

A Pastor's Plea After Church is Scammed

A church in North Carolina is reeling after an email scam stole nearly \$800,000 while building a new sanctuary.

As reported by the Elkin Tribune, "The church, founded in 1884, had long outgrown the building on North Elkin Drive constructed in 1954 and had been holding services in its family life center since 2016. In September of last year, the church broke ground on a new facility after raising funds for the project for seven years."

In November of 2022, the Elkin Valley Baptist Church received their bill for the previous month of work from the builders of the new sanctuary.

"Immediately following that email was another email, which we thought was from Landmark," said Pastor Johnny Blevins, the Senior Pastor of the church. "It had cloned basically that email and it gave instructions on payment and included the invoice and everything."

With the FBI currently investigating the matter, it has been determined that scammers gained access to one of the church's computers and were notified when the builder's statement was emailed to the church.

The predatory email and the bill from the builders arrived on a Friday. On the following Monday, a church employee responded and paid the email. Except it was the email from the scammers, not the construction workers, that was paid.

"At that point, we thought we had paid Landmark, and of course, Landmark was waiting on a check," Blevins explained. "So, we didn't find out until almost nine days later when Landmark asked about the payment; and we said, 'we have paid,'

and through investigation—found out it was a fraudulent account.”

The church, having grown past its capacity, is currently holding multiple Sunday services to accommodate all of its congregants.

In light of half of their savings having been stolen, the church has been forced to take out a loan to move forward with the project.

While the enemy looks to steal from all the peoples of the earth, he targets Christians in the hopes to destroy their faith and steer them away from the Lord.

In this time of struggle and uncertainty for Pastor Blevins and his congregation, prayers are never a wasted effort. They need prayers for the Lord to comfort them in a trying time and strengthen them as the devil conducts spiritual warfare against them.

Armed with the sword of the Spirit, the Elkin Valley Baptist Church can not only overcome the devil and his forces in this trial, but use it to glorify and honor God while sharing the amazing testimony of how He guided them through the storm.
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