

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you...
Isaiah 43:2a

We write today with sobering news.

By way of brief background, on May 20, 2021, Pastor Tim Armstrong sought the resignation of Pastor Mike Castelli. Pastor Tim made this decision based on his belief that there existed under Pastor Mike's leadership a culture among the staff at the Green Campus that did not support Pastor Tim's overall vision for the church. Pastor Tim felt that these cultural differences were contributing to a breach in the foundational unity of our church. When Pastor Mike declined to resign, Pastor Tim terminated Pastor Mike's employment.

Around the same time, concerns of a very different nature were brought to the Board of Trustees, involving claims against Pastor Tim of harshness and fear-based leadership toward The Chapel's staff. The Trustee Chairman called a Constitution Committee to investigate the issues, and the Committee engaged The Center Consulting Group to help with the necessary fact-finding to discern an appropriate path forward.

Pastor Tim and Pastor Jim Mitchell went on paid administrative leave so that these issues could be searched out objectively and thoroughly. Pastor Mike was reinstated, but immediately placed on administrative leave pending the investigation. While it was the hope of both the Constitution Committee and the Board of Trustees to make simultaneous decisions about whether any or all three of these pastors could be reinstated, the significance and complexity of the findings of The Center Consulting Group made it clear that the decisions needed to be made one at a time. Therefore, over the last several weeks, we prioritized and focused our efforts on the issues surrounding Pastor Tim. As Senior Pastor, we believed that the issues pertaining to his leadership of the church staff were paramount.

After extensive review, the evidence reveals a consistent pattern of conduct that substantiates the concerns raised about Pastor Tim's leadership of the staff. Given this troubling and consistent fact-pattern, The Constitution Committee unanimously recommended to the Trustees that Pastor Tim, in accordance with language outlined in The Chapel's Constitution, is *unable to fulfill the duties of senior pastor and therefore cannot be restored to the role of senior pastor of The Chapel*. The Trustees unanimously voted to affirm that recommendation. Pastor Tim agreed to resign, effective immediately.

Pastor Tim wrote the following:

Chapel family,

My family and I are deeply grieved by the present circumstances. We have often said to one another that this may be the most difficult trial of our lives but that we desire above all else to traverse these days with humility, godliness, and honor. My greatest desires are for the unity of the church and staff and therefore agree with the Trustee's that it would be best for me to resign my position as Senior Pastor of The Chapel. I also realize that you as a church have been facing difficult trials. My last charge to you: Set your heart; Follow the Lord carefully; Follow the leaders and Guard the unity of the church and your relationships with one another. I wish these days to be the best of days at The Chapel in the way you respond and follow those who have charge over your souls. It has been a pleasure for me to serve and lead you over the course of the last seven years. Please know that I will not cease to pray for you in the future.

*In Him,
Tim Armstrong*

We are grateful for what the Lord has accomplished through Pastor Tim's ministry at The Chapel. The Saturate campaign is establishing new campuses throughout northeast Ohio. We are seeing disciples made through global outreach initiatives around the world. More kids than ever are experiencing the personal nature of Jesus in life-transforming ways at Camp Carl. Thousands have heard the truth of the Gospel through excellent expository preaching. Though we are imperfect, the Lord is good.

Next Steps

Regarding Pastor Mike and Pastor Jim specifically, they both remain on administrative leave. As previously indicated in this letter, the Constitution Committee and Board of Trustees are approaching the decisions surrounding each man independently of one another. We now intend to resume the decision-making process surrounding the issues related to Pastors Mike and Jim, including the issue of unity among staff members at The Chapel. Our hope is to follow up with each of them individually and then make a prayerful decision on how best to proceed. To do so effectively, we must take additional time. While our initial intention, as expressed in our July 10 update, was to communicate all decisions by August 9, we now realize that the release of further decisions and next steps may occur closer to the end of the 90-day timeline given in our June 5 update.

We understand that changes to the timeline can be frustrating. We are deeply sorry to increase your waiting. We remain committed to honest and consistent communication with you throughout this process. At the close of the decision-making phase, we will be providing additional information from our fact-finding measures in a *Summary of Findings*.

With respect to ongoing leadership, our current interim leadership structure remains in place for now. The ministries of The Chapel continue as planned. Our Trustees will begin working on long-term organizational and governance plans for The Chapel once all decisions have been completed, related to the three pastors.

We know that the Lord is ever at work in His church. We also know that there is an enemy who wants to destroy this work at every step. Please continue to pray with us for wisdom and courage. Pray that, instead of bitterness taking root, the Holy Spirit would continue to move us in powerful ways to love one another, showing ourselves disciples of Christ. Pray that, in this season at The Chapel, we would serve to advance the cause of the Gospel. Pray for Pastors Tim, Mike, and Jim and for the Armstrong, Castelli, and Mitchell families.

We are grateful for your commitment to the Lord and to His church. Thank you for your patience and your prayers.

*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his Word I hope...*

Psalm 130:5

Sola Gratia,
The Chapel's Board of Trustees