

July 18, 2022 @ 6:00pm

MX Elder Meeting

Attendees: Brad Stevens, Bret Blackford, Keaton Jones, Jeff Kryder, Steve Awtrey, Don Fitzgerald, Dave Weiler, Steve Walker

1. People Update –

- Michael & Whitney Cannon – had car repossession notice. Dave Weiler able to assist and Dave will work with them on budget and planning.
- Bryant and Nene Taylor – Dave still working to get with them on discussing finances and budgets. They are looking for a 3-bedroom to accommodate a new foster child.
- Keaton met with Jim Roberts who fell and hurt his arm. Slipped on floor and hurt arm. Vicki said he fell again off a ladder. Jim has lots to do on the house and Keaton will try and help.
- Jaime Wehrung – still a crazy schedule with the kids.
- John Waters – not sure of status – he has been in Texas for a while
- Marie and Jerome Allen – Dolores said they sent a big makeup check, but we have not seen them since last year. This may be a good opportunity to connect with them.
- WC Connelly – Dave & Amy Weiler saw him and wife at Culvers. He is still doing dialysis and on kidney transplant list.
- Cindy and Sergio Munoz – have been visiting MX.
- Ron & Stacey Cruz back after a while. Stacey fell and wearing a boot. Ryley doing well after surgery but self-conscious about being on a crowd.
- Steve Awtrey’s brother Ron in rehab in Bethesda. He is losing weight but doing better.
- Tod and Beth Mayberry at building with Tora.

2. Youth Ministry Search –

- Steve Awtrey – Concerned this is going to spin out of control. There is a split on **Jeremy Picker** and **Nathan Strickland**. The elders need input from the YM Search committee. We should get feedback from the Youth Group who went on Colorado trip? Also, input on Nathan?
 - Will MX loose families if we chose one over the other?
 - If not Jeremy Picker then what will his role be going forward?
 - Elders will trust the Committee to do its work

Attachments:

- July 17 Jenny Reijgers email **Attachment A.1**
- July 18 Dave Weiler resp to J Reijgers **Attachment A.2**
- July 18 Lane Hamm resp to J Reijgers **Attachment A.3**
- July 18 Tara Beachamp email **Attachment A.4**
- July 19 Lane Hamm update on YM search **Attachment A.5**
- **Link** – prior discussion from Steve Haupt and Bret Blackford on Youth Minister position

3. Adding Elders (MX Church Leadership Structure)

After discussion noted below consensus was reached that the Elders should approach four (4) men to see if they are willing to attend the Elder meetings and shadow the elders for 6-12 months. Then, if mutually agreeable, they will be presented to the congregation for possible commissioning as an elder. The men were selected from the initial list submitted by the Elders earlier in the week (see **Attachment B**). The four men are: Jon Earnhart, Steve Jones, Collins Corder, and Charles Eickele.

We also agreed that there should be leadership development, two tracks: 1) one for those men who we see as possible future candidates for joining the elders, and 2) another group of those in the body who are currently leading or have the qualities of leadership (included women like Kari Ferguson).

Below were discussion items to help define the goal/outcome of eldership number and composition. Additional questions/thoughts from Bret noted in **Attachment C**.

- How many elders do we need?
 - Dave Weiler – more members on a non-profit board is better. Feels similar to eldership IF we use sub-committees: Finance, Pastoral, Vision
 - Do we have a roadmap [Steve Walker]

