

October 21, 2021

Dear Chapel Family,

The collection of stories of God's faithfulness *to* The Chapel and *through* The Chapel is a very thick volume, and we have, as a church, now turned a page, through the series of townhall meetings held earlier this month. We thank you for your participation in these meetings, and we are grateful to have had an opportunity to offer clarity and bring additional truth to light. It is our hope that those who attended these meetings now have a better understanding of our investigative process and how we reached our conclusions.

At the meetings, we addressed the questions we received via Slido, breaking these down into multiple categories of interest. Today's update includes a summary of the most pertinent questions from each category, for those who were unable to attend an in-person meeting. Scroll to page 2 of this document to find the Q&A recap.

We also wish to draw your attention to a change to our Leadership Updates portal. While this page will remain archived on our website and accessible via direct URL, there will no longer be a shortcut button on our homepage. If you wish to revisit the archived content here, you will need to either type the web address into your web browser (<http://thechapel.life/leadership-updates>) or bookmark the page for easier access. We will not post regular updates to this page any longer; rather, future updates about our ministry model and church governance will be available at the appropriate times.

May we press onward in steadfast hope together, assured that even when leaders fail, even when processes and systems fail, our God never does. It is in Him that we place all of our faith and our trust. He has already seen us this far through a mighty trial, and we can hope and trust in Him that He will see us through yet further.

Grace & peace,

Chip Weisel
Trustee Board Chair

Zac Derr
Interim Senior Pastor

TOWNHALL MEETINGS Q&A RECAP

Strands of Complexity

Why was this issue so complicated and time-consuming? You had a few pastors who disagreed. That sounds pretty simple... right? Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., served as a Supreme Court justice for nearly 30 years in the early 1900s. He said this about simplicity: *“The only simplicity for which I would give a straw is that which is on the other side of the complex, not that which has never divined it.”*

We have identified eight different categories of questions that we have endeavored to answer for you in this document, and it may serve you well to have a mental image that will help you understand what made our situation so complex: strands of Christmas lights, no matter how you put them away the year before, generally result in a complete tangled mess the next year. Our work this summer has been to identify the strands of a tangled mass of cords. Throughout our investigation, we were able to discern 10 individual strands that have added to our complexity. Now that we are on “the other side of the complex,” may this simplified explanation prove wise and fruitful.

1. **Governance** | Our church constitution was created for one congregation, gathering in one place. This document has not been updated since 2009. Today, we are seven congregations, and we have the same governance document. It has become very clear that our governance model is no longer serving our church effectively. Further, our governance model entrusts an inordinate amount of power to one man, no matter how godly or righteous he is.
2. **Ministry Model** | We've had tensions with our ministry model for a long time. We launched the Green Campus by sending 2,000 people to Green as “one church in two locations,” with the explicit promise that both campuses would be the same. We learned relatively quickly that the promise of sameness was an impossibility.
3. **Disconnect** | There is a disconnect between our ministry model and our governance. They were not created to go together, and that disconnect creates its own difficulties.
4. **Insufficient Oversight** | There is and has been insufficient oversight by current and previous Trustee Boards.
5. **Pattern of Sin** | A pattern of sin has disqualified the former Senior Pastor from office. The standards for any pastor, in Scripture, are not the same standards that the world applies to an executive or to a leader. The standards for a pastor are given to us in Scripture in I Timothy 3, Titus 1, and I Peter 5. This isn't a matter of staff being “too soft” or “thin-skinned.” Many in our church body have had the experience of working for a harsh, domineering boss, and can say of the world, “That's just the way it is.” The church of Jesus Christ knows better and ought to practice better.
6. **Alignment of XP & SP** | There has been near-complete alignment and support of the Executive Pastor to the Senior Pastor, in which the Executive Pastor understood and practiced his role as translating or interpreting the Senior Pastor to the staff, and not translating the staff back to the Senior Pastor.
7. **Internal Conflict** | We recognize the internal conflict of Mike Castelli, the campus pastor of our largest campus, to submit to this same Senior Pastor, while also desiring to care for the staff and congregation of Green according to the word of God and his own conscience.
8. **Silence of Others** | We acknowledge the silence of ones who could have said something and the silence of those who should have said something. At each townhall meeting, Pastor Zac Derr raised his hand and counted himself among the “should-haves.”
9. **Disagreement vs. Division** | There was a narrative cast that “disagreement equals disrespect,” that “disagreement equals division,” and that “disagreement equals disunity.”
10. **Conflict & Lack of Trust** | Conflict, suspicion, distrust, broken relationships, reluctance, resistance, confusion, misunderstanding: all of these things exist among us as a result of all of the other strands being tied together.

