



SAINT  
ANDREW'S  
CHAPEL

March 20, 2026

Dear Members of Saint Andrew's Chapel,

The Session of Saint Andrew's Chapel writes to you in response to statements published on social media in recent days. We understand that many of you have questions, and we believe you deserve a clear explanation of what has occurred. We offer this statement in a spirit of pastoral care, not controversy, and ask that you receive it with that same spirit.

In 2024, members of a former family of the church began openly showing hostility toward Pastor Stephen Adams. It's important for our congregation to understand how the Session first became aware of this: Pastor Adams himself reported it. This is a key point: the former members never voluntarily approached church leadership or filed any complaints with civil authorities themselves. It was Pastor Adams—the person experiencing the hostility—who brought the matter to the elders and law enforcement.

Elders met with the former members multiple times in a sincere effort to understand their concerns. It's also important to note that during these meetings, the former members showed no indication that their concerns involved anything of a sexual nature. In fact, after one of these incidents, Pastor Adams accepted a personal apology. The elders believed the situation was resolved, but more antagonistic behavior toward Pastor Adams persisted. The elders again requested a meeting with the family in early 2025.

It was not until this meeting that the elders fully understood the family's suspicions—that they involved an unspecified sexual allegation against Pastor Adams. Before that, interactions between the former members and church leadership had not indicated any such concern. In late January 2025, the church submitted its initial report to the Seminole County Sheriff's Office based on what was known at the time, and the elders consistently urged the former members to report the issue to law enforcement as well.

The elders also learned that during this period, a counselor acting as a mandatory reporter contacted the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) in early 2024. However, DCF determined that the information provided did not meet the legal criteria for a reportable incident of abuse, neglect, or endangerment, so they did not initiate an investigation. This reflects what the Session itself experienced: no specific incident was ever reported to the elders or law enforcement — no act, no date, no location. The former members expressed general suspicion but explicitly refused to file a formal report on multiple occasions. Without a specific allegation, neither the Session nor law enforcement could conduct a meaningful investigation. Law enforcement confirmed this, stating they could not open an investigation without a report from a victim or witness of a particular incident.

Nonetheless, according to its own child protection policy, the Session took action in early 2025 based on the information it received: Pastor Adams was temporarily removed from all ministry roles involving minors while the Session sought outside expert advice and waited for more details. This leave lasted six weeks. Any concerns of a sexual nature, whether specific or not, are taken very seriously and handled with care by the Session. Elders consulted a local denominational committee leader about a concern involving a Teaching Elder and sought help from a qualified external professional organization. These steps align with what a responsible child protection policy requires in cases of unproven concerns. When the former members ultimately refused to provide supporting evidence and law enforcement confirmed there were no grounds for investigation, the Session allowed Pastor Adams to resume his usual ministry roles.

Saint Andrew's Chapel has consistently maintained and will continue to uphold a safe and secure environment for all visitors and participants in our ministries. Our child protection policies follow industry best practices and are applied uniformly to all staff and volunteers. In this case, the Session has no credible charges before it and no grounds for further action against Pastor Adams. We do not take this conclusion lightly, and we grieve the pain this situation has caused.

Pastor Adams was neither dismissed nor asked to leave Saint Andrew's Chapel. He voluntarily resigned, despite the expressed wishes of his fellow elders, following what he described as two years of significant personal and spiritual hardship for himself and his family. We are sincerely grateful for his years of dedicated service among us. We invite you to continue praying for him and his family.

Recent public statements have suggested that the church's disciplinary actions against the former members were taken in response to, or as retaliation for, their raising concerns about Pastor Adams. However, this characterization is inaccurate, and the Session believes the record needs clarification.

An initial investigation (BCO 31-2) by the Session against the former members was launched in March 2025, and formal disciplinary proceedings began in the summer of 2025 after more than a year of documented conduct aimed at Pastor Adams and the congregation—including public confrontations, anonymous social media activity, and escalating accusations made without evidence. The proceedings were not initiated because former members raised concerns, but because of their prolonged conduct that disturbed the peace, unity, and purity of the Church.

It has also been stated that the case was "never adjudicated." That is true in the narrow sense that the underlying charges were not tried, but it omits the reason: the former members repeatedly declined to appear before the Session, ultimately refused all engagement with the proceedings, and attempted to leave the congregation before the discipline process was complete. The principle at issue is not a denominational rule but a biblical one. Our Lord Himself established that when a member refuses to hear the church, the church must treat that refusal as its own offense (Matthew 18:17). The Westminster Confession of Faith likewise recognizes that church censures extend to those who are obstinate in the face of lawful ecclesiastical authority (WCF 30.4). Excommunication was not a judgment on the underlying charges, but a result of the former members' willful refusal to submit to the Session's authority. Church discipline, though painful, is given by Christ for the protection of His people, the preservation of truth, and the restoration of those who have strayed.

The Session notes that it granted the former members multiple extensions, revised the indictments at their request, and authorized a final pastoral meeting as recently as February 25, 2026, in a sincere effort to reach a resolution. Unfortunately, that meeting did not achieve its purpose. The Session has prayed for the family throughout these proceedings and continues to do so. We ask you to join us in that prayer. If either seeks restoration, the Session stands ready to receive them in accordance with the process outlined in our bylaws and in line with the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:5–11, which calls us to reaffirm our love for the repentant.

The Session is also aware that a committee of a local denominational body received and reviewed reports concerning Pastor Adams in the fall of 2025. That committee reported at the floor of its November 2025 assembly that the information before it did not establish any criminal wrongdoing or ecclesiastical offense. As of the date of this statement, the Session remains unaware of any active or pending investigation of any kind—civil or ecclesiastical— involving Pastor Adams.

We acknowledge that this situation has caused pain and confusion for many of you, and we do not minimize that. You may have questions that this statement does not fully answer, and we understand. While we are committed to transparency, there are pastoral, legal, and ethical boundaries to what can be publicly shared, especially regarding private individuals. We strongly encourage you to protect your hearts from the temptation to speculate beyond what is known, to share unverified information, or to make conclusions about matters that remain deeply painful for everyone involved. The Session remains available to meet with any member who wishes to speak with us personally. Additionally, the church's Child Protection Policy is available to any member who requests a copy.

As a church family, we have faced many challenges over the past few years. Let us remember that the Lord is sovereign over all things, He works all things together for our good, and His steadfast love endures forever. “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust” (Psalm 18:2). During times of trial, let us entrust ourselves to the Lord, who alone sees everything clearly, and will, according to His perfect will, bring glory and honor to His holy name.

In His service,

The Session of Saint Andrew's Chapel