

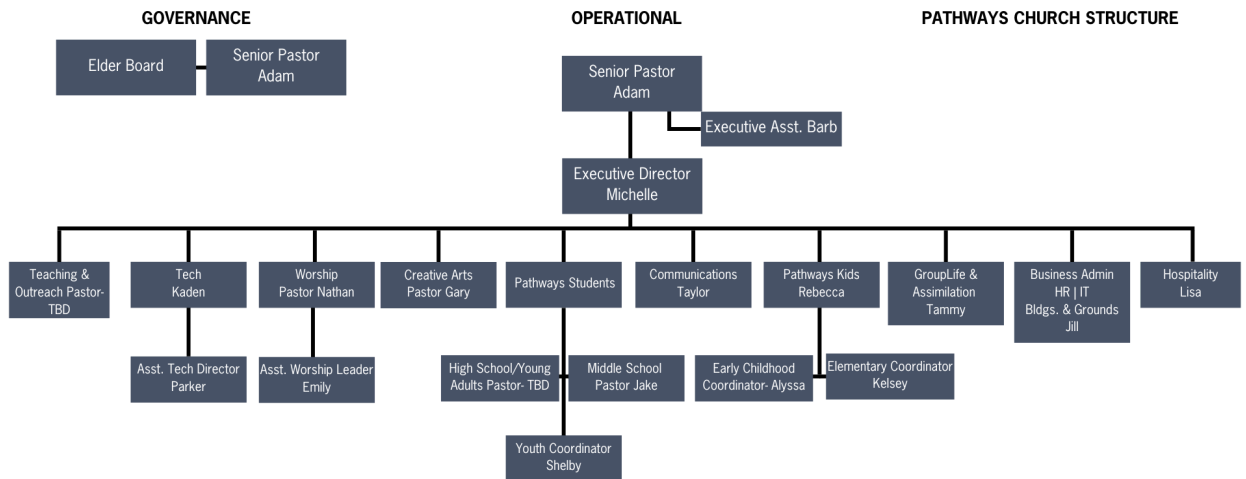
This document was built from the questions the Pathways Church Elder Board received leading up to a church meeting that took place on Oct. 10, 2023. The questions relate to several topic areas which can be seen below and were asked because many Pathways Church congregants were seeking transparency regarding a restoration process for one of our pastors. The Elder Board Team has modified the questions below to show what we believe to be the heart of the question. The intent of this document is to provide answers through biblical guidance as best as we can while navigating the privacy of those involved, the transparency expected by those who attend our church, and the legal obligations of the State of Wisconsin.

If you have additional questions, please email elderboard@pathwayschurch.us.

Who was specifically involved in reviewing and crafting the responses to the questions submitted by the congregation for the 10/10 meeting?

- Current board members: Chris Tarmann, Justin Stambak, Mike Trinkner, Marilyn Besch and Lindsey Biesack, as well as Executive Director Michelle Vanderlinden are creating responses for the questions. Other staff members may be consulted if the question pertains to their area of expertise (budget, volunteers, etc.). Adam is not creating responses to the questions, he may be consulted for questions that only he can answer, ie questions about his sobriety

What is the organizational chart for Pathways Church?



Who decides what biblical tenants the church upholds and how is the church body included in this process?

- The biblical tenants are foundational elements of who we are as a church. These statements don't change over time; it's who we are. Our beliefs are posted on the Pathways Church website under beliefs and the Board of Elders Bylaws maintain accountability of our Statement of Faith and the Biblical Covenant we adhere to.
- The Board of Elders are part of our congregation and have many relationships with others who are also a part of our congregation.
- Many of our elders serve in other areas of the church in addition to their role as an Elder.

What is the name of the corporation that runs or owns Pathways Church?

- Per our bylaws: The name of the corporation is Pathways Church, Inc., a non-profit tax-exempt educational and charitable corporation operating under the laws of the State of Wisconsin and defined as "not a private foundation" by the Internal Revenue Service.

What is Gary's role on staff?

- Gary continues to serve as our Creative Arts Pastor on a part-time basis.
- He is a part of weekly programming and series planning meetings.
- He also preaches occasionally depending on his schedule.

Who decides the content for our services and message series?

- Pastor Adam has always used a team approach for determining the message series and services here at Pathways Church. In his leave of absence, other team members who have always been involved in this area continue to be involved in planning and setup of the messages and services.

Can you speak to why Pathways Church doesn't have an Associate Pastor? What systems or people are in place to protect our current pastors?

- Different churches label pastors in different ways. Some label all pastors as associates. At Pathways, they are titled by department. For example, some say Associate Worship Pastor. We say Worship Pastor. We currently have 3 pastors on staff (plus Adam) and we are hiring for 2 additional pastors. One of those additional hires is for a High School/Young Adult Pastor. The other one will be to cover some teaching and well as missions. However, this takes time.

Why does Pathways Church have an Executive Director?

- This was an operational decision made by the organizational structure of the church.
- The executive director was put into place to directly supervise staff. This allows

Adam to Pastor staff and Michelle to supervise them.