- What qualities are we looking for to balance us as an eldership?
 - We have a need for Pastoral elders to work with Keaton (many of the possible new elders have good qualities for this)
 - Keaton likes younger elders for a different perspective
 - Are young professionals and families comfortable with the direction of the church? Do we get eldership representation for/from them?
 - Don Fitzgerald – wishes we had more specifics about what elders did in the first century. What are we looking for in a new elder? What skillset to complement the current elders? We have uncertainty to what we are calling someone to when they are commissioned as an elder here at MX.
 - Admin Committee [Dave Weiler] – involves many people, more than just the elders. What if the Vision Committee were 2-3 elders plus a couple individuals from the congregation? Same with other Committees.
 - Jeff Kryder – Leadership development is important. How do we grow the pool and encourage those to seek the position of eldership. How do we encourage ministry leaders? Are we giving members a calling?
 - Steve Walker – Can we still give members a task, challenge them to step in. Perhaps NOT as an elder but to take the lead or work with a task – to help further the kingdom.
 - After Covid there seems to be a feeling of instability. Is the MX Leadership just trying to keep the plates spinning?
 - What do we need for the next 2-3 years? Who do we have now to help is in the next 2-3 years? How do we call them to step up?
 - Whatever we do we need to communicate it to the congregation.
 - Jeff Kryder – buy-in will increase when congregation gets involved. There are a lot of skillsets in our congregation. How do we bring these to bear, to leverage these to help the congregation?
 1. What is the Leadership mission?
 2. Do we need a weeknight to bring talented and spiritual members together to discuss and pray about the mission of MX? Target people, challenge them, and give them something worth their while.
 3. Erich McPherson influences people but not through the normal channels. Meaning, are Elders leading the sheep or are the sheep taking lead from someone else?
 4. Don Fitz – do we need to look at an elder/deacon type model? Elder mission leader connections. As we discuss leadership training it sounds like deacons.
 5. Dave Weiler – would we be helped from the Serving And Leading Together (SALT) team concept? Link [here](#)
 - List of Possible Elders:
 - Are there initial qualifications for being on the list? Children? Divorced? Position on marriage, etc.?
 - We probably want three lists:
 1. Ready to come along the elders – come along for 6-12 months to see if they feel called. Mutual between the elders and the candidate.
 - Jon Earnhart – Steve Awtrey and Jeff Kryder
 - Steve Jones – Steve Awtrey will connect
 - Collins Corder – Brad Steven will connect
 - Charles Eickele – Keaton will connect
 2. Need additional training and encouragement (Minor Leagues)
 - Ross Brown
 - Jeff McGlawn
 - Karl Reijgers
 - Steve Beachamp (perhaps ready for group 1)
 - Jon Earnhart (perhaps ready for group 1)
 - Matthew Bardewell
 3. Younger elders
 4. Leadership Development
 - Can include women
 5. Unknown due to qualification questions [divorce]:
 - Eric McPherson
 - Jayson Vincent
 - Brett Ferguson

- We may lose several elders such as Don Fitzgerald and Keaton Jones (retiring), Lane Hamm (moving), Lewis' health may be an issue.
- Should we share the attached with the Elder candidates or does this document need to be updated first?
 - ***MX Shepherding Model*** [[.docx](#)] or [[.pdf](#)]

4. **Other Items –**

- a. **Vision Retreat/Next Steps –**
- b. **Dale Robinson Recommendations – [link here](#)**

5. Jeff Kryder **Hallway/Foyer Class** – this has traditionally been its own animal and serves a good purpose.

- a. Are we able to connect with the 50 and under crowd?
- b. Elizabeth mentioned Eric in a troubled place with McKnight since letter, which went unanswered.
 - i. Dave Weiler talked with Eric about the letter. Dave understood that Eric just wanted to voice his opinion and didn't expect a response from the elders. Letter [here](#).
 - ii. Shall we invite Eric to an elder meeting? How can we connect with Eric and Elizabeth? Can someone go to dinner with the McPherson's ?? Possibly Brad Stevens take them to diner.

Youth Minister

From: Jenny Reijgers (jreijgers@yahoo.com)

To: jkryder@mcknightcrossings.org; sraine6@yahoo.com; lane_hamm@yahoo.com; steve.awtrey@gmail.com; bret_blackford@yahoo.com; donaldfitzgerald@att.net; steve@rotolite-stl.com; keaton.jones@sbcglobal.net; bstevens@shandselbert.com; dave-n-amy-weiler@juno.com; joycedickersonwest@gmail.com

Date: Sunday, July 17, 2022 at 01:33 PM CDT

To Whom This Concerns,

I have been dragging my feet on writing this because of my close relationship with the Strickland family, Carrie and I even grew up at McKnight together, and putting this friendship at risk causes me tremendous anxiety. But, my kids are my utmost priority, and therefore I have no choice but to voice my concerns. I adore Nathan Strickland as a person, a kind and funny soul, and a buddy to my kids, but I have concerns over him becoming the youth minister. Nathan is young, inexperienced, and has little idea of what being a youth minister entails (nor could anyone until they are in the midst of it all), which is the exact situation we, as youth group families, already experienced with Michalie. Though, to be fair, I cannot predict the fated outcome of this hypothetical situation, we are in a place now where our kids need and deserve stability, they need to know they have that safety net in a youth minister without the concern over yet another possible loss. If Nathan were to be hired this will be my son, Coen's, fourth youth minister in five years and I think we, and all of the youth group families, have been fairly patient and trusting in the leadership but now is not the time to bring in someone new and bring about more change. I, personally, had a chance to speak with Jeremy on the Middle School mission trip and was not only impressed with the way he taught, prayed with, joked with, and cared for the kids during the trip, I was also impressed with the way he has established relationships with the families of those in the youth group. He has reached out to families and has more middle school and high school youth and their families wanting to get involved. Jeremy has gained the trust of the kids and their families (especially middle school families who were not participating before he took over). Jeremy enjoys the job, is not a "flight risk", and has proved his dedication to our kids and the job of being youth minister. Basically, it simply comes down to what is in the best interest of the pre-teens and teens at McKnight and who can be trusted with the responsibility of achieving this best interest of all involved.

