

PATHWAY COMMUNITY CHURCH

ELDER
NOMINEES

²³ "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust." **Acts 14:23**



DAVE WALL



My story began much like many growing up in Winkler. I grew up with two parents, two brothers and three sisters. I, the youngest of the six, probably had a different perspective than the rest of my siblings.

My brother was the closest to me in age so we definitely became partners in crime and fun. We pretty much did what we wanted as long as we also did what dad said when he said it. My mom and dad had a really hard relationship with much love lost and we kids were no different. Mom and dad separated when I was the age of seven. By that time, I had seen enough pain, anger and sadness that it would not soon leave me.

With no father role-model in my life, I soon found companionship with older boys who were a lot like me; only having one parent. Mom did her best but she wasn't around much to provide for us.

It didn't take me long before I was stealing and getting into trouble at school. I dropped out of high school when I was sixteen and at that time I already had the beginning stages of a drug problem. Over the years it progressed and got significantly worse. Seventeen years later I found myself sunk deep into darkness and without any hope. I had lost everything I had that was of any good. I gave up. I moved back to Winkler and began asking God for help. I started attending a Christian recovery group and one week later walked into Pathway Community Church understanding that my life of sin I could not sustain. I wept for two weeks. I began to trust on the name of Jesus Christ and started to understand that He is the only way to life that is truly life. I confessed my sin and turned from it. I was in pretty bad shape, but God started to change me. The Lord was doing a good work in me.

The next year I began to serve in the church as a greeter/usher and I went on a mission trip to the Philippines, I just wanted to serve the Lord.

That same year I met Sandra who in the next year became my wife. We were married in June of 2016 and since then have been blessed with three children whom we love so much.

I enrolled in a two-year discipleship class and learnt the disciplines of the faith and began to practice them. I began to disciple other men as I now understood the need for discipleship in Christ. I love Jesus only because He loved me first. I am covered by His blood and I will serve the Lord until He returns. Amen.

"For what you have done I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people. And I will hope in your name, for your name is good." Psalm 52:9

KELLY WIELER

My name is Kelly Wieler. I've was raised in a Christian home by 2 wonderful parents who loved God. Through their example and faith, I committed my life to Christ at the age of 4.

Growing up, I was blessed to have a group of 3 strong Christian friends throughout my school years. We kept each other (mostly) out of trouble, except the fun kind like driving an old Dodge car with roll bars down a toboggan hill. The foundation of those freindships was invaluable to me for accountability and early development in my walk with God.



It was in college where I really started to develop both my head knowledge of scripture, and really make my faith my own as I applied it my relationship with God. As part of our education, we were expected to choose a volunteer ministry to be a part of. I chose YFC, a choice that I had no idea of the impact it would have on my life. I'd lived a relatively sheltered life until this point, so it was a wake-up call to find out what life was like for many who did not have the same opportunity. It wasn't long before I realized that this youth ministry at YFC was a passion, and it's been part of my life for most of the past 25 plus years.

During this time, I also experienced the first real test of faith. I had felt that my calling was to the field of accounting and business, but during the final semester of my 4th year at college, my world was turned upside down when the Chartered Accounting designation decided that only University Degrees would be accepted, and instantly, my business education was worthless for advancing my studies. With the help and encouragement of my family and friends, I decided to try another route to my dream, and long story short, the change in direction in a different area of accounting was far more fulfilling, as well as the lessons learned from persevering through things that were out of my control. It showed me that God truly could be counted on to write the best story.

It was also in these years where I was an unwilling bachelor. I saw most of my friends get married, have families, and started feeling like God has forgotten to set aside a wife for me. There were moments where I accepted this well, and there were moments I didn't do as well. Looking back, I can see the blessing and opportunities it allowed me to have at YFC, and to go on mission trips. During this time, God also blessed me with a closer friendship with another single buddy who was instrumental as the "iron sharpens iron" friend in my life. We pushed each other in our faith and our relationship with Christ as we waited for the wives God had for us.

Eventually, the time was right, and I met a wonderful young lady named Melissa, who would become my wife exactly 1 year after our 1st date. Together, we're learning how to first love God, and through that, each other. It's definitely a huge blessing to have her in my life, and it was worth waiting for God's

timing. We also have a 3 year old son, which has also taught me much about how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love for us is. (Ephesians 3:18). The depth of my love for my wife and my son, are just glimmers of the fullness of God's love for us.

I've attended Pathway now for around 6 years, and the mission of helping those far from God find life in Christ resonates with me. It's a Passion that God has put in me, and I look forward to what God has both for my family, and for Pathway Community Church as we continue to journey together.

MARVIN KLASSEN



My name is Marvin Klassen. I was born in Winkler in 1982. I am the oldest of 3 kids and in addition to ourselves, we have a large stepfamily. I grew up in a loving Christian home. My parents were both strong Christians and both served in our church. I enjoy spending time outdoors camping, fishing, etc.

My dad died when I was young (I was 12 years old) in a swimming accident. This was hard for me and my family. Being the oldest I had to take on a lot more responsibility. I started to withdraw into myself, and this led to me feeling alone and being depressed. I started acting out at school, using

poor language and addictions. I felt guilty and ashamed, I was too proud to ask for help. I still managed to do well in school and went into the workforce after school was finished. My mom noticed I was struggling and challenged me to read the Bible daily. Through reading and attending church I realized I was missing Christ in my life. I realized that I was disobeying God, and the penalty of my sins was eternal separation from God. I learned that Christ has paid the penalty for me by dying on the cross and that I needed to invite Christ into my life. In December of 2006 I asked Christ into my life, to forgive me of all my sins. I now know that I have eternal life with God. I have been living for God since then and have served in various ministries in the church. God helped me get over my depression and addictions and freed me from the guilt and shame. God has blessed me with a wonderful wife and two boys

REILLY SMITH

I do not remember the first time I began a personal relationship with Christ, but I do remember one evening as a young child approaching a forest (in my little child's eyes) and, like every other time before, fearing the forest greatly. But I had to run through this small stretch of woods in order to reach my home, so I prayed, and I felt a profound sense of peace, and I walked through the woods in the dark for the first time in a long time (after I made it through the woods I ran again!!). Later, I developed an intense desire to rebel against probably in Grades 4-5, when I dreamed of scheming my way into heaven despite the fact I didn't want to serve God.