- The board can influence the organizational structure but cannot make the decisions.

What are the salaries of our employees?

- We do not share the salary of any of our staff.
- The Board of Elders sets a budget each year for specific areas and the operational leadership of our church is responsible for setting salaries based on metrics, retention, evaluations, and performance.

What is our communication mechanism for hiring and for changes in volunteer leaders?

- For departmental hires, first the team would typically send a letter and/or video directly to whichever segment of the congregation it affects. (For example, directly to parents if it was a hire in the kids or student department, or directly to the worship team if it was for a hire in the worship department.) Then it would be announced to the congregation as a whole in the digital newsletter.
- We are aware that there is some concern about this communication and are looking at ways to make these announcements more accessible to all congregants. Having new staff introduced on a Sunday morning is a helpful suggestion.

Who is Pastor Adam's supervisor?

- Pastor Adam reports directly to the Board.

In what ways are the different levels of positions held accountable?

- As a Church of God, we feel that we are accountable to God first and then to each other. Congregants, Staff, Pastors, Elders, Directors are all part of God's Church and responsible to each other.
- As an organization, Pathways Church operates similarly to others. There is an Organizational chart which depicts the reporting structure. Regular Performance Reviews are held which would discuss goals, attainment and merits.

When staff members or pastors choose to delegate responsibilities to others; what criteria are used in the decisions as to who (which volunteers or staff) the leader's job responsibilities are delegated to and why?

How does this impact the ministry and potential for burnout?

What processes are used for supervision to lead staff?

- Staff report to the Executive Director, the spiritual leader is our Lead Pastor.
- There is a system which has been in place for many years, through which the staff is evaluated and has annual reviews. As far as what tasks are delegated to volunteer team leads or team members, that is a decision that is made by the

staff department lead. As far as the potential for burnout of staff and volunteers, that is a real thing. The answer to that is additional volunteers. Unfortunately, statistics show that only a small percentage of a congregation typically serves regularly.

- Open communication between leaders and staff is needed to help prevent burnout
- Acts 6: 1-7, Exodus 18: 13-26

What areas of the church structure are in critical need of improvement?

Has the difficulty of our current situation brought to the surface any gaps in the hierarchy or leader/decision making processes that you plan to change or improve in the future?

- If you are speaking of paid staff, the structure that is in place works well. There are gaps because of the need for additional staff. That need exists for a couple of different reasons. One is finances. Another is the search process. It takes time to hire great staff, especially when it comes to ministry. Where those gaps currently are is High School/Young Adult Pastor, Missions/Teaching Pastor, Assistant Communications Coordinator, Online Pastor, etc. Decisions regarding which position takes priority are made by Pastor Adam and Michelle Vanderlinden, the Executive Director.
- This situation has brought to light the need for more depth in our spiritual leadership and leadership succession.

How does Pathways provide support to church leaders in an effort to reduce burnout as well as monitor areas of concern?

What mentorship options are available to Pastors?

How are Pastors cared for in the church?

- Hire a teaching pastor who will focus on missions and outreach. This will alleviate some of the pressure for teaching and the missions/outreach responsibilities that were on Adam's plate.
- This also allows for stronger leadership succession planning, support for consistent sabbaticals, and backup coverage for the 24/7 needs of our congregation.
- Develop stronger and more consistent check-ins with pastoral staff.
- Develop a senior elder team that spends more time in prayer with the pastoral staff.
- Exodus 18: 13-26

Why is spending not published regularly?

Can you provide a budget update?

- The board treasurer has been and continues to be willing to share additional

details about church finances with congregants who have additional questions. Reach out through email or in person to set up a meeting.

- CLA does an annual audit of our finances.

Why was church membership changed at Pathways?

- Pathways Church has never been a congregationally led church.
- Per our By Laws: Covenant is a biblical concept. In the Ancient Near East, covenant was a binding agreement in which covenant members had certain obligations and could expect certain benefits in return. What makes a covenant different from a simple binding agreement is that covenant implies meaningful relationship. God covenanted with Noah, Abram, and eventually the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai. The prophets viewed the covenant at Sinai as a marriage between Yahweh and his people. We believe that to commit our lives to God, one another, and the world in a meaningful relationship is what it means to be the church. We use the word Partnership to describe the covenant between an individual and the church. As a partner an individual agrees to support the vision, mission, and strategy of Pathways as well as follow the biblical mandate to tithe.
 - The majority of churches that are similar in size to Pathways are board governed and Pastor led.
- Church is about being in the same place and being in relationship with each other.

Does Pathways operate as a completely autonomous entity or do we have another church we partner with?

- Pathways is an autonomous entity.
- We do not have a partner church.
- Pathways Church leaders have very strong relationships with other area churches and churches where leaders who work here have come from. These relationships help ensure that we have guidance in areas where things are not black and white and create opportunities for healing, accountability, and growth.

Can I serve at Pathways if I'm not a believer?