I realize you have many opinions to hear on this issue and I am only one but I have a request, please make this decision swiftly. We have all been through a lot and it really isn't fair to drag this out much longer, as we have much to discuss as a family and would like to be settled before the school year begins.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jenny Reijgers

Sent from my iPad

Re: Youth Minister

From: dave-n-amy-weiler@juno.com (dave-n-amy-weiler@juno.com)

To: jreijgers@yahoo.com

Cc: jkryder@mcknightcrossings.org; sraine6@yahoo.com; lane_hamm@yahoo.com; steve.awtrey@gmail.com; bret_blackford@yahoo.com; donaldfitzgerald@att.net; steve@rotolite-stl.com; keaton.jones@sbcglobal.net; bstevens@shandselbert.com; joycedickersonwest@gmail.com; dave-n-amy-weiler@juno.com

Date: Monday, July 18, 2022 at 09:48 AM CDT

Hello Jenny:

Thanks so much for sharing your thoughts about the youth minister opening and the path forward. I agree with you that it has been a huge blessing that Jeremy has stepped in to fill the youth ministry leadership gap for this summer, and am glad to hear from you that it is going well. I think it is fair to share with you that during the search process Jeremy has expressed mixed feelings at different times about taking the position long term. That's reasonable as we all pray about the various options and search for what is best. Please keep praying too.

We will do our best to keep the process moving to a conclusion sooner rather than later as God answers our prayers.

Thank you for your heart and perspective,

Dave Weiler

Attachment A.3

Re: Youth Minister

From: Lane Hamm (lane_hamm@yahoo.com)

To: jkryder@mcknightcrossings.org; sraine6@yahoo.com; steve.awtrey@gmail.com; bret_blackford@yahoo.com; donaldfitzgerald@att.net; steve@rotolite-stl.com; keaton.jones@sbcglobal.net; bstevens@shandselbert.com; dave-n-amy-weiler@juno.com; joycedickersonwest@gmail.com; jreijgers@yahoo.com

Date: Monday, July 18, 2022 at 10:25 AM CDT

Jenny,

Thank you for your email and for your care and concern for the youth group and MX as a whole.

I can tell you that we are moving as quickly as we can to find the best individual to take the youth group forward. I would agree that this hire is critical as one of our top priorities as a congregation is to NexGen and the health of our families with children.

With Michalie leaving, Jeremy stepped up and agreed to fill in on an interim basis until we found a replacement. I appreciate what he has done in organizing the ministry, hiring interns and keeping things moving during the critical summer time period. He and I spoke again prior to his leaving for Colorado and he told me that he would be willing to continue to serve on an interim basis into the fall. While Jeremy has told me that he has thought about the role on a permanent basis, he has not applied for the position.

Whoever we ultimately hire for the role will have strengths and weaknesses. As we did with Jeremiah, an onboarding plan will be developed for this individual to see them to success. A blessing we have at McKnight is the presence of two very successful youth ministers in Steve Awtrey and Eric McPherson who have both volunteered to help shepherd and mentor our new YM.

We have an obligation to you and all of our families to find the right leader to move the youth group forward and I am committed to seeing that happen.

I am happy to discuss this with you in person in more depth as I know that you have many questions and concerns that this email will likely leave unaddressed.

Thanks,

Lane

lane_hamm@yahoo.com
314-269-4049

letter from Tara Beauchamp

From: Steve Awtrey (sawtrey@cfserve.org)

To: donaldfitzgerald@att.net; jkryder@mcknightcrossings.org; keaton.jones@sbcglobal.net; louiswest920@yahoo.com; dave-n-amy-weiler@juno.com; aokunade@dom.wustl.edu; hauptsteven@att.net; brad1125@swbell.net; srainey6@yahoo.com; bstevens@shandselbert.com; bret_blackford@yahoo.com; mblackford@archrsc.com; lane_hamm@yahoo.com; jonathanearnhart44@gmail.com

Date: Monday, July 18, 2022 at 05:24 PM CDT

I received this email from Tara Beauchamp today.