An earthquake shook The Chapel in May 2021 with Mike's sought resignation and subsequent termination; the calling of the Constitution Committee; the voluntary leave of the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor; and then the reinstatement and the placing-on-leave of the Green Campus pastor. All

of this led to The Chapel suddenly lacking 58 years of ministry experience. Regardless of who was responsible, this ought never occur in a church.

An experience like this one massively damages trust. Our initial communication damaged trust further. We communicated initially of a *resignation* that was really a *termination*. In response, we promised *maximum transparency*. We now know it was foolish to make such a promise. One cannot promise maximum transparency to a congregation, and then promise confidentiality to the very people who hold the information in their personal experience and observation, in a climate of fear. We found ourselves forced, by our own hand, to choose which promise to keep, and which to break. We should not have spoken of *maximum transparency*; we should have instead said *appropriate transparency*, because we will honor the promise we made for those who received confidentiality, that they may have the security and safety to speak the truth as they experienced it.

Low trust, low information, and our extended timeline added up to create a very difficult season for many. All the while, some very hurt people have been hurting people. For a time, we shut down comments on our various social media channels. We had to pause the question-asking tool that we were using several weeks ago. When there is low trust, it makes it very tempting to believe that no one is trustworthy, and if no one is trustworthy, then we lose hope. But the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies are new every morning. By God's grace, we are excited for The Chapel, and where the church is now heading, because we are in a much healthier place today than we were six months ago.

Tim Armstrong

When Tim first asked for Mike's resignation, was the Board aware of and in agreement with that course of action, or did Tim act unilaterally? When Tim asked for Mike's resignation, the Board was aware of some of the challenges that Tim had expressed. Under The Chapel's constitution, the senior pastor has the authority to terminate any pastor. An employee termination is not a Trustee decision, nor is it subject to Board approval or a Board vote; therefore, the Board never formally voted on Tim's course of action. The Trustees did not make a decision about whether Mike should have been terminated; they simply acknowledged that it was within the authority of the senior pastor to terminate him.

In the seven years that Pastor Tim was senior pastor, were other allegations questioning his leadership style brought to the Trustees? If so, what was their response? Our evidence showed that the current Trustees did not know any of this collectively. In late 2015 and in early 2016, there were two email communications that confirm that one Trustee in each of those two different times was brought up to speed on some of the challenges that staff were experiencing, but that Trustee never took the information to the full Board.

Was Pastor Armstrong given an opportunity to repent, correct his actions, and change his harsh leadership style? It is our hope that Tim will repent of his actions and seek the help necessary to fully understand the scope and the impact of his behavior on the staff and The Chapel. The findings were presented to him in a meeting with representatives from The Center Consulting Group, and we did hope that, in that meeting, Tim would repent of those sins and seek reconciliation, but that did not happen.

Was Tim urged to repent publicly from sins that disqualified him? If so, what was his response? When the consultants met with Tim for the first time, he said, "I want you to go and speak to as many people as possible, and if what is being alleged about me is true, I should and will resign." The consultants interpreted Tim's statement to mean, "We don't think you'll find anything, but go ahead." In the end, the investigation uncovered significant evidence to suggest that Tim was unable to return to the role of Senior Pastor. When the consultants spoke again with Tim, he said that he had taken every leadership assessment available, and he said, "I don't see my leadership style changing." We did offer him an opportunity to repent in the writing that he offered to the congregation, and we copied and pasted what he provided without changing any of his words, and in terms of that repentance, it didn't happen.