What decision process is used to hire or allow them to volunteer/serve?

- Being a believer is not a requirement to serve at Pathways. (An example might be to volunteer at a Second Saturday event - such as the one mid-October where they were closing down the Giving Garden.)
- Being a believer IS a requirement to serve in a volunteer role where there is spiritual leadership happening. (Such as a small group leader for example.) For roles like that, there is a vetting process that is run through the staff lead for that department.

- The staff lead is in charge of hiring and on-boarding staff and volunteers for their departments. The board does not oversee these hires.
- This is an operational decision that would be determined through the wisdom of the leaders assigned to the areas in question.

Who is held accountable to 1 Timothy 3 at Pathways Church?

- God's grace applies to all of us, no matter the role in the church.
- 1 Timothy 3 specifically applies to overseers, deacons, and elders.

Are staff members and pastors asked to sign a confidentiality agreement?

If they make mistakes will they lose their job or their benefits?

- The board hasn't been made aware of a situation where anyone has been told they would lose their benefits if they make a mistake.
- The board signs a confidentiality agreement annually. This has been a board policy since the inception of Pathways Church.
- Pathways Church doesn't have a pension plan.

How does the church plan to further the involvement of the church body to better grow relationships between congregants, Elders, and Pastors allowing congregants deeper and more meaningful interactions?

- For many years, we would have church meetings to update the congregation on things such as finances. Out of the many people who call Pathways their church home, there were maybe 50 who would attend those meetings. So, we moved to putting those updates in services from time to time, which we have done for the past several years. Those have not happened for many months now due to the current situation but we anticipate going back to them once we are through this season. At times, we have also had the elder board members down front after services to answer any questions.
- Through this season we have become aware of some blind spots and areas where we need additional processes for communication.
- We do publish an impact report annually that is available in the lobby and online.
- We have had church live surveys and we have had advisory teams in the recent years.
- Whole ministries have been built on congregational input -
 - Security Team
 - Stephen Ministry
 - Young Adults Ministry
 - Building and Grounds
 - Missions endeavors

Is church leadership open to changing and restructuring the church to ensure

accountability and restoration moving forward?

- Restructuring is not in consideration.
- The Elder Board is always seeking additional ways to increase and maintain strength in accountability within their scope and role.

If Pastor Adam resigns or is terminated, what are we going to change about our church governing style to ensure this doesn't happen again?

- Pathways is not immune to the attacks on churches that are taking place worldwide. Changing the structure of the church would not prevent these situations from happening.
- We are considering having 2 separate boards: a board of directors and a board of elders. Having these separated into two roles would give church leadership the ability to focus heavily on the business side of things and heavily on the spiritual side of things. This also opens up opportunities for leaders within our congregation to add value in areas where they have strong knowledge, skills, and experiences.

In addition to our main vision, what is the vision for Pathways over the next several years. Are we going to focus on building improvements, etc?

- We have a very strong buildings and grounds team that has a plan which takes into consideration the facilities, grounds, mechanicals, structures, etc. This team meets with the Elder Board throughout the year and we discuss how to ensure that what God has granted us is well managed and taken care of.
- We recently installed a new sign, we purchased and installed a new boiler and chiller, we completed exterior caulk, paint, and building repairs, we built a new garage, we've replaced the roof, and we're talking about what we can do going forward. This is always something we are working on.

Are we looking at the impact to our financials, attendance, giving, new congregants, etc. given the current situation we're managing?

- We had a slight dip in giving in early September. This is consistent with past years and those numbers have leveled off.
- Church leaders monitor spending and income all the time. This is a major strength of our leadership team at Pathways church. Budget adjustments are made, where appropriate and necessary often.
- We continue to see new families showing up at Pathways Church.
- We are also aware that some families have decided to leave Pathways Church.
- The operations of the church have continued because of the very dedicated staff and pastors that we have here.

Who appoints the board or how do you get onto the Elder Board?

Does the congregation have a say in who is appointed to leadership roles, specifically the elder board?

Are there term limits for positions on the Elder Board?

- Scripture does not ascribe a process for appointing elders.
- The board does not make operating decisions.
- The board follows a Nomination/Approval Process: Nomination, Congregation feedback, Candidate screening, and Voting process to seat new members.
 - 1) Nomination: anyone from the congregation can nominate a new board member. Nominations can be emailed to the elder board, or discussed verbally with a board member for nomination.
 - 2) Congregation Feedback: Once the nomination/s are received, the congregation will be notified . The board approval process includes a 30 day window for the congregation to express any concerns. Concerns can be addressed firstly with the nominee, and with other board members if required. Matthew 18:15
 - 3) Candidate screening: after the initial nomination is received, several documents / questionnaires will be sent to the nominee for completion. These will include a Pathways Church Board of Elders Application, Pre-Membership Information Form, New Board Member Orientation Checklist, background check. After completion of the requested forms and submission to the Board for review, two or more board members will interview the nominee.
 - 4) With completion of the forms, interview, and congregation feedback period, the Board will conduct a vote to admit the nominee to the board. A unanimous vote of the Board is required for the nominee to be installed on the Board.
- Future plans: Fasting by the board members (Acts 14:23).
- Each officer shall be elected biennially by the Board to serve a two (2) year term, or until a successor shall have been duly elected. Officers may serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. The members of the Board shall serve 1 year terms.
- Acts 6:1-6

Who holds the board accountable?