Steve,

I don't have all the Elders email addresses, but I'm happy if you'd like to share this with them. I won't take up much of your time, but just wanted to offer my opinion on our search for a youth minister. I think the answer to months of searching, stress and worry for our kids may be right under our noses. I personally believe the best person for the job is the one who stepped up for our kids in June and is currently fulfilling the role. I think it would be a big mistake not to pursue Jeremy Picker as our next Youth Minister. Steve and I feel strongly about this and would be happy to talk further on the subject if you wish. Thanks for listening and considering our input!

Tara Beauchamp

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Attachment A.5

Re: MX YM update?

From: Lane Hamm (lane_hamm@yahoo.com)

To: bret_blackford@yahoo.com

Date: Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 01:23 PM CDT

- Nathan Strickland evaluation process still underway. To collect Youth Group feedback. Committee and Elder feedback is positive. Absent any other candidates would be moving to recommend him to the elders.
- Spoke with another candidate, Wesley Handwork. Just out of school, intern only experience up to this point. Good initial interview via Zoom. Committee may want to bring him in for an interview
- Received text from Jeremy Picker last night, wants to discuss the Youth Ministry position and his role at MX. Agreed that we will chat at camp early next week. Candidly, a little frustrating. A few parents are advocating for him when he still hasn't been willing to officially put himself in the mix for the role. You can't consider a candidate who hasn't applied. Will listen to him but also communicate that this isn't fair to the committee or the other applicants.

Thanks,

Lane

lane_hamm@yahoo.com
314-269-4049

On Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 10:40:22 AM CDT, M Bret Blackford <bret_blackford@yahoo.com> wrote:

Lane,

I'm putting notes together from last night's elder meeting. Do you have any updates or schedule for the Youth Minister search and Committee?
--- Bret

Below provided 7/18/2022 to Elders by Steve Awtrey

Names brought up to consider as Shepherds

1. Steve Beauchamp
2. Jeff McGlawn
3. Steve Borth
4. **Jon Earnhart**
5. **Charles Eickele**
6. Brett Ferguson
7. Jeff Goff
8. Jim Griffith
9. Kirk Kasicki
10. Rob Kruse
11. Karl Reijgers
12. Ross Brown
13. Alec Hill
14. Ben Mehringer
15. **Collins Corder**
16. Dale Simpson
17. Matthew Bardowell
18. Jayson Vincent
19. Eric McPherson
20. **Steve Jones**

"I know we will have push back on Eric & Jayson because they both dealt with divorce. I feel God's forgiveness covers that and does not necessarily disqualify them from serving as elders."

"I know we would need to confront the "can't be divorced" deal). Eric cares way too much to be on the sidelines".

"I think we should consider allowing the congregation to tell us who is a good fit."

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Here is a summary from the May 3, 2021 meeting notes (link [here](#) and a companion website [here](#)) :

Conclusion: *The de facto standard has been that divorce excludes a man from Elder selection. The articles reviewed and associated discussion did not present a clear and compelling reason to change direction on this position and consensus agreement remains that an Elder should not have been divorced.*

Although there was consensus on the conclusion we realize there is nuance in the passages that keeps them from being clearly black and white. Both sides of the position were discussed. However, one theme that we returned to in our discussion was that of the many listed qualifications of an elder that the marriage covenant is a sacred thing, and not to be taken lightly.

Bret: elders meeting 7/18

From: M Bret Blackford (bret_blackford@yahoo.com)

To: donaldfitzgerald@att.net; jkryder@mcknightcrossings.org; keaton.jones@sbcglobal.net; louiswest920@yahoo.com; dave-n-amy-weiler@juno.com; aokunade@dom.wustl.edu; hauptsteven@att.net; brad1125@swbell.net; srainey6@yahoo.com; bstevens@shandselbert.com; mblackford@archsc.com; lane_hamm@yahoo.com; sawtrey@cfsolve.org

Cc: bret_blackford@yahoo.com

Date: Sunday, July 17, 2022 at 02:27 PM CDT

Gents,

I should start by stating that unless there is a compelling reason to add elders I am opposed to doing so.

As I stated in the last elder meeting, I think there should be 5 – 8 elders. When the number of elders gets below 8 or 9 that should be a trigger event to bring in a candidate (or two) to work along side the elders for a time before deciding about confirmation. I do not think it best to invite anyone to apprentice before this point.

We currently have 10 elders so I do not feel motivated to make adding elders a priority. Sure, there are a couple who will retire soon and a few that may take ill, but we have time for that to play out. As stated above, we could lose 5 for various reasons and I would still be good with only having 5 active elders.

I think of possible elders in two categories – a) those who seems ready to quickly join the group and b) those who may be young or not quite eligible (age of children, newness to congregation, etc.). For both I think it appropriate and good if we the elders began praying over the list and encouraging these men (without making any future offers).

