

Dear Journey Family,

Grievously, we need to share with you some very troubling news. In recent weeks, substantive allegations of pastoral misconduct arose against Pastor Darrin Patrick and were eventually confirmed. This required that the Board of elders place Pastor Darrin on immediate paid leave and begin a formal process of deeper investigation. The findings of this investigation and further confession from Pastor Darrin, combined with deep historical patterns of sin, led us to the heart-breaking decision to remove Pastor Darrin from office at The Journey and require him to step down from all internal and external leadership positions. We did not arrive at this decision lightly but rather agonizingly, with deep consternation for our brother, after many hours with Darrin and his wife Amie, praying diligently together, seeking professional counsel and outside assistance, and reflecting over a long and repeated pattern of breaking trust with other leaders.

The initial and now confirmed accusations were not of adultery but did violate the high standard for elders in marriage through inappropriate meetings, conversations, and phone calls with two women. (I Tim. 3.2). Additionally, the Board has been engaged for several years now in uncovering and confronting other deep sin patterns in Darrin that do not reflect the Biblical qualifications for an elder, such as

- abandonment of genuine Biblical community (Titus 1.8)
- refusal of personal accountability (failure to be a fellow elder according to I Pt. 5.1)
- lack of self-control (I Tim. 3.2)
- manipulation and lying (Titus 1.8)
- domineering over those in his charge (I Pt. 5.3)
- misuse of power/authority (I Pt. 5.3)
- a history of building his identity through ministry and media platforms (necessity to be “sober-minded” in I Tim. 3.2 and avoid selfish gain in I Pt. 5.2)

These patterns and lack of turning away from these sins reveal that Darrin has not been pursuing a personal walk with Jesus in a manner that reflects his pastoral calling and position as an elder in the church (I Peter 5.1-5, I Tim. 3.1-7, Titus 1.3-8).

As part of our spiritual community and in our role as elders, we have experienced and confronted these issues regularly and intentionally over the past few years. Each time, these confrontations have been followed by initial confession with short-term changes but quickly receded into unfulfilled promises, reversion to old patterns, and broken trust with pastors/elders. Though we all stumble in many ways, those called to teaching and preaching carry the weighty responsibility of setting an example of a Christ honoring lifestyle with the consequence of stricter judgment (James 3:1).

From the very beginning of this process, the Board of elders has sought diligently to love Darrin, remind him of the Gospel, put a care team in place for his family, make immediate plans for the church, and bring in outside help. We have involved Amie, his counselor, outside pastors, and we have partnered with PastorServe (an organization that specializes in assisting pastors and churches in similar situations). Darrin is willingly placing himself under this care, and with these resources in place, we are extremely hopeful in our God who is powerful to bring redemption and grace from the midst of brokenness.

Many of you have experienced the power of the Gospel in profound ways through Darrin's gifts in this church, especially his preaching. We have all been privileged to sit under the teaching of a man who consistently and powerfully proclaimed gospel truth. Without Darrin's vision, passion and desire for mission, the Journey would not exist. God has used him in profound ways for which we are forever grateful. We highly esteem and appreciate Darrin's gifts and the labor he has exerted over the years and are praying that Darrin will now take to heart the very gospel he so faithfully proclaimed. We hope you will join us in praying for Darrin and his family, asking the Lord to sustain and guide them and drive them deeper into the heart of God's grace.

While this may come as shocking and difficult news, we believe our church is in faithful, wise, capable and loving hands with our local Lead Pastors and lay-elder teams. Additionally, we have asked Pastor Jeremy Bedenbaugh (who was already serving as a Journey-wide Lead Pastor) to handle and coordinate the preaching calendar while continuing to work with and direct our Local Lead Pastors. From the pulpit, you can expect to hear from Pastor Bedenbaugh and Pastor Curtis Gilbert, as well as a similar rotation from local lead pastors. At Tower Grove, Tim Holley has been effectively serving and now will formally be named as the Interim Lead Pastor. We have faithful and dedicated elder-teams, staff, and volunteer leaders who are deeply grieved but also unified in continuing to give themselves to Gospel ministry here at The Journey. Please commit to prayer for them and patience with them as they seek to shepherd and lead our church through this season.