Are there standards that the Elder Board must adhere to?

- Firstly, each of the Board members is accountable to God. This accountability is not taken lightly as we know that one day we will stand before God and account for our actions.

- Board members are also held accountable by each other. Referencing our By Laws, there are standards to be evaluated and held to (Article VI - d, Annual Affirmation Statements, 1 Timothy 3 2-7, Titus 1 6-9). Article VI - h outlines the removal process if needed.
- Board members are also held accountable by the congregation. As board members, we do our best to make ourselves accessible to meet with congregants, discuss issues and resolve. (1 Timothy 5 19-20)
- Congregants have always had access to share input during Pastor Adam's tenure here.
 - He has put his phone number up on the screens numerous times.
 - The church has an email that is specifically to receive input (info@pathwayschurch.us).
 - During COVID, church staff made hundreds of phone calls to check-in on congregants.
 - Adam regularly met with congregants to discuss anything they desired to discuss.
 - Other pastors do the same.
 - The Elder Board is always available and has been available through the entirety of this season via email, via phone, via in-person meetings.
- The membership covenant that was in place prior to moving away from signing this agreement is as follows - see the document on our updates page at pathwayschurch.us

A board member stepped down during our current season. How was a replacement selected?

- From April, 2023 to September of 2023, there have been 6 active board members.
- In July of this year, a new board member joined. This member had completed the New Board Member process before Mother's Day and when we learned of the things we're currently managing we put this candidate on hold. We moved forward with this candidate after a couple of months.
- In July, our board secretary took a short leave due to medical issues. This member was actively back on the Board in August.
- In August, our Treasurer resigned due to family medical health issues, and has not stepped back onto the Elder Board because he needed to and continues to need to pour energy into the situation involving his family. This was a 1 Timothy 3 decision to ensure that his family is in order before he can continue to serve Pathways Church.
- Our interim Secretary resigned the first week in October of 2023 and we are now working to fill the vacant position.

- We are always seeking candidates for Elder Board members.
- These members can be nominated by someone or they can request to go through the process. Not all nominees or candidates will qualify to be on the Elder Board. Prior to submitting an application or accepting a nomination to be on the Elder Board, interested candidates should read through 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. These are the foundational verses that explain the very strong requirements for these positions.

Is there a plan to expand the board, knowing that there can be up to 15 people on the board?

It seems like some board members aren't always completely aware of what the whole board is doing. Why does this happen?

- We'd love to have more people on the board. We were seeking candidates as this situation came to light and then we put that on pause because this has taken up the majority of our available time.
- Everyone on the board is privy to all the things that we are working on. The majority of us have full-time jobs and families. Right now, there's a lot of information coming through the board so folks know as much as they can read, retain, and manage in the moment that we're in.
- We meet regularly, talk on the phone often, and share information often several times each week but, there is a lot of information so...it's hard to retain and know all the things, all the time.
- There are several people who invest on average 30 hours each week working through this situation and those people communicate with everyone as much as possible but, sometimes it can take 5-10 days to really catch everyone up to speed due to the volunteer nature of these positions.

Why do Elder Board members ultimately decide who else gets to be an Elder Board member?

- This is how Boards work throughout the Country.
- Pathways is not very different from other organizations like ours and like other businesses and organizations that are run by a board.
- The difference is that we lay our foundation and process on the word of God through biblical understanding and accountability.

Do we have a Board of Elders or a Board of Directors?

If it's Board of Directors, why was it changed from Elders?

If you operate as Elders do you all feel you are qualified based on what's laid out in 1 Timothy 3?

- We currently operate as an Elder Board. The name has changed a couple times throughout the history of the church.
- The Elder Board (current title and roles) must meet the standards of 1 Timothy 3.

- One of the discussions that we have had during this process is the need for a separate Elder board and Board of Directors.
- We are working on what this looks like and will be strategizing on how to bring something like this to fruition.

What is the board working on that will offer us hope as we continue to walk together through this situation?

- We are working on hiring a new High School Pastor and a Teaching and Outreach pastor. The High School pastor isn't something we were planning to fill, but with Michael's departure that became a priority.
- We have been working on hiring an Outreach Pastor for a while now and we have put more energy into making this a reality so we can continue to meet the needs of the families who call Pathways their home.

Why was Adam allowed to give a sermon on Aug 13, 2023 if some of the congregation believe that he was not in compliance with 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1?

