

Elders Meeting

June 17, 2024

6pm – 8pm

Attendees: Steve Walker, Don Fitzgerald, Brad Stevens, Bret Blackford, Dave Weiler (chair), Steve Awtry, Jeff Kryder, Jeff McGlawn (visit), Ross Brown (visit), Nathan Strickland

Next mtg.: Monday July 1 – Steve Awtry chair

1. John 15:17-27

2. People

{{ various }}

3. Jeff Kryder out Sunday July 8 7

Kaylynn Myers will preach this Sunday on Gideon. All elders were OK with the decision to have Kaylynn preach. In-line with earlier statement ([here](#)). Will plan to follow-up the sermon with elder closing prayer mentioning the sermon topic. Also thought wise to have a male do the communion talk.

4. Ron Milligan Concern

On June 2, Ron Milligan talked with Bret (and I believe Dave Weiler) and mentioned that he did not like that the song leader [Carrie Strickland] stood further up front than the other members of the Praise Team. Ron would prefer all members of the Praise Team stay in a line so as not to have any stand out. Ron is not comfortable with women taking a prominent role in Sunday worship.

Elders acknowledged Ron's concerns but do not feel any change needs to be communicated to those on the praise team (again, refer to earlier Elder statement [here](#)). Don Fitzgerald will follow-up with Ron and let him know the elders discussed his concern.

5. Lock-In Volunteers

Dave Weiler mentioned that Elizabeth McPherson was a last-minute volunteer to work the lock-in. Dave wants Nathan to feel empowered and comfortable cancelling events if sufficient volunteers are not available.

6. Children's Minister Search Update

After several interviews the main candidate dropped out.

7. LGBTQ+ Conversation

Elder Brad Stevens noted that LGBTQ+ issues continue to be widely discussed in our culture, as noted by a recent CNN article on Trans Conversations with Children (<https://apple.news/AigDKYnv-T8u3jYTiU2thHg>) as well as a recent sex questionnaire that was distributed in the Kirkwood school district ([Parents sue Kirkwood School District, alleging mishandling of public records \(msn.com\)](#)).

Although "marriage" is mentioned in the McKnight Crossings Church of Christ Core Beliefs ([Facility Rental Agreement \(mxcoc.xyz\)](#)). However, this is not on our website but has in the past been distributed to ministry leaders to affirm during budget submission.

It was discussed if Dave Weiler could present his thoughts on the Church and LGBTQ+, based on his recent study in this area. The Elders can then decide what, if anything, might be needed as far as a formal position on the matter. This should be done prior to a new minister as to avoid any suspicion that it was done on his request or prompting.

8. Ethan Laster Discussion

- a) Input From MX Members – Almost all input has been positive. No concerns or significant red flags noted. Some worry about age, experience, hand waving, etc., but nothing significant noted.
- b) Ethan's Meeting with Don Fitzgerald and Jeff Kryder – meeting was after the June 2 preaching/teaching weekend. Ethan seems to have a proper amount of worry and concern for such an important position.
- c) Are you ready to make a decision? – **All elders were unanimous on extending an offer to Ethan Laster.**
- d) Status of Memo of Understanding (MoU) – Dave Welder presented draft. Some slight changes were made a Dave Weiler will tray and get an updated draft to elders for review asap. Ref. **Attachment A**
- e) Next Steps - Hope is to get any additional edits or questions addressed this week on MoU so Don Fitzgerald and Jeff Kryder can meet with Ethan and share we feel God is calling Ethan to minister at McKnight. Don and Jeff will share the MoU and explain the offer. Elders consider 2 weeks enough time for Ethan and Sarah Laster to make a decision (yes/no) or express any questions or concerns regarding the MoU.

Jeff Kryder excused from meeting

9. **Jeff Kryder's Good-Bye Sunday (August 25)** – Jeff Kryder has requested his last Sunday to be somewhat of a reunion and he will invite several friends to attend, possibly: Jeremy Picker, Phil Gold, Bob Grigg, Dale Robinson, and others. There will be a luncheon after class that Sunday and the Elders have approve \$3,500 for food (main course) and decorations. Kari Ferguson will take the lead on the luncheon.

10. **Preaching Schedule for Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec** – Steve Awtrey again shared his working document (also here - <https://tinyurl.com/5n9yvc37>). We plan to give this schedule more attention at the July 1 Elder Meeting. Ref. **Attachment C**

Other documents:

- **Email from Bret on various topics** - <http://shared.mxcoc.xyz/2024/06.12.2024-MemoToElders.pdf>
 - Feedback on Ethan Laster
 - Meeting with Eric McPherson
 - Comments from Ron Milligan
 - Comments re Ministry Leaders
- **June 17, 2024 MXYG Newsletter** - <http://shared.mxcoc.xyz/2024/06.17.2024-MXYG%20Newsletter%20%2006.17.24.pdf>

Attachment A

Below presented by Dave Weiler - *draft under revision*

Note: it was requested to have Carson Reed or similar at [Siburt](#) review and provide feedback (ref. **Attachment B**).

Memo of Understanding

Dear Ethan,

The Elders at McKnight have decided, after congregational input and much prayer, to call you to serve as our next Lead Minister. We are convinced that you possess the faith, maturity and skills to both take-on and grow into the role as a gifted minister.

Your position is under the oversight of the elders at McKnight. Of course, you will work in leading and collaborating with the other ministers and office staff.

