

Public Statement from Sioux Center Christian School by Mr. Josh Bowar, November 8, 2017

We have been told from the beginning that additional charges for a former teacher at Sioux Center Christian would be coming. Today, Mr. Curt Van Dam, was charged with 101 felonies and 39 misdemeanors. We have been informed that he was arrested this afternoon.

On Oct 18, within hours of hearing a complaint, school officials removed Mr. Van Dam from the school and immediately contacted authorities. His employment was terminated on Oct 19 and we have been in full cooperation with civil authorities since. This case is in the hands of our criminal justice system and we trust that justice will be served.

Though the number of charges do not necessarily reflect the number of students, we are grieved again as we hear the extent of the charges. We've wept, now it's time to weep again. We've prayed, now we need to continue praying. We've brought our anger and fears to the Lord, and now we need to lay those feelings again at His feet.

We need to remember that though the charges are many, it also means that many students are no longer carrying secrets. Kids, we want you to know that we consider you brave for telling your parents, the police, and the interviewers what happened to you. We praise God that your testimony has brought to light a dark secret that none of us adults knew was there. You have played an important role in keeping others safe.

Please know that thousands are lifting you before the throne of your Father in heaven... trust Him to restore you completely.

Our focus at Sioux Center Christian continues to be the Christ-centered education of our students, while also providing daily support and guidance to students as needed through their teachers and professional counselors. Tonight, there is a parent group session with All Things New Therapy Services. It is at 6:30pm in our gym for parents. Next Wednesday, Nov. 15, we will have a parent/5th – 8th grade student opportunity with Pastor Aaron & Nicole Baart at 6:30pm in our gym. We are planning additional specialized support for our students in the months ahead and for as long as it takes.

If this news especially hurts because you have suffered or are suffering abuse, we encourage you to bring it out of the realm of secrecy, so that it loses its powerful grip on you. We encourage you to talk to a professional Christian counselor.

We know hearing these new charges is incredibly painful and heartbreaking, but we need to be reminded again that we are walking this road of pain, so that another child need not. In the midst of this hurt, we proclaim hope. Hope in our sovereign God, who is so very trustworthy and true in His promises of life and healing. He gave His only Son, who lived as one of us, died on the cross, rose again, and reigns on high, so that we could enjoy eternal life in Christ's unfolding Kingdom.

As a community of people bound together by our love and care for kids, let us persevere through the trials that lay before us. This will be an enduring process but we rest in our Living Hope, Jesus Christ. Let's continue to pray and encourage one another. We have been overwhelmed by the love and support shown by our entire community and beyond ...you have done more for us than words can define. Be assured that God is good and He is at work mightily in this school. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Below was not part of our public statement, but we want to share this with those who read the statement.

We have all experienced comfort and assurance through Scripture and in songs of faith during this trying time. Here is one Bible verse that has been especially encouraging to us:

"In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls." 1 Peter 1:6-9