- There are several factors that contributed to our decision -
- First - Adam had been working on our restoration plan and the only change was that he received legal papers. Adam had not changed his behaviors or his desire to reconcile.
- Second - We found out on the Wednesday prior to Aug 13. It's not impossible to shift programming for Sunday but it is stressful on many levels for many people to do this.
- Third - The decision to allow Adam to be in this role helped us identify areas where deeper healing was/is necessary to return.
- There are many different views on the weekend of Aug. 13.
 - It's very possible that the Elder Board made the wrong choice and Adam shouldn't have preached on that date.
 - It's also possible that the Elder Board made the right choice because people found that message to be what they needed for their own personal healing and it provided us with an opportunity to identify areas where Adam needed deeper healing.
- The Elder Board is a team and it takes time to navigate information and announcements. The knowledge of Adam receiving legal papers is just one piece of information that went into the decision to have Adam on stage on Aug. 13th. The board made a decision based on the totality of what we know.
- As we navigate very complex decisions through this process we aren't going to get them all right and honestly, we may never know if some of our decisions were right or wrong. This one is an example of one of those situations.

Where has the Elder Board sought help? Who have you spoken, when, and how frequently?

- Board members have spoken with a number of pastors. Some we've spoken to once, some we've spoken to several times, some we continue to speak to. We sought guidance immediately and have continued to receive wisdom from different leaders throughout this process.
- We have spoken with other board members of nearby churches. Those relationships continue as we navigate this situation.
- Some of the people we have spoken to are local, some of them are from outside the area, some are relatives of the Elder Board members, and people who have relationships with Elder Board members.
- We have been consulting with Pastors, Elders, and other professionals throughout this process and we will continue to do so.
- We have consulted with people who have never met Adam, people who know Pathways, do not know Pathways, who have worked with Adam in the past in order to get multiple views of the situation and biblical interpretation.

What scriptures is the board using to restore Adam?

How does the process align with scripture?

- We have a document available at pathwayschurch.us that outlines scriptures we have used and processes that we have in place because of those scriptures.

When is termination of Adam an option?

- Termination has always been an option. This is not the biblical way to manage a situation like this which is why there is a restoration plan that is in place. Restoration takes time. We believe that the bible calls for us to be united, show grace, offer a plan for healing, and do our best to restore. Having said that, there are clear expectations in the restoration plan. If those aren't met then we would agree to part ways.

Do you really need an attorney at our meetings?

- We originally intended to have an attorney present. This decision was made to protect the people who work here, volunteer here, and to protect the things God has entrusted to these people.
- We ultimately consulted with our attorney who did not believe he needed to be in attendance.
- Pathways has had a relationship with a law firm for many years so this isn't a new thing that we decided; it's something we do regularly.

Can the Elder Board speak to the expenses we are incurring during this season?

- The church has been very fiscally minded for years. We are attentive to the budget regularly. We're asking that you trust God through this season and know that we are attentive to the fact that all the money that comes into our church is God's money and we're accountable to Him on how the church determines to spend the money.

Would Jesus approve of the actions & decisions made over the past year by the board as a whole and by each individual board member?

- Every human being has sinned and will sin again.
- The actions and decisions made by the Elder Board are and have been biblically based.
- Board members are not perfect and this situation is complex. The Board is focused on prayer, biblical understanding, listening to and meeting with congregants, and managing the complex situation that we're navigating right now.
- The heart of the board is to focus on God's plan for our church.
- Every Elder Board member understands that we will one day answer to God for the decisions that we have made regarding this situation and the importance of what this means for us.

Is the Elder Board being as transparent as possible (legally), trusting our Lord to bring the church family together to guide one another in accountability and healing? Why hasn't the board been more transparent in sharing the names of people, pastors, consultants, our congregation, etc.

- The board has been honest throughout this process. Transparency has been a top priority while maintaining legal standards and respecting the private and personal nature of the matter.
- There is no scandal to cover up.
- The hardest thing for the board is determining what can be said in a situation like this. The board would share all details if we were able to.
- This is complex for a few reasons -
 - This involves the personal lives of people
 - There are laws and biblical principles that guide us to follow those laws
 - Some of the things we've received are confidential and would cause us to break confidentiality for people who have reported things in confidence.
 - We have been very careful not to pass judgment on those who have said things out of pain.
- We are doing our best to navigate this situation through confidentiality and transparency. We are trying not to hurt people while also navigating the laws that we need to follow according to the state of WI and the biblical guidance we find in scriptures.
- We appreciate that you understand the very complex nature of this situation and the strong desire that we have as a board to be open and transparent while also doing

our best to ensure that we are meeting the biblical standards we expect from everyone else.

What does leadership believe is the "divine plan" for Pathways, as noted in one of the update letters?

- We believe that God has a divine plan for Pathways and are praying and listening to God to follow His word.

What support will be provided to assist Pastor Adam if he is not allowed to return?

- We will continue to support Adam as a person no matter the outcome.
- We have been building strong resources for him through this entire process that are foundational to what will be available to him regardless of the outcomes.

How should a congregant handle mistrust with church leadership?

