. He says, ‘Man, you have been told what the Lord requires of you. It is to do justice. It is to love mercy. And it is to walk humbly with your God.’ Today, I want to do that before you.”

In 1982, Braddy said, 28-year-old married father David Ingram joined the church as youth pastor. Ingram served in that role until 1988, with his family remaining “active and engaged” members of Broadmoor until he was called to be the lead pastor of a nearby church in 2010.

“As a church family, we loved David, his wife, and his children, and we still do,” said Braddy.

The survivor approached a former Broadmoor pastor shortly after Ingram was no longer the youth minister over the case and again in 2019 for assistance in warning Ingram’s church over the abuse. It is unclear, Braddy said, if any steps were taken beyond the former pastor expressing “acknowledgement and grief.”

“We recognize that this journey will be full of grief, and that many of you may also feel anger, confusion, loss, and many other emotions,” Braddy said. “Our church family has strong relationships with both the survivor’s family and David’s and the wounds are and will be deep.”

Acknowledging that the news would bring “an intensely painful time” for those in the congregation who have also experienced abuse, Braddy announced several steps.

- An independent third-party firm will conduct a thorough investigation and assessment related to the allegations. That process will include a “factual examination” of the allegations, assessments of Broadmoor’s policies and procedures at the time of the abuse, and how those procedures could have allowed the abuse to take place.

The assessments will extend to “pastoral responses over the relevant time frames” and current church culture, policies, and procedures.

- Local counselors, Braddy announced, will also be working with Broadmoor to provide safe places where church members could process emotions and questions that may arise. A list of resources was included in a full statement available on the church’s website.

According to the survivor, Ingram began grooming her when she was 12 and abusing her when she was 15. The abuse, she said,

continued for several years. Multiple witnesses corroborated the survivor's allegations as presented to them over the years.

At one point, the survivor and her husband – alongside two counselors – confronted Ingram and his wife in person with a letter detailing the abuse.

The statement specifies that both counselors confirmed with church leadership that Ingram offered “a non-specific apology” while not attempting “to refute or deny anything presented to him in that meeting.”

Further documentation received by the church showed that Ingram assisted in covering therapy and medical costs for the survivor. A “sizeable portion” of those payments were made only after the survivor agreed to a non-disclosure agreement, which prohibited her or her husband from speaking further of the matter.

“We have communicated to both the survivor and David that should David choose to pursue a lawsuit against her for breaching the NDA and tell us her story, Broadmoor will assist in her defense, including a willingness to reimburse certain costs,” Braddy announced yesterday.

The church has reached out to Ingram and spoken to members of his family. Ingram's attorney has delivered a response denying the allegations in their entirety.

As the service concluded, Braddy urged people to remember that others have suffered from abuse and to guide them to the resources being provided by the church.

“This is a tragic part of our story,” he said, “and we need to learn how to thoroughly engage it.”