



In order to discover the truth of what transpired between Jake Goetze and Anna (Chadwick) Tolf in 2020, Arbor commissioned an investigation from a law firm. After the investigation, we followed the findings and direction given by our attorneys. Because the findings were prepared by lawyers, their primary goal was to answer legal questions using terms as they'd appear in a court of law. This was the basis of our initial statement, shared with the Arbor family on January 25, 2021.

Since then, however, we have continued learning about the topics of harassment, power imbalance and clergy sexual misconduct. We've developed not just knowledge about these issues, but also a trauma-informed heart. As a result, we have come to a better recognition of the harm caused by Jake to Anna. What we initially viewed only through a legal lens, we are learning to see from a new perspective. We want to now provide a corrected picture of the events as we understand them.

We begin by recognizing that Jake's conduct toward Anna is considered Adult Clergy Sexual Misconduct or Abuse. Simply put, this term defines the sexualized behavior of a faith leader towards an adult, abusing the inherent power and authority of their fiduciary role, and violating the sacred trust given to a spiritual leader. Jake abused the power entrusted to him as Anna's pastor. His behavior towards Anna was unwanted, pervasive, and severe. This created a hostile work environment for Anna, resulting in emotional and psychological trauma for her. This was at a time in Anna's life she was particularly vulnerable and in need of spiritual care.

We sincerely apologize to Anna that in our initial statement we inaccurately called it an adulterous relationship, while Anna maintained it was nonconsensual. This label regrettably added another significant layer of trauma to her experience. We also apologize to Anna that our initial statement was given to the church body without including Anna's voice. Additionally, she pursued engagement from the Elder board, and we failed to engage with her in a compassionate, trauma-informed manner, causing undue delay in providing for a corrected record as well as additional burden and pain for her.

We continue to pray for Anna as she heals. If anything we've shared resonates with you, we invite you to reach out to one of our leaders or staff who can listen to your story without judgement. We recognize that protection for the victim is central to truth-telling, and we will hold your confidentiality and provide resources for healing. It would be our honor to walk with you as you journey toward healing.

As a church, we pray Arbor continues the mission we believe God called us to from the start: to help the hurting. To do this more faithfully in the future, we commit to training and education for leadership, staff and all those who serve here. With His grace, our work will continue as we seek to be a safe church that ministers to those in trauma, crisis, or pain.

The Elders at Arbor Church
November 13, 2022