

To: Church and Community Members  
From: Pastor Brenson Jennings  
Date: February 14, 2025  
Subject: Response to Claims

A number of claims have been publicly made about Crooked Creek Baptist Church (“CCBC” or “Church”) regarding the Church’s response to child abuse allegations and criminal charges against a young adult Church member (“the accused”). The purpose of this memo is to provide accurate information on behalf of the Church and to respond to certain claims as set forth below.

The Church cares deeply for victims of abuse of any kind, especially children. Jesus loves children. Jesus said that anyone who harms a child will be accountable to Him and warns of His judgement upon those who offend the little ones.

Church leadership is aware of the criminal charges filed in court and the allegations brought by advocates for the young child. The accused strongly maintains he is innocent. Advocates for the young child strongly maintain the accused is guilty. The court released him on bail shortly after his arrest pending trial. The Church is awaiting the results of the court trial and prays that the full truth will come out, regardless of what it is.

The Church understands that at the time of the alleged offense(s) in 2022, the accused was approximately 17 years old and the alleged female victim was around 3 years old. No incident is alleged to have occurred at the Church, or because of a relationship established or maintained by the Church. On October 3, 2022, the accused was arrested. On October 9, 2022, after a regularly scheduled service, Church leadership publicly informed Church members of the arrest/sexual abuse allegations. On October 12, 2022, the court released the accused on bail. The court imposed three conditions for his release: 1) no contact with the alleged child victim or her parents; 2) no unsupervised contact with minors; 3) and obey all other laws.

Neither the alleged child victim nor her parents are members of or attend the Church. The Church has established and enforces the following restrictions permitting attendance by the accused at Church services:

- a. He is not allowed to work with Church children or youth in any way.
- b. He is not allowed to be in the children’s hall or in any children’s classrooms at the Church.
- c. He is not allowed to lead, teach, or preach at the Church or participate in the choir.
- d. He is not allowed to be alone while on the campus of the Church and must be accompanied by a Church-designated person at all times.
- e. He must sit within the sound booth or in a designated row where he can be supervised during the service.
- f. He must use only the single-user half-bath restroom at Church, while a supervisor waits outside.

A core tenet of the American legal system is the concept that a person facing criminal charges is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt before a jury of his peers. Cases are not tried in print media or on social media. The legal process must be respected. Given the serious nature of the allegations, the Church has placed restrictions on the accused, so that membership and attendees can be assured that their children are protected while the charges are pending, and so that the accused might comply with court orders while attending worship services and receiving spiritual care.

This situation is heart-breaking from every angle. The alleged victim is very young. The accused young man is the brother of the alleged victim’s mother; the son of a church elder; and has attended the church since he himself was a child. As a local body of Christian believers, we have a responsibility to seek justice and mercy, walking humbly with our God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Church leadership seeks always to be truthful and transparent. The Church reiterates that we have nothing to hide, and we hope that this statement puts to rest false claims that have been made.

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### **Other General Claims**

**Claim 1:** “The Church is harboring and protecting a child abuser and does not care about the victim.”

**Response:** The Church cares about everyone involved in this situation. The Church has been truthful and transparent about the charges against the accused. There is no cover-up or hiding of any information regarding the charges or arrest of the accused. Pastor Jennings communicated to the accused the clearly defined restrictions governing the presence of the accused on Church property. The security team and congregation were notified of these restrictions. The Church takes these allegations very seriously and we do not minimize the severity of the allegations or charges. Our prayer and public statement from the beginning is only for the truth to prevail. We have cooperated with authorities and await the trial date and are praying for all involved.

**Witnesses:** Multiple

**Claim 2:** “The pastor knew about the charges and allowed him to supervise as a chaperone on Church field trips with young children.”

**Response:** This statement is absolutely false. At no time following his arrest has he been a part of children’s field trips or any church ministry involving children.

**Witnesses:** Multiple

**Claim 3:** “The accused is working with children at the Church.”

**Response:** The accused has not worked with children at the Church since his arrest and did not work with children unsupervised prior to his arrest.

**Witnesses:** Multiple

**Claim 4:** “The accused is in leadership at the Church.”

**Response:** The accused has not been in any form of Church leadership since his arrest.

**Witnesses:** Multiple

**Claim 5:** “Pastor Jennings is not open to hearing people’s concerns or questions.”

**Response:** Pastor Jennings has always been open to hearing from Church members or attendees regarding what measures the Church is taking to ensure that every worshipper is safe in this situation.

**Witnesses:** Multiple

**Claim 6:** “Pastor Jennings has turned a blind eye to the allegations made against the accused.”

**Response:** Pastor Jennings has not turned a blind eye to the allegations against the accused. As stated above, the pastor and the Church take the charges very seriously.

**Witnesses:** Multiple

**Claim 7:** “The Church withholds information from new members regarding the accused.”

**Response:** Pastor Jennings informs each person considering membership that child sexual abuse allegations have been made against the accused (**identifying the accused by name**) and informs them that a trial has yet to take place. The charges against the accused are publicly available. The Church communicates to each person considering membership the restrictions that are placed upon the accused while he is on campus.

**Witnesses:** Multiple

Our prayer and desire is for truth and justice to prevail and that God’s mercy will bring healing and hope to the brokenhearted. We will continue to pray for all who are involved in this difficult situation