- Congregants should follow the Matthew 18 process if you believe there is a conflict within the church.
- Please review the Biblical Process document on our updates page for how to manage concerns regarding conflict, leadership, etc. in the church.
- The board has and continues to be available for meetings with the congregation regularly and will continue to be available, as time permits, to speak with congregants who have concerns.

When will our current situation with Pastor Adam be resolved?

What will the results be if Adam does not complete his restoration?

- We have a restoration plan in place that takes us a few more months to get through.
- The restoration plan is for Pastor Adam however, as we all lean in, we all have an opportunity to grow through this situation. This will all take some time.
- Adversity creates strength when everyone is united and focused on God's plan so we continue to pray for His healing and direction.
- If Adam does not complete his restoration plan he won't be able to be a pastor here anymore.

Talk about what it means to have your house in order in 1 Timothy 3. What if Pastor Adam's house isn't in order? What if Pastor Adam can't comply with 1 Timothy 3?

- The 90 day period that we discussed in August is an evaluation period to give Adam time to focus on his healing. After that 90 day period we will determine the progress Adam has made regarding the plan we have in place. This evaluation will help to lead our next steps.
- Scripture does not define what having your house in order looks like but it does

mention that your kids should respect you and obey you and be followers of Jesus.

- Through the restoration plan the board will determine if Adam complies with all parts of 1 Timothy 3.

Who is running and making decisions for the church right now in Pastor Adam's absence?

- The Pathways staff team is running the church directed by our Executive Director.
- There are three pastors on staff, Pastor Gary Smith, Pastor Nathan Purifoy, and Pastor Jake Collins.
- Michelle attends the board meetings and provides operational updates to the board and gathers feedback, where needed.

When can all of us at the church refocus on God?

Can we all work on loving God, loving our neighbors as ourselves, and forgiving others?

Can we remember the importance of forgiveness?

- Our Restoration plan is rooted in Love, and Forgiveness. However forgiveness is independent of the consequences of an action that may need to be forgiven. We have forgiven, but need to be accountable and show loving corrections as needed.
- It has been the Elder Board and Pathways Staff's prayer that we can maintain our focus on God through this season. Satan's plan is to create distraction and adjust our focus. We need to maintain strength in serving our community and protecting our congregation.

What details of this situation are considered facts?

- Everything that has been shared by the Board, has been factual.
- The Elder Board has a legal obligation to the rights of employees and their personal matters. This is where things get a bit complicated because people care about the people we employ here and have strong personal relationships with them.
- Not real truths often come from the lack of information in an effort to protect those who work here and the stories or personal lens of the people who fill in the gaps. This isn't out of ill intent but, it's naturally what happens as we seek to know the private details about what has taken place.
- Truths -
 - Michael was not fired
 - Michael did not want to speak on stage
 - Adam is working on a biblically based restoration plan

- Some people want Adam to be back on stage
- Some people want us to move on from Adam being our pastor
- The board is made up of a group of volunteers who are dedicated to Pathways.
- The board members are all congregants of Pathways Church

Can the church vote to determine how the church should move forward regarding our senior pastor?

What percentage of people are for allowing restoration to continue?

- The current structure of Pathways church requires: Per Pathways Church by Laws: The Senior Pastor may be removed at any time with a vote of at least 75% of the Board, whenever in its judgment the best interest of the corporation will be served thereby.
- There will not be a vote by the congregation on the outcome of Adam's position.
- We haven't taken a vote but, there are a lot of strong positive messages from congregants who want Adam back on stage. Having said that...this process is about a biblically based healing and restoration plan that Adam needs to continue working through.
- The outcome of this restoration plan will determine Adam's ability to continue serving at Pathways.

If a man repents of his own wrongdoing, should he be forgiven?

We understand forgiveness but, can Adam spiritually, emotionally, and mentally perform his role?

- Adam has been forgiven. The Board of Elders is charged by God to protect the congregation so our focus is healing and restoration and if Adam cannot meet the requirements established through this process then we believe it is also our responsibility to terminate Adam's employment at Pathways Church.
- Forgiveness does not mean that Adam is qualified to do all of the things listed in this question. Healing and restoration prepare him for the ability to manage the tasks that are listed here.

What is Pastor Adam's plan regarding the announcement early on that he had an unhealthy relationship with alcohol?

- At the very beginning of this situation Adam had an AODA assessment. At that assessment the counselor suggested AA as a good path forward and that started immediately and has been in place since.
- Yes, Pastor Adam is working through a 12 step program and other supports. He has been very involved in this program since Mother's Day and continues to provide strong updates to the board.

- The 12 step program was built for AA but, it's a program that comes with zero judgment, massive support mechanisms, and a continuous plan for healing and growth. The 12 step program never fully ends, it becomes a piece of who you are because it's a very healthy way to live.
- Many areas identified in questions regarding progress for Adam are addressed in the restoration plan.

The church has heard that Pastor Adam had an unhealthy relationship with alcohol and there were fractures in his marriage. Are these the only two issues for which he has been granted a leave of absence and a restoration plan?

