



UNITED METHODISTS OF UPPER NEW YORK

Growing Christ-Following Leaders – Building Health Congregations – Making Disciples- Transforming the World.

PRESS RELEASE: Upper New York response to Netflix documentary, “The Program”

March 8, 2024

For Immediate Release

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United Methodists of Upper New York were made aware of a new Netflix documentary that features audio clips of Thomas Nichols. In the docuseries, “The Program,” Nichols is identified as the former Public Relations Coordinator for the Academy of Ivy Ridge, a boarding school in Northern New York that ceased operation in March 2009. The series details several allegations of abuse.

Nichols is currently associated with Galilee and Kendrew churches. Nichols and these churches disaffiliated from the Upper New York Conference and The United Methodist Church on February 9, 2024. Nichols’ prior work at the Academy was independent and never endorsed by the Upper New York Conference.

In The United Methodist Church, credentialed pastors are required to undergo and complete a thorough process that includes mentoring, a criminal background check, psychological assessment, and more. Upper New York had no knowledge of the events portrayed in the docuseries and no knowledge of Nichols’ involvement in the alleged abuse.

United Methodists of Upper New York are committed to ensure the safety and well-being of the people we serve, especially the most vulnerable among us. Our congregations are required to enact a Safe Sanctuary policy to reduce the risk of abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults participating in the ministries of our churches, districts, agencies, and ministry groups.

We stand with those harmed by the alleged abuse and questionable practices portrayed in the documentary and recommit ourselves to confront abuse in all the ways it manifests in our society.

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