The following is an actual letter, copied here with permission of the leaders who sent it. Its publication here is not necessarily an endorsement by EFCA West of every detail, but we felt it was an exemplary response to a serious situation which is becoming increasingly faced by our local churches.

****

To the Family and Friends of _____ Church;

We recently learned that a [convicted child molester] has been attending our church. We will make an abbreviated reference to this letter in an upcoming Sunday morning announcement, but in the meantime we want you to know that your leaders are dealing with this matter with a sense of urgency.

We want to minister to and protect everyone the Father has entrusted to us. People need to feel safe at church. We are doing our best to deal with this in a biblically faithful and legally permissible way to create a secure environment that protects our children and extends the grace of Jesus to everyone.

Jesus loves children and Jesus loves sinners; and only he can find the perfect balance between the two. In seeking that balance, our course of action has been to seek expert counsel from a variety of sources. We have spoken with staff pastors at churches that have faced this challenge. We have received guidance from a professional therapist who is experienced in treating sex offenders. We have been given assistance by our insurance company and spoken with an attorney about our options. Here is how we are dealing with this situation:

1. We have rescheduled our men's bible study to an evening when children will not be present. This will extend to the offender the opportunity to experience the fellowship of other men, the accountability relationships he needs, and significant time in the Word.
2. We have instituted a one year probationary period during which the offender will receive counseling and maintain weekly reporting to the elders about his participation and progress.
3. During this probationary period he will be excluded from services, events, and activities when children will be present.
4. If the elders then deem it appropriate to allow him to participate in services, events and activities when children are present then the following conditions will apply:
    a. The offender will arrive at a set time.
    b. He will be met by another man who will be with him at all times while on church property.
    c. The offender will sit in an assigned place where no children will be nearby.
    d. He will leave immediately after the service concludes.
    e. The offender will maintain a 10' distance from children at all times.

Within these guidelines we want our church to extend the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our intention is to welcome him to the fellowship of our men's bible study, to our home study groups and, when the time is appropriate, to receive him into our corporate worship.

When that time comes these guidelines of participation will remain in perpetuity.

Please be advised that at this time we are also re-evaluating our Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policies with fresh eyes to ensure that they are as effective as they can be.

In His service,
(signed by all elders)