Can you provide specific examples of the fear-based and harsh leadership from Tim? Tim was described by staff members as, at times, being ungentle, unkind, and overly harsh in his treatment of them. He would make fun of people, and it was known to many on staff that he had a difficult time apologizing. Several staff members described fear of losing their jobs, based on comments and actions from Tim Armstrong. Staff members further described a culture in which it was clearly understood that the senior pastor could end one's employment at any time, which resulted in further fear of dismissal. Staff members were expected to "fall in line" and described a culture that demanded unquestioning submission to senior leadership. Staff felt that they could not speak up about concerns. Staff would ask Tim very sincere questions about the church, his own personal walk with Christ, or the things that he was learning, and he would speak back to them as if they had no right to ask those questions.

Jim Mitchell

Why didn't the Committee or Trustees permit Tim & Jim to respond to the consultant's survey to provide context, as Mike Castelli was permitted to do twice? Our investigation results were presented to all three men. They were able to review our findings and ask clarifying questions to get more detail, but it was clear that each of the men were in different circumstances and needed to be handled uniquely.

Is there evidence that staff went to Pastor Jim with issues/concerns, and nothing changed? Yes. Our investigation revealed that some staff tried to raise these issues with Pastor Jim often. His response was to describe Tim's behavior as "a difference in leadership style." There was also concern among some staff that, because of the closeness of Tim and Jim in their work, that going to Jim was essentially like going to Tim, so that was a significant concern as well.

Were Pastor Tim and Pastor Jim permitted to review the findings of the independent committee prior to the requests for their resignations? Yes, our findings were presented to all of the men involved in the investigation.

Was Jim's reason for not trying to hold Tim accountable because he feared for his job too? No, we do not believe this to be the case, as far as we are aware. Our consultants met with Jim on multiple occasions, and he did not communicate this to us.

Mike Castelli

What are the specific ways in which Mike was considered to be not unified? The allegations of misalignment and disunity needed to be fully investigated, because these are serious accusations. Jim Mitchell said these words to Mike: "We presume the best, but these are still headaches and indicators of your separateness." The examples that were used included:

- **Web Prayer Wall:** This was a campaign to mobilize prayer requests into a central location. Mike and other pastors asked Tim if incoming prayer requests from specific campuses could be directed to the lead pastors at the appropriate locations, so that pastors could pray specifically for the people and needs in their locations. Tim and Jim used that as an example of misalignment and disunity
- **College Ministries:** It was decided that the Green Campus website would not be able to highlight the ministry for college students and young adults that was happening in Green, and the only college ministry that would be listed on the Green Campus website was the Campus Focus ministry that was happening at the Akron Campus. Mike asked to be allowed to communicate about the existing ministry in Green.

It is fair to say that there were some who experienced difficulty at times, in working specifically with employees at the Green Campus, but from a disunity or misalignment perspective, we did not uncover

evidence of that. We found Pastor Mike Castelli to be a good and humble man, who represents the quality of a pastor in a way that honors Christ.

Pastor Mike apologized for his role in this ordeal. What specifically was he apologizing for? Mike acknowledged, during his time at The Center, that he could have and should have spoken up sooner to confront Tim, beyond his multiple one-on-one times of confronting, and that he had not fully considered the others who were hurt by Tim. Mike had what we would describe as both positional authority, with 20 years on staff, and some of the relational authority, with 30 years of Chapel attendance, necessary to confront Tim, but Mike would say that he was concerned for his job. Mike wrote, "I was not sufficiently attentive to others who were also enduring it, specifically those not in leadership positions who were also suffering, the extent to which I was unaware. I should have spoken up sooner in a more aggressive way, yet I too was convinced that I would be fired if I spoke up."

We've been wondering about submission. Was Pastor Mike ever called to submit to his senior pastor, or was Pastor Tim's authority immediately questioned? There was no question among staff of the requirement of submission from staff to the senior pastor. Submission was an issue for Tim, in that some staff were not submitting enough. Disagreement was often perceived as a lack of unity

What was the difference in vision between Pastors Tim and Mike that was mentioned early on as the reason for Pastor Tim terminating Pastor Mike's employment? We believe that the source of the conflict between Mike and Tim was less about vision and more about Tim's character. During the investigation, Mike shared many times that he would gladly follow a leader, and the vision of that leader, provided that their character was strong. For context, Zac Derr currently serves as the Interim Senior Pastor and Mike reports to Zac. There is no friction in this reporting structure, because Zac's character is strong.

