



Dear Members of Severns Valley Baptist Church,

At its 2021 Annual Meeting, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) messengers representing the over-47,000 SBC churches voted overwhelmingly to create a Sexual Abuse Task Force (SATF) and to authorize an independent investigation by Guidepost Solutions of the SBC's Executive Committee's response (or lack of response) to and handling (or mishandling) of sex abuse allegations within the SBC. The report of the SATF resulting from the independent investigation was released Sunday, May 22, 2022. A link to the summary and the full report is provided here:

<https://www.sataskforce.net/updates/guidepost-solutions-report-of-the-independent-investigation>

Like many of you, we were recently made aware of the findings of the SATF charged with looking into allegations of the mishandling of sexual abuse within the SBC. We are heartbroken, angered, and in a state of lament as we hear more and more stories of the failures and fallout. We pledge our accountability, authenticity, and transparency to you and commit to taking any and all allegations seriously. Severns Valley unequivocally stands to be a safe place for all men, women, boys, and girls who attend and visit our church. We advocate for and pray diligently for victims and survivors of abuse and we commit to being a place of help, healing, and hope.

In light of all this, we want you to know these things.

1. Severns Valley continues to be committed to providing the safest environment possible for men, women, boys, and girls who attend and visit our church. Severns Valley has, for many years, followed stringent protocols for background checks, mandated two-person rules in children's and student ministries, and selected and trained a robust security team. We strive to be a hard target for any threat of sexual abuse. The SATF report is a call to constantly review, update and strengthen our own policies to ensure that Severns Valley is safe and welcoming to all people.
2. The leadership of Severns Valley resolves and commits to take any allegation of sexual abuse seriously and to treat those reporting abuse with care and concern. We will treat sexual abuse as the sin and crime that it is and investigate and report it. We will continue to have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual abuse.
3. We will continue to pray and advocate for the victims and survivors of abuse revealed in the SATF Report. We will pray for God to lift up and sustain Godly men and women, both at Severns Valley and in the larger SBC, to be bold and Christ-like as we continue to prevent, expose and address the evil and sin of sexual abuse.

Yours in Christ,

The Pastors, Staff and Church Council of Severns Valley Baptist Church