

**Statement by Highlands Church Elders
Regarding Allegations of Sexual Misconduct by Les Hughey
April 23, 2018**

Highlands Church takes seriously any and all allegations of abuse or misconduct.

The Church Elders only learned of the accusations of misconduct against Founding Senior Pastor Les Hughey last week. Pastor Hughey disclosed his history in a statement released to the media and the church body (copied on page 2 of this document for reference). Before his disclosure, the Elders were unaware of any past incidents or allegations.

The Elders placed Pastor Hughey on an indefinite leave of absence in order to investigate claims published in the media on April 21st. As a church, we are committed to the biblical standards of leadership. If those standards are compromised, we address them immediately and take appropriate action.

The Elders have since become aware, beginning the evening of April 22, of additional accusations of misconduct that occurred more than two decades ago before the founding of Highlands Church.

Given the complexity and sensitivity of these issues, the Elders are in the process of securing a qualified independent organization to fully investigate all allegations. We invite any individual with additional information to contact Highlands at info@highlandschurch.org, or Pam Phillips, Highlands' Minister of Women, at pPhillips@highlandschurch.org.

The leadership of our church has always been and will continue to be committed to pursuing the highest moral and ethical standards in all that we do. Highlands Church remains unfaltering in our calling and commitment to continue to proclaim the Word of God and to provide hope and healing to anyone seeking God's grace and peace.

We are filled with sorrow for the heartbreak and harm these reported allegations have caused, we join with the Body of Christ in praying for all individuals involved or affected, and we ask for prayer for wisdom and discernment as the process moves forward.

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Previously Released Statement:

April 22, 2018

The elders of Highlands Church have directed Les Hughey to begin a leave of absence while the matter recently brought to their attention is investigated. Because the allegations are from more than 40 years ago, it will take some time to get a clear picture. We are concerned about the well-being of all people affected by these events.

The following statement was previously released by Pastor Hughey:

Over 40 years ago, as a church intern in California, I sinned and harmed the most important relationships in my life. I was unfaithful to my God, my wife, the ministry, and was rightly removed from that Church. I engaged in consensual relationships with fellow college-age staff.

With God's help, my wife's forgiveness, and discipline and counseling from Church authority, I sincerely repented and we put our lives back in order.

Unfortunately, it's impossible to undo what happened, so I instead accept and live with the consequences, even now, so many years later. My family and the authority over me at my Church are aware of this history. I thank God for His forgiveness and grace.

In addition, Pastor Hughey added this as he addressed the congregation this morning:

This matter was dealt with as church leadership thought best back then. But we all failed to understand the deep wound that would come to everyone involved. I am profoundly sorry for all of the different people that I hurt.

During Pastor Hughey's leave of absence, Highlands Church intends to:

- Do its due diligence in gathering information
- Apply biblical standards and principles
- Show compassion to all involved

Doug Milligan
Chairman, Highlands Church Elders