What were Tim's plans for Green that Mike was in disagreement with? This was a part of our investigation that necessitated additional time and attention in order for us to truly understand what was happening. We heard conflicting reports surrounding Tim's plans for Green. When Tim came to meet with several of the Green staff and leaders, he said to them, "Be prepared. Brace yourself. Big changes are coming." Tim did not go into great detail about the changes, but staff knew they needed to be ready. We had also heard a narrative that Tim's plans were to take Mike from being the Lead Pastor in Green and move him into a central role, but allow him to continue to preach, to some extent. There were some conversations around a succession plan with Mike, and Mike wasn't a part of that conversation. There were inconsistencies in the way that this was being handled.

Board of Trustees

Was the Board aware that Tim was concerned about disunity among the Green staff before Mike was asked to resign? The Trustees were aware of a narrative that Tim had created that disunity existed. It is important to understand that Tim had instituted a policy whereby lead pastors were not permitted to speak with the Trustees about church-related issues.

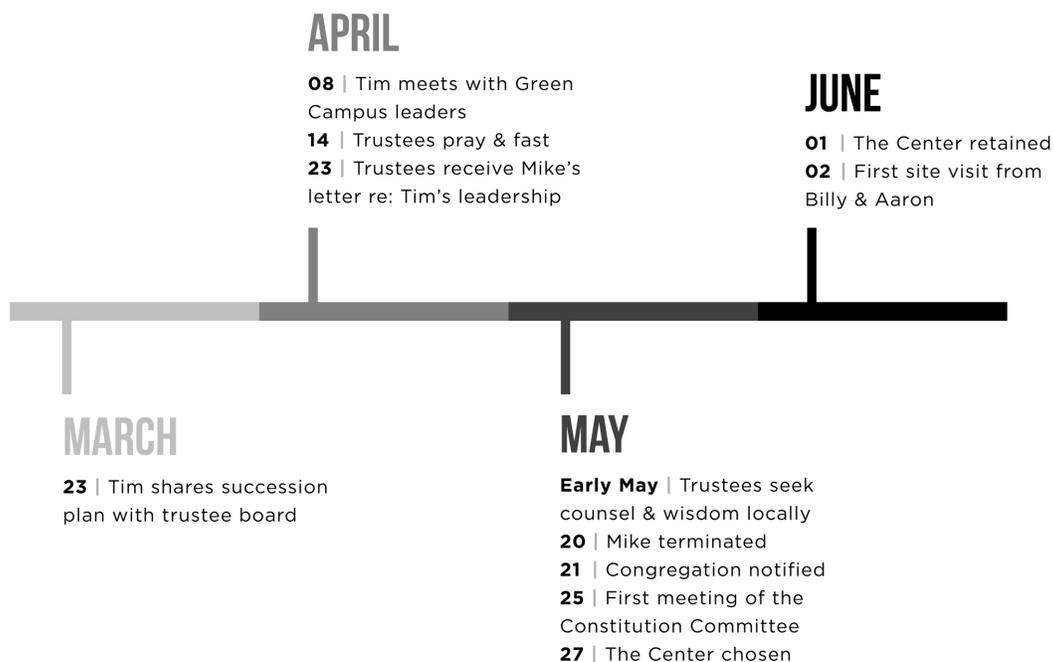
When were the first allegations against Tim Armstrong brought to the Trustee Board? How did they respond? We were able to find some email evidence to indicate that some concerns had been brought to an individual Trustee in late 2015 and early 2016. There were concerns that led to two Trustees speaking to Tim at the time, but the issue was never brought before the Board in a formal way. When the current Trustees fully understood what was happening, they moved to hire a third-party firm to investigate. It is appropriate for a Board of Trustees, in a situation like this, to seek outside help, because it keeps things consistent and it makes the process fair.