However, in a few short years, my attitude had switched (I don't remember how) to the point that now I was afraid I could not be saved because I was worried I had committed an unforgivable sin. I pondered what the best course of action was, and determined it was to try to bring others to Christ. Even I could not reach it heaven, others would, God had changed my heart and would continue to do so. I eventually came to understand that I could still be saved and was baptized in Grade 10.

I enjoyed the latter years of high school, meeting my now wife Sofia at LDP in between grades 10 and 11, but during Grade 12 my Dad got glioblastoma and passed away right before I left home for college. I was very close with my Dad and wrestled through that, but I attended Steinbach Bible College, which was incredibly healing for me. Sofia and I got married in between our 2nd and 3rd years of college, and Sofia's dad suddenly passed away in December of that year. We moved back to be closer to Sofia's family and I eventually ended up working at Youth For Christ Morden (YFC).

YFC has been tumultuous for me. I began under the great tutelage of the Satellite Director at Pilot Mound, but I eventually ended up as co-satellite Director, and COVID hit with all its struggles. I spent time seriously wrestling with my belief in God for the first time in a long time, which obviously was tense because my whole life had been developed around my belief in God. God showed me grace, and I found a good footing for my faith. Eventually, several staff members of YFC left, resulting in me being promoted to Ministries Director of YFC Morden. As Ministries Director, I have been forced to grow and learn through several different struggles and challenges, dealing with multiple difficult situations and needing to apply and teach others how to apply God's love to complex and difficult situations.

Sofia and I have also been blessed with two children in the last couple of years, Thomas and Clementine. Having two young children in the house consistently chips away at different aspects of my personality, and helps me become a more faithful servant of God. Sofia especially, but also my two children (in different ways) have taught me a lot about serving God.

I would love to chat and talk with anyone who has questions about my journey!

RICHARD HEIDE



I remember being a kid, and just loving going into the toy store to look at the Lego sets. With big colorful pictures perfectly portrayed on the box, every detail and accessory perfectly placed. All planned out in advance, only assembly required.

You see, my life was a little like that. I grew up in a stable, loving, Christian home. My parents took me to church, and I accepted Jesus as my savior at a young child. I attended Sunday School and later youth group. I also knew what I wanted to do for a living: carry on the family tradition of being a

farmer. Like the Lego box, I had this picture of what my life should look like. Find a good Christian girl at youth group, finish university, get married. Then grow the farm, build a new house, have kids. Make sure you go South on yearly vacations, build your net worth, and buy the vehicles and toys that would make you happy. Show up to church on Sundays and maybe volunteer for some things along the way as well. Be a good, moral person and have good standing in the community.

Nothing wrong with a lot of things in that picture; it was a good, solid plan. By the time I was 40, I had accomplished those things. To the outsider looking in, it looked like the beautiful picture on the box. Just as it should be.

About that time, things started to unravel. My wife's words one day brought me to my knees, "I don't love you anymore, I don't want to be married to you" I was shocked, broken! Everything I had worked hard to accomplish, all those pieces that I thought I had placed so perfectly. This was not part of the plan, this isn't what I had pictured on the front of my Lego box! I started to look inward and realized a lot of other things. I had been so preoccupied with building my net worth, I had neglected time with my kids. I didn't have a close relationship with them. I had very superficial friendships and relationships with extended family. There was no one I would share deeply with. Even my wife - we were not spiritually, emotionally, or physically connected. I had ruined that by being involved with pornography, pridefulness and selfishness.

Over the next years I fought hard. Fought to change who I was and save our marriage, fought to get to know my kids and spend time with them. Fought to open up to friends and family and get to know people at a deeper level. Fought my pride and was humbled with how hollow my life's creation actually was. I realized that in building that perfect Lego picture I had dreamed of, I forgot to take out the instruction manual (the Word of God). I hadn't built on a solid foundation. Proverbs 3:5-6 rang so true to me "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths". I needed to surrender and let the Lord be in control of my life. I repented of my sexual sin, my pride, my pursuit of wealth, and asked the Lord and those around me for forgiveness. And for the first time in my life, I really had a heart of surrender to the

Lord. No more religion – but true relationship with the Almighty. I spent many, many hours in the Word and in prayer. God started to place amazing things in my path; the Equip To Serve discipleship class, Pathway Church and its strong biblical teaching, the Conquer series, as well as a Christian sexual addictions counsellor and accountability groups. I was truly finding freedom in many areas of my life that had been hindering me.

Unfortunately, my sin had consequences. Even though I repented and turned to the Lord, not everything in my life was restored, and the pain was not instantly over. My wife and I separated, and then later divorced. My kids struggled with the breakdown of the family, and it had some negative effects on the paths that they chose to follow. Finances and extended family relationships were not the same as they were before.

But through it all, the Lord provided peace. His forgiveness and grace for me showed me how to extend grace and forgive others. He has now allowed me to meet a wonderful woman of God, and to get remarried. To develop better relationships with my kids and have meaningful friendships. To truly value the chance to steward our family business. He has allowed me to serve in the church and continue to grow in Him.

To have a second chance to build this life, but to do it His way, with His instruction manual.

Praise be to the God of grace and restoration!!!