



### **Elder Candidate Bio: Adam Gooley**

My name is Adam Gooley and I have been attending Valley Brook for about 8 years. I was born and raised in Bloomfield, CT where I still reside today with my wife, Brenda, and our son, Charles. I currently work for the Connecticut Department of Correction and hold the rank of Captain. I'm the youngest of three siblings and grew up in a Christian household. Although my parents were believers, their marriage did not last and they divorced when I was 9. From there I lived between two houses staying mostly with my father and attending church with him and my brother. When I was 11 years old I made the decision to get baptized because I knew in my heart that Jesus was real and that was the direction I wanted my life to go. From there on I attended our church youth group where I continued to learn and grow in my faith. I also began to attend Catholic high school, which was beneficial to me staying in God's word even though I did not agree with some of their interpretations of scripture.

When I was 15 my father died of cancer at just 46. I moved out of my childhood home in the middle of the night to live solely with my mother. Although life had given me some cruel cards, my faith still remained strong. As the years progressed into college and early adulthood, I continued to believe but my relationship with Jesus was somewhat distant. It was like having an old friend that you talk to occasionally. It's always nice to see them and when you do it's like nothing's changed. During that time I was walking in two different directions at the same time which is impossible, trying to stay with Jesus, while going my own way at the same time. To sum things up, I lived a little bit recklessly. I faced several hardships during my young adult years. I graduated college and was hired as a police officer at just the age of 21, but that career was short lived as I was dropped during my probationary period. My long term relationship with a significant other had completely fallen apart and I felt alone and like a failure. I tried to fill the voids with things that just left me feeling even emptier.

I went on to work several part time jobs to make ends meet. One of them was being a substitute teacher at my old high school and with it being a Catholic school, which helped me stay connected to my faith. There I formed a friendship with a woman named Lisa who was motherly and warm, and a devout Catholic. Our lunchtime conversations were always lighthearted and filled with jokes, but deep at the same time. One of the things she would always say to me was: "Gooley, you need to find a nice girl that will put up with you." And I would joke back and say at this point I think all the good ones are taken. And her response was for your sake I hope that's not true.

I ended up getting a full time job managing a mall security company. During this time I was actively seeking God a little more and due to it my outlook on life became more positive and my burdens started to feel a little bit lighter. One day, a credit card was turned into me with the name Brenda Fiume on it. Immediately I knew who this person was. We had gone to church together as kids, and our fathers were good friends. In

fact, her father Joe was one of the last people to see my father alive and was one of his pall bearers at his funeral. So I made one of the most important decisions in my life, I went back to my office and used Google to contact her. That day my life changed forever. I had met the nice Christian girl that Lisa kept telling me to find. We dated and fell in love. Not only with each other but with Jesus as well. We married in 2014 and have built this beautiful life and family that I was afraid to even ask God for. There are still times that I look at life and am amazed at what God has blessed me with. In 2017 we found Valley Brook, and this has become our home. This is the most connected we have ever felt in church. Our greatest joy is being able to raise our son in a church that is so firmly grounded in God's word and being surrounded by so much love. Our life group has become exactly what it's meant to be, a group of people who do life together.