Why did current and past Trustees not intervene or take action sooner regarding the claims against Pastor Armstrong? Generally speaking, the current Trustees were not aware of the claims against Pastor Armstrong until they received Mike's letter. During the investigation, Mike himself noted

that he and others should have and could have spoken up sooner in a more aggressive manner, but didn't.

When was the Board made aware that Pastor Tim intended to fire Pastor Mike? What did they recommend at that time? The Board was unaware of Tim's concerns until March 23, 2021. He raised the issue in two ways on March 23: first in the context of some changes that we were considering for centralization, but also in the context of his succession plan for Mike. The plan would have taken Mike away from his role at the Green Campus and put him in a more central role. Tim, at the time, was positioning this as a way to mitigate what he felt was a unity issue. In this discussion, one of the Trustees asked, "Have you discussed this with Mike?" and Tim's answer was "No." As a result of that, the Board reacted by wanting to pause and have a day of prayer and fasting, scheduled on April 14. In the meantime, Tim had a meeting with Mike and several others from the Green Campus on April 8, where he said, "Brace yourself. Change is coming." The Board Chairman was informed of that meeting but did not know the context of it.

The full Board met on April 14 to break their fast and pray together, thinking that their next step would be to deliberate over Tim's plan. But, at the end of the prayer meeting, Tim announced that he was going to be moving forward with transitioning Mike's role. One week later, on April 23, Mike sent his letter to the Board and to Human Resources, outlining his allegations against Tim and his leadership style. The Board's first reaction was to schedule what they hoped would be a reconciliation meeting between Tim, Jim, and Mike, which was held on May 19. It did not turn out that way at all: at the end of that meeting, Tim informed the Board that he was going to terminate Mike.



How does the Chapel view Scripture's call to appoint elders as in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1? What is the difference between a trustee and an elder? The distinction we have made is that the *trustees* are the elders of fiduciary things, and the *pastors* are the elders of the ministries. Our constitution states: *Trustees, care deacons and deaconesses, and pastoral staff are the standing boards of The Chapel. These shall be comprised of those who are "who are known to be full of the spirit and wisdom," as from Acts 6. Our constitution also references I Timothy 3: Pastors, trustees, and the chair and vice chair of the deacons and deaconesses shall be men since they serve in an elder role.* This is the lone use of the word

“elder” in our constitution. That same section describes the duties of the pastoral staff and trustees: *Pastors and staff have duties as assigned by the Senior Pastor or others that he designates. They shall be responsible for the ministries of the church. Trustees are the fiduciary representatives of the church and are responsible for the finances and properties of the Chapel.* Therefore, we understand pastors to be the elders of ministry and trustees to be elders of the fiduciary.

Chapel Staff

How many staff members have been fired or forced to resign since 2014 because Armstrong's "harsh, fear-based leadership"? We focused our investigation on the current situation, not because we don't care about prior staff, not because we disregard their experiences, but because we had current staff who were bringing up concerns and issues. The first thing that we had to do was we had to understand the situation as it exists today. We believe that, by the end of that investigation phase, we had enough information and enough clarity for the Committee and the Trustees to be able to make an informed decision and take appropriate action.

What were the cultural differences among the staff in Green that led to the termination of Pastor Mike? We do not believe that cultural differences between different campuses were ultimately what led to Mike's termination. As we've clarified in previous sections, there were other things going on beyond just cultural differences

Is there a remaining culture of fear-based and harsh leadership within the staff in Tim's wake? How has this been addressed, or will it be addressed? We sincerely hope not. By God's grace and as the Spirit works, where there are vestiges of harshness, should they remain, we are confident that they will be brought to the surface. We began many months ago, and will continue, to care for those who are hurting. We also encourage, where necessary, to seek appropriate confession, repentance, and reconciliation.

Have former employees of the Chapel (last 7 years) been part of the investigation into Armstrong? If not, why? While we did focus our investigation on the current situation and the current staff, one of the recommendations in the Summary of Findings was to follow up with former staff members. Chapel pastors are putting a plan together to be able to do that, to reach out to former staff, to hear from them about their experiences, to spend time listening to them, and also to understand if there is reconciliation necessary. That process is underway.