Here are my lists:

Group A – I believe the following men have the qualifications to fold into the eldership after a minimal trial period:

- Jon Earnhart
- Jeff Goff
- Jeff McGlawn

Group B – I see potential in these men; however, their children may be young.

- Matthew Bardewell
- Ross Brown

I am very comfortable with the elders composing a similar list of men to start praying over them. Anything beyond that makes me uncomfortable.

— Bret

Below are my notes from the last elder’s meeting:

From Bret:

Q: Why add more elders? What is the goal?

- We have 10 elders with Wole and Glenn gone – how many elders do we need?
- Do we need more elders (how many) or different (younger) elders? If younger, then Collins does not fit.
- Do we need more elders because there is work that is not getting done with current elders? If so what work?
- I would think 5-8 elders is a good number. More than 8 and you get into diseconomies of scale. It is harder to make decisions, etc.

On Friday, July 15, 2022 at 11:43:06 AM CDT, Steve Awtrey <sawtrey@cfsolve.org> wrote:

Greetings gentlemen!

We have an elder’s meeting coming up on Monday at 6:00 p.m. The AC isn’t working so we will meet in the room just off the gym.

We were going to be praying about future elder’s this week and come up with a list. **Please send me your list by Sunday night.** I will put that list together for our meeting.

Before we look at the list Monday night, I would like for us to start by talking about what would be a good "fit" for the present needs of our congregation as we look forward.

See you Monday night! Don’t forget to send me your list by Sunday night!

Driving Home

From: Jeff Kryder (jkryder@mcknightcrossings.org)

To: donaldfitzgerald@att.net; jkryder@mcknightcrossings.org; keaton.jones@sbcglobal.net; louiswest920@yahoo.com; dave-n-amy-weiler@juno.com; hauptsteven@att.net; srainey6@yahoo.com; bstevens@shandselbert.com; lane_hamm@yahoo.com; sawtrey@cfserve.org; bret_blackford@yahoo.com

Date: Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 08:15 AM CDT

Dear Brothers,

Thank you for your faithfulness to Christ and to the body at MX! Your hours serving this church is beyond observation and comprehension by most. **If I had a magic wand, I would see that you each received an all expense paid vacation to the destination of your choice! Alternatively, if you would rather sit at home in an easy chair in front of the TV, possibly that could be granted as well!**

As I left the meeting last night, I sensed that we all felt a certain heaviness of leadership. Since you are my sounding board, I sometimes feel I overdo it with problems I see. And there are always problems!

I continue to read articles that point out how the church is not the same as it was before COVID, not just because of COVID, but accelerating in certain ways by COVID. We are canoeing the mountains! A series we discussed prior to COVID! That is not an easy journey.

However, God is faithful, he loves us, and all things are bringing us into his glory and likeness!

A few years back, I started most meetings with 5-10 observable ways that God is at work. I thought I could do that here with an incomplete list:

- Seth's Baptism.
- Grady's baptism.
- The Rocky Mountain Discipleship Camp.
- Sergio and Cindy's interest in MX.
- Fina visiting from the community.
- Brenda Tull's membership.
- Shannon and River regularly attending.
- Camp and the leadership and volunteerism from our church.
- Tech team growth to support Brian with audio and video from Ross Brown and Leon.
- Food Pantry service and outreach!
- Todd and Beth back at church.
- Tora and kids back.
- Jeremiah is doing fantastic. Getting to know families. Making changes. Building a ton of relationships.
- Young Professional Group showing some life. Jeremiah is excited about this. Zoe at church. Demetrius potentially to be a part.
- Adam Shelley to participate in Vision Planning Class in fall.
- Joyce leading Lunch and Learn classes on Racial Bullying beginning September.
- Jeff McGlawn, Jeff Fogarty, and Karl Reigers leading an Adult Bible Class in September.
- Rob and Stacy Kruse back.
- Sunday Class on The Road I've Traveled has been well received.
- Pray & Go!
- Dave Weiler taking over Prayer Ministry for Wole!
- Bardowell Sunday Connect Group now includes Grimshaws, Trevor and Kaylynn, Worthey's, and a couple of other young families.
- Pool Party this Sunday for young families.
- Betty consistently planning content for BibleApp and RightNow Media.
- Matt Earnhart indicated that he would be willing to lead more often.
- Other Connect Groups, breakfast groups, and women's groups, and other "under the radar" groups meeting.

And after all is said and done and undone, we rejoice that our name is written in heaven!

—
Jeff Kryder
Senior Minister
McKnight Crossings Church of Christ