

I'm reaching out because I'm working on a story about spiritual abuse and former members' allegations that that abuse manifested in several ways at Immanuel. They allege spiritual abuse was perpetrated in the following ways:

- The Pastor and the session misled the congregation in the September/October letters sharing information about the abuse, giving off the impression that it was isolated and being handled appropriately (advisory committee to help investigate and a comprehensive safety plan).
- Jared Olivetti's success as a pastor became synonymous with the church's success, giving him outsized influence within the congregation.
- Favoritism among congregants that created an unspoken social hierarchy that discouraged some from seeking guidance and support.
- Olivetti, while discouraging members from — and in some cases rebuking members for — gossiping, had multiple meetings with congregants with the expressed intent of answering questions from his perspective. Some of those I've spoken to allege these meetings allowed him to defend himself while discouraging others from reaching out to victim families for clarity/to offer support.
- During congregational meetings, elders did not fully take accountability for their missteps — rather, they acknowledged things could've/should've been done differently.
- The session discouraged congregants who requested a Presbytery commission to investigate the situation from speaking at a Jan. 2, 2021, congregational meeting.
- Some members who left without transferring their membership were sent a letter they believe was inappropriate, given that they were attending another church at the time, warning them they would be separated from the visible church, “outside of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.”

Do you have any response to these allegations? If you have any comment or would like to lend your perspective to the story, please let me know by **Wednesday, Feb. 23 at noon**. If we don't hear from you, we will report that you did not respond to the Star's requests for comment. We're planning to publish this story in the coming days.