Mike is receiving "coaching" to help him deal with the effects of recent events. Will other staff members receive some kind of counseling/support as well? Yes. Over the summer, counseling resources were made available to the entire staff, for anyone who felt that counseling would be a benefit or a blessing to them. This offer was reiterated to the staff again recently, so those resources have been and remain available to them.

Investigative Process

How does a member go about receiving a full copy (not the summary) of The Center Counseling Group's findings? The Center Consulting Group has strongly recommended that the full report of findings not be released. They do not believe that it would be honoring to those who shared sensitive personal information, nor would it be wise for the report to be released publicly.

In the summary, the staff survey shows most were happy with the way conflicts were handled and concerns addressed. Why was the data construed as a negative? There is more context to the survey that may be helpful in understanding this. A number of staff members responded to this question neutrally. When we think about the question, “Was conflict managed appropriately?”, only 47% said that they thought it was. It would not be accurate to say that most staff thought these things were handled appropriately. Another important point to make in response to this question is that, in our investigation, we

collected data in various ways: one-on-one interviews, staff surveys, comments, documents, and things that we saw. This allowed us to compare data against other pieces of information. We did not draw conclusions based solely on the staff survey, nor from individual questions on the survey. Instead, it was the comprehensive picture that we were able to develop, using all sources of collected data, that led us to our conclusions

We were promised transparency all the way back in May and throughout the summer, yet we've only been offered a “summary” of findings. Why? Where is the total transparency? We sincerely desire for the information we've shared to be appropriately transparent, in terms of what we've provided in the summary of findings and at the townhall meetings. We hope that even this FAQ document will do much to instill confidence in you, for you to know that we want to share as much is appropriate.

Why wasn't the process of dealing with Tim Armstrong per the church constitution followed? Why weren't members given an opportunity to vote on this decision? We believe that the constitution was followed. As we shared in a previous section, Tim openly said, “Please go and talk to everyone, and if this is true of me, I should resign,” and that is indeed what happened. If Tim had not chosen to resign, the Constitution Committee and the Trustees would have moved forward with removing him through a congregational vote, in accordance with the constitution.

Why were allegations concerning Tim's leadership addressed *before* questions of Mike's leadership and disunity? It really came down to the seriousness of what we found right away. We made a decision early on to separate the issues and look at each of the three men individually, rather than continuing an investigation where we would be looking collectively at all three. As the Senior Pastor, Tim's positional authority necessitated that his situation be addressed first.

What's Next

This process has caused lots of hurt and more disunity. How will The Chapel fix what is broken and help people heal? We are deeply sorry for the impact of these events and deeply sorry for the hurt that's been received in the process. We will resolve, together, to heal. A body that has had major surgery cannot be rushed into healing—you deal appropriately with what must be removed and what must be mended, and when you stitch something back together, you simply must allow the Spirit to bring healing. It will happen quickly for some, and it will take a long time for others. We do well, as a church to provide them opportunities and ministry, for those who are ready to move on. For those who need more time, we do well to graciously afford them the patience and the opportunity to process further and to heal slowly.

What exactly is being proposed to be implemented to prevent this type of situation from ever occurring again? Suggestions for consideration include an updated governance model, a more robust multisite strategy, a plurality of elders who are responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church, much greater accountability, yearly reviews of the senior pastor, and an ongoing conversation about reconciliation, ensuring that the two primary campuses that have experienced this issue most deeply (the Akron and Green campuses) are moving forward together as well.

Will the church constitution be changed in the future to not allow one man at the top to have so much power and more accountability going forward? Yes.

Should there really be one pastor that heads all churches, or should there be a governing board that oversees all pastors? In the coming months, Pastor Zac Derr will work with the Trustees, the Constitution Committees that will be appointed, and the staff to determine what revisions are necessary for our governance document and what changes are needed to enhance our multisite strategy. Questions related to our governance and ministry model will be considered and answered first, by the appropriate exploratory teams, and then we will shift our focus to the question of a new senior pastor.

Will ALL options be on the table or is there a baseline commitment to retaining a multi-campus model? If so, why is multi-campus a prerequisite? Yes, all options will be on the table.