

February 24, 2003

The Honorable Judge Hill
Richland County Courthouse
Olney, IL

Dear Judge Hill:

I am writing this letter to you to plead for mercy for Leslie Mason. I have known Leslie since I was called to be on staff at First Baptist Church, Fairfield, IL approximately one year ago.

It has been my privilege to become friends with Leslie during this year. It has been a difficult year as you might expect, but sometimes in adversity you can see the real character of a person. Leslie is a kind, caring and compassionate man who has a great strength of character. This character has been shown as he waived many of his rights, he has admitted his guilt, he has never tried to justify his transgressions and he has done everything possible to spare all the families involved in this action. Leslie exhibits a true sense of repentance. As King David says in Psalm 51 "My sin is ever before me." Leslie certainly knows that he has sinned and has clearly asked God to "create in him a pure heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me". I cannot imagine a circumstance that would cause Leslie to repeat his actions.

Leslie has continued to contribute to our church and to the working community, even though the easy thing to do would be to hide from everyone. He has been willing to serve in whatever capacity we have asked him to in the church, with the exception of those that would put him in the spotlight. He has operated the computer/sound board in our services, he has been willing to substitute teach in senior adult classes and done many thankless tasks, not out of a sense of penance, but because he is truly a contributing member of our congregation.

Judge Hill, I would again plead for your mercy for Leslie Mason. I do not believe that society will be served by placing him in prison. Leslie has suffered for his transgressions and will continue to suffer in ways that we will never understand.

Sincerely,



Catherine Singleton
Minister of Music and Youth
First Baptist Church, Fairfield, IL