- Yes, these are the reasons why Adam was placed on a restoration plan.
- The board was informed on the evening of May 13th.
- An unhealthy relationship with alcohol, challenges within his family. Through this process the board was able to identify personal traits that needed healing to help him focus on having healthy relationships with others
- The identification of these areas have helped us shape a more specific plan for healing and growth.
- We should follow the biblical guidance to restore Adam to his role. We will share the document the Board of Elders has been using to navigate this process.

Does Adam have any complaints about his role as a Lead Pastor that have contributed to his stress levels and propensity towards addiction behavior as coping?

If so, what are they and how are they being addressed?

- Adam has discussed that he has a lot of responsibility and that sometimes those responsibilities are hard to navigate at a high level due to the number of things on this plate. Adam has also said that COVID was a very challenging time. We are working on ways to fix these things going forward such as filling the role of a Teaching/Missions Pastor and creating a Senior Elder board that is separate from the Board of Directors.

What is Adam's role at Pathways Church while he is on a leave of absence?

- Adam is not a part of the board right now.
 - He does attend the first hour of our meetings so we can pray with him and he can provide an update to us on his progress.
- We asked Adam to help us identify strong teaching pastors during the season he has been on leave so the congregation can be fed appropriately.
 - He has hosted some of our guest speakers at his home which he has also used as an opportunity for healing and accountability.

- The Elder Board initially thought having Adam at church as an attendee would be healthy for him and others but we recently changed this so everyone has the best possible chance to heal.
 - Adam isn't able to truly be someone who can just soak in the message and be minimally engaged. He can't not be the pastor if he is at our church so we asked him to find a place where he can be fed while he heals for the remainder of the restoration plan.

Can we reach out to Adam while he is on leave?

Will Adam reply?

- You can reach out to Adam if you would like to however, we have asked that he truly take some time away from Pathways so he can focus on his walk with God and his family.

After the 90 days will Adam be allowed to return as a pastor at Pathways in the following situations:

He and Laura reconcile?

He and Laura remain separated?

What is the scriptural basis for each of these responses?

What are the specific requirements of Pastor Adam before he can return?

- Adam is committed to the restoration plan and he continues to work on the things laid out in that plan. Adam can only rely on God to resolve true healing in his family.
- We believe that forgiveness, redemption, and restoration are central to the Bible, and that past mistakes or failures should not necessarily disqualify someone from pastoral ministry. This belief is shaped around the idea that the pastor has sought forgiveness and is working toward reconciliation. This pastor must demonstrate Godly character and leadership.
- Jesus exemplified forgiveness, redemption, and grace. Pathways encourages pastoral care and support for both the pastor and their family, seeking healing, restoration, and guidance while we navigate the biblical understanding the protection of the flock is the central importance of the Elder Board Team.
- We would like to see Adam return, and we are following the lead of God's plan for Adam.
- We are working through this process everyday with the restoration plan and Adam's updates to the board.
- These requirements are protected by employer/employee laws in Wisconsin.

Do Pastors enjoy working for Adam at Pathways Church?

Does Adam have any areas of his leadership that need growth?

- There are a few things to consider here -

- Pastor Adam's restoration plan focuses on healing Pastor Adam in ways that will make him a strong leader.
- Some people just aren't going to pan out in roles due to personality, role, organizational culture, etc. This doesn't mean that Adam is a bad person or that the other person was a bad person or couldn't do the role; it just means that we weren't heading in a similar direction and then it's healthy to take on a different role in a place that makes more sense. This also doesn't mean that differing opinions, differing leadership, and differing approaches are wrong...but, there has to be a good set of ingredients to make things healthy for ministry so we positively impact the kingdom for God.
- The national average for pastors remaining in their roles is unfortunately 18 months. This average doesn't mean that we believe it's okay to be inline with the average but, it's a data point that we have to work up against as a church.

Why does a Pastor have to proclaim their sins to the whole church?

- Adam chose to confess his sins to the congregation as part of biblical reconciliation. He was not asked to do this, but wanted to do it.

Is Adam receiving his pastoral salary, or any other compensation, from Pathways during his leave?

- Adam has had a reduction in salary during this restoration process.

Who is/was Adam discipling to become future lead pastor?

- All Pathways employees are responsible for thinking forward on how to guide, grow, and encourage people to take on roles that will allow for leadership succession and future opportunities.
- Pastor Adam was leading and growing several Pastors on staff.
- Pathways isn't unlike many churches and organizations across the country who are working to grow a less experienced/younger generation to take on leadership roles down the road.
- There is an emergency leadership succession plan in the event of death or termination for our Lead Pastor.

The congregation asked many questions about the health, well-being, and care for Pastor Adam's family.

- The church cares deeply for Adam and his family.
- We believe that the situation regarding the Demetrician family is a private matter and we have been asked by the Demetrician's family to please respect their privacy.

When were Chris Tarmann and Justin Stambuk made aware of the fractures in the Demetrician marriage, and at what point was the rest of the board informed?

