News 18 November 2026 | English article

Today: Former Methodist President Steven Wild Found Guilty of 11 Sexual Assault Charges in Cornwall

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Just Steve being Steve,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

A jury at Truro Crown Court took less than four hours on Tuesday 17 November 2026 to find the Rev Steven Wild, a former president of the Methodist Conference, guilty of all 11 charges against him - ten counts of sexual assault and one count of indecent assault against five women. Wild, 72, of Steeple Close, St Ives, in Cornwall, stood impassively in the dock as the unanimous verdicts were read out, one by one, after a trial that laid bare a culture inside the Methodist Church in Cornwall that let a powerful man's behaviour go unchallenged for years.

The charges covered the years 2004 to 2019. The five women met Wild through the church - at services, at district events, at conferences and prayer gatherings in Cornwall, Devon, Bristol, Southport and Derbyshire.

The prosecution's case was not that Wild was violent. Prosecutor Brian Fitzherbert told the court Wild never used force. The case was that he used his standing in the church to touch women in ways they did not want and could not easily refuse, and that the touching was sexual.

Wild had been one of the most senior Methodists in Britain. He served as president of the Methodist Conference in 2015-16, the church's highest office, and chaired the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Methodist District from 2008 until 2022. Before ministry he had been a Bluecoat entertainer at Pontin's holiday camps, and he carried that easy, public warmth into the pulpit. That warmth was the centre of his defence - and the centre of the prosecution's case against him.

Wild told the jury he was simply a tactile person. Hugging, putting a hand on someone's shoulder, pecking someone on the cheek - these, he said, were common behaviours within the church, a way of sharing a sense of togetherness and feeling the presence of Christ during prayer circles at events and services. He denied every charge and said there was nothing sexual in anything he had done. The jury did not believe him.

That was how Fitzherbert put it to the court, and it is the sentence that explains why this case matters beyond one man. The touching happened in public, in front of other people, at church events - and nobody stopped it. The jury heard that within the Methodist Church in Cornwall, Wild's behaviour was treated as a quirk of a popular preacher. "Just Steve being Steve," the court was told, was how colleagues explained it away.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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