

SAMPLE CHARACTER REFERENCE LETTER – FAITH LEADER

The Honorable Rebecca Lawson

United States District Judge

[Address of the Court]

Dear Judge Lawson,

My name is Reverend Michael Turner, and I serve as the senior pastor of Grace Fellowship Church in Cedar Hills. I have held this role for more than twenty years, ministering to a congregation of over four hundred families. I am writing to share my perspective on a member of our community, Jonathan Miller, who now comes before your Court.

Jonathan has spoken with me openly about the circumstances of his conviction. I do not presume to comment on the legal aspects of his case. Instead, I would like to offer insight into his character, drawn from my experiences with him over nearly a decade of pastoral relationship and community service together.

I first met Jonathan when he began attending services with his wife and children about nine years ago. From the start, I noticed his quiet humility and willingness to serve. He was not the type to seek attention or recognition; rather, he looked for small, practical ways to contribute. Within months, he volunteered to help with our church's Saturday food pantry, which provides groceries to nearly seventy low-income families each week. For years, Jonathan was there nearly every Saturday morning, unloading trucks, stacking shelves, and carrying bags to the cars of elderly patrons.

One moment that stands out vividly occurred three winters ago. We had a particularly harsh storm, and several volunteers couldn't make it to the pantry. Jonathan showed up anyway, bundled in heavy clothes, and worked alongside me and one other congregant for nearly six hours straight. I watched him push grocery carts through snow and ice, smiling the entire time as he reassured elderly visitors who were worried about slipping. It was not glamorous work, but it was work of dignity and kindness. That memory reflects what I have seen in him consistently—an instinct to serve others quietly, without expectation of reward.



Beyond the pantry, Jonathan also served as a mentor in our church's youth program. He coached a small group of teenage boys, many of whom came from single-parent households. I remember one young man, struggling with anger and dropping grades, who told me privately that "Mr. Miller is the only adult who listens to me." Jonathan spent months meeting with him after school, helping him with homework, and teaching him how to channel frustration into positive outlets like basketball and weightlifting. That young man eventually graduated and now attends community college. He credits Jonathan for believing in him when others had given up.

I do not deny that Jonathan now faces a serious conviction. He has spoken to me with deep regret about the pain his actions have caused, and I believe his remorse is sincere. At the same time, I can say without hesitation that the qualities I have witnessed in him—compassion, reliability, and humility—remain part of his character.

I also want the Court to know that Jonathan is not alone. Our church community, including myself, will continue to support him and his family throughout this journey. We will provide encouragement, accountability, and practical help where needed. I believe this is part of our calling: to walk with people through their lowest valleys and help them rise again.

Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective on Jonathan Miller. I hope these examples provide a fuller picture of the man I have known—one who has served faithfully, cared for the vulnerable, and demonstrated the capacity to grow and contribute meaningfully, even through hardship.

Respectfully,

Reverend Michael Turner

Grace Fellowship Church

[Contact Information]