Were attempts made early on to help them through this?

- Justin became aware of certain concerns in February. In response, Pathways staff went about gathering additional information.
- Chris Tarmann was made aware that there were issues with alcohol and their marriage on the morning of Mother's day in May of 2023 and the entire board was notified that same day.
- The entire board has been kept apprised of the facts of this situation throughout this entire season.

When a pastor resigns or leaves our church, do we consider the impact of that change on the people who follow the guidance of these pastors during their walk with Jesus?

- We always consider the impact of these things as they happen.
- Pastoral changes are difficult because of the connections that pastors make with families. These changes are always felt in a congregation.

Talk about the "theological differences" statement that was made regarding a pastor deciding to resign.

How do we vet theology during our hiring processes?

- During the interview process, the interview team does talk through theology to make sure there is alignment. However, you can be generally aligned but when it comes to the application of how certain nuanced details are interpreted, there can be differences. Often, those detailed differences aren't an issue or even discovered until there is a specific situation. That is what happened with Pastor Michael. He initially disagreed with how the board is interpreting and applying the passages in 1 Timothy and Titus in regards to Pastor Adam's restoration plan. However, he also thanked the board for how parts of the process were handled.
- Just prior to turning in his resignation, he expressed concern for how a complaint was being handled by the board. That is where the theological differences come in, referencing Deuteronomy 19
- The interview team typically consists of the hiring manager, another staff member, Pastor Adam if it's a pastoral position, and key volunteers from that department.

What did Pastor Michael's exit look like at Pathways Church?

- Pastor Michael provided a two week notice for his resignation.
- After a discussion about what would be said regarding Pastor Michael's resignation it was determined that Pastor Michael would be paid for his full two weeks of notice but that he could be done that day instead of a week from that day.
- He was able to gather all the things in his office.

- The staff team working then gathered together and prayed for Pastor Michael prior to him walking out of the church and leaving for home.

Can you speak a little bit to the letter that Pastor Michael sent around to people who are a part of Pathways Church?

- In the letter that Michael wrote and distributed to select families who attend Pathways Church he indicated that information that was said about him was not verified and he was held accountable for this.
 - This is not an accurate depiction of what occurred. Here are facts about what took place -
 - There were three separate reports of concerning behaviors regarding Pastor Michael to the Elder Board.
 - A meeting was held with Pastor Michael with his supervisor and an Elder Board member.
 - Pastor Michael was provided information about the concerns that were provided to the Elder Board and advised to self-reflect and to consider how he can make some changes in how he was presenting his feelings.
 - Pastor Michael was told that he is the right person to be at Pathways during this season and that the things that were being discussed with him were to help him adjust how he is impacting others.
 - Pastor Michael openly admits in his letter that he received a written warning.
 - People question why the Matthew 18 process wasn't followed during this situation.
 - There are reasons for why this process wasn't followed exactly and it is not our wish to speak negatively about the circumstances that took place during this process.
 - Did the Elder Board properly manage this situation? This is left up to the discretion of those involved. No one is perfect but, the heart of the Elder Board team is to navigate things in a biblical and appropriate manner as best as possible given the complexity of the situations we're dealing with.
- Pastor Michael chose to resign from his position and he was told that God has him here during this season for a reason. He was asked to stay at Pathways Church but he still chose to resign from his role.

Did Pathways Church leaders consider the way a new pastor was announced and the fact that the new pastor also announced the departure of a current pastor?

- This was an operational decision that happened in the moment of many different changes occurring and taking place. The decisions made and the notifications that occurred could have happened in a different way, but the heart of the people who made these decisions were in the right place.
- There was no intent from anyone managing these things to cause harm to anyone.

- They have heard feedback in this area and will adjust going forward.

Will the Elder Board and other church leaders be apologizing for decisions, actions, and statements that are untrue?

- The Elder Board and leadership have attempted to manage situations to the best of their ability given the complexity of this situation. It is not our desire to tell “half truths” however, as we do share limited details people naturally and without malice fill in gaps based on their own experiences, perception, lens, etc. and then things get misconstrued.
- The Elder Board and staff leadership is very apologetic for any unintentional harm that we have caused along this process. This is not our desire. We are not perfect and we have never said we would be perfect but, we certainly are doing our best to navigate this is a way that is the least harmful we can possibly be.

Why did the church have to stand during a whole service recently?

- An operational decision was made to have a service that was heavily focused on worship recently.
- This wasn't meant to be a service where people had to stand. People can choose to worship while standing, sitting, kneeling, etc. during services.
- Pastor Adam was originally scheduled to preach that weekend and when he was placed back on a leave of absence 10 days prior, there was very little time to find a replacement speaker so we decided to pivot and chose to focus that weekend on the importance of worship, which we have done before from time to time. Last year, we had a similar service on October 2 where we had a shortened message and primarily worship.

Who makes the decision to remove volunteers from their positions at Pathways Church?

- Decisions regarding changes in volunteers and/or leadership are decided by staff members who lead these areas.