Finally, we as your elders want for Darrin what we want for ourselves and each of you – to listen to and obey the Lord and be transformed into his image (2 Cor. 3.18). We pray that this painful situation will encourage every member of our church family, not to pride, arrogance, or judgmentalism but rather to disclose and deal with the secrets that reside in the darkest places of our hearts (Gal. 6.1).

Because of the scope and ramifications of this decision and the Biblical injunction regarding charges against elders from I Tim. 5.19-21: *“Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality,”* we are planning to address this situation publicly in our worship services on April 16/17, host upcoming gatherings (TBD), and offer future updates through The City. In the meantime please direct any questions to your elders and/or Lead Pastors.

Though this process has been and continues to be extremely difficult and painful, we love Darrin deeply and have committed to a long-term plan of personal restoration for him and devoted care for his family. The love and discipline we are extending to Darrin during this season is the same kind of care we would want to receive personally and offer to any of you in similar circumstances. There are certainly many unknowns but we are humbly submitting to and trusting Jesus to shepherd and care for the Patrick family and The Journey as we depend upon Him every moment. Ultimately, our faith in Jesus Christ and His Gospel gives us tremendous hope for renewed health and spiritual vitality for Darrin, the good of God's church, and the glory of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as the Bible teaches us, our hope is not in a leader but in the Lord:

*The Lord is the strength of his people;
he is the saving refuge of his anointed....
Be their shepherd and carry them forever. —Psalm 28.8-9*

Respectfully and Hopefully,

Board of Elders: Josiah Cox, Stephen Rhodes, Tim Yeadon, Jeremy Bedenbaugh

Journey Lead Pastors: Jeremy Irwin, Scott Hickox, Curtis Gilbert, Rusty Maple, Tim Ezell, Tim Holley

Hanley Road Elders: Nathan Mattia, Robert Millar, Kevin Frank, Rich Pierce

South County Elders: Jeff Fox and Greg Lhamon

Tower Grove Elders: Joel Steele, Steve Brewer, Josh Wilson, Eric Gregory, Jeremiah Stutte, Courtney Peebles, James Westbrook, Randy Moore, William Davie, Eric Miller

West County Journey Elders: Aaron Layton, Larry Schutz, John Hessel, Josh Jaworowski, Jim Beckemeier, Jim Wallace, Greg Heckenberg

From Darrin:

Journey Family,

Being a part of The Journey these last 15 years has been one of the greatest joys of our lives. We have loved being used by God with you to bring the gospel to our great city, and have loved seeing the faithful work of God in so many of your lives. We are confident that God will continue to use The Journey in amazing ways. I am utterly horrified by the depth of my sin and devastated by the terrible effects of it on myself, my family and so many others, including all of you. I am so deeply and terribly sorry for the pain that my sin is causing you, as well as the broken trust that my sin has clearly produced. In short, I am a completely devastated man, utterly broken by my sin and in need of deep healing. The way that the Journey elders have demonstrated their desire to see me restored to Jesus, as well as their love for me, Amie and our family is nothing short of miraculous and beyond gracious. They have put together a thoroughly comprehensive restoration plan for myself and our family, and we have great hope for God's healing, restoration and reconciliation through this process. We are profoundly grateful for the elders' care in this, and are completely committed to every aspect of the plan that is in place. Journey, you are in good hands with your elders. Please know that Amie and I are completely committed to our marriage as well as the well-being of our children and family. We earnestly desire your prayers for us in this terribly painful but hopeful season. We are desperately clinging to God's promise that He loves us completely in spite of our sin, delights in us when we are at our weakest, and that He is, indeed, the restorer and healer of all brokenness.