I. General Information

1. Job Title – Lead Minister
2. Job Relationship – Supervised by Elders
3. Position Summary – To lead and serve the church family in preaching, teaching, strategic planning, and in supporting and developing staff, ministries, and members.

II. Lead Minister Duties:

1. Proclaim the Word of God.

- a. Maintain a discipline of personal growth in prayer and the Word of God.
- b. Deliver quality Biblical messages each Sunday that are inspiring and applicable to daily life, arranging occasional guest speakers and having absences approved.
- c. Oversee and plan worship in coordination with the Worship Team, overseeing the Sunday worship assemblies, special worship times, including transitions and ad-hoc meetings.
- d. Oversee Spiritual Formation Team, teaching classes on Sunday or during the week as needed.

2. Provide Leadership.

- a. Work closely in relationships of mutual trust and support with the elders.
- b. Consistently champion the church's mission, vision, and values.
- c. Cast vision for community outreach, events, and programs to strengthen the church.
- d. Offer strategic planning and support to on-going and new Ministry Leaders and Ministry Teams.
- e. Encourage and model discipleship relationships and a growing devotion to God.
- f. Meet regularly with church elders.

3. Supervise Ministry and Administrative Staff.

- a. Coordinate and oversee Ministry Staff to carry out the church's vision, ensuring team cohesion, alignment, and execution of roles and tasks, including periodic meetings, and annual job reviews.
- b. Coordinate and facilitate staff meetings to nurture staff, respond to needs in church body, implement administrative tasks, and coordinate staff, ministry, and congregational calendars.
- c. Oversee congregational communications (email, banners, social media, Live-Stream, and Sunday announcements, etc.)
- d. Oversee technology initiatives that support the staff, ministries and congregational life.
- e. Office hours on several days per week to ensure office staff continuity and accessibility for congregation.

4. Provide Spiritual and Pastoral Care.

- a. Offer and coordinate pastoral care and guidance to church members and others, including the sick, and shut-ins
- b. Be on call for pastoral emergencies.

- c. Coordinate pastoral care and planning for funerals, weddings, and other special requests and events.

III. Compensation Package

Annual Salary = \$67,000

Medical/Dental/Vision - Allowed up to \$1,200 per month for individual and/or family coverage for medical+dental+vision as needed. Costs above that limit will be withheld pre-tax from salary. = \$14,400 max.

Retirement Match of 50% of your contribution up to 3% maximum match% = \$2,010 max.

Long-term Disability Insurance Paid by MX = \$500 est. cost

Annual budget for ministry resources (books, materials, etc.) = \$1,200

Annual budget for education/training = \$1,500

Annual budget for shepherding funds (reimbursement for meals, coffee, etc.) = \$1,200

Total Package Cost: = \$87,810

Minister will structure housing allowance and salary as appropriate.

You will be considered a minister under the IRS code and will pay self-employment tax unless you have chosen to exempt yourself from that tax.

Relocation Expenses: In the event that you choose to move your residence closer to the McKnight building within three years, the church will reimburse your actual costs up to \$5,000 in moving expenses.

IV. Terms and Conditions of Employment

Start Date: On or about January 1, 2025.

Annual Vacation: Our practice is 2 weeks for 1-5 years of ministry experience, 3 weeks for 6-10, and 4 weeks for more than 10 years. Because you come to us with 3 years of full-time ministry experience, you will bump to 3 weeks of vacation after 2 years with McKnight.

Teaching at University Level – 1 class per semester.

Academic and Other Conferences – 1 per year

Ongoing Mentoring (Re-evaluate after 6 months):

1. Meet monthly with a small multi-generational group of leaders for encouragement and feedback.
2. Meet monthly with Jeff Kryder for encouragement, feedback, and training.

Bi-annual review by elders for feedback, job performance, and Ph.D. progress.

Sabbatical: After 5 years with McKnight the elders will be open to discussion and consideration of the appropriateness, need, and timing of a sabbatical.

Between now and your start date: We desire that you transition to attending McKnight by attending at least half of the Sunday morning services prior to your start date. We also encourage you to make a one-time visit to some of the Connect Groups and Huddle Groups we have during that time.

Attachment B

Email from Carson Reed to Dave Weiler – June 17, 2024

Hello David,

I apologize for a slow response. I've been teaching a doctoral seminar this past week and finished late yesterday.

I'm excited to know that MX continues in conversations with Ethan. He is a great candidate and a gifted minister. Your MOU looks comprehensive and names important features about expectations and relationships.

The things that I would want to inquire deeper about are the mentoring expectations near the end of the document. If I were Ethan I would find it odd to find it stated that I am supposed to engage with Jeff for mentoring, feedback, and training. Mentees usually choose their own mentors and it is problematic for the outgoing minister to be placed in a position of being a person to offer feedback to the new minister's performance. Feedback would be appropriate from the elders. Yet setting Jeff into the framework places Ethan in a situation of having multiple and quite possibly varying opinions about his work. Finally, the idea that Ethan needs training seems a bit much.

Jeff has much to offer to Ethan in the transition. Yet that relationship needs to emerge through informal engagement that Ethan chooses to embrace. Placing formal expectations about that relationship could easily hamper the very thing you desire--the success of your new minister. If Ethan is your lead minister, then he needs to be your lead minister. (After Jeff's long tenure, as I have noted before, Jeff's role and relationship with the church and the new minister will require a great deal of attention.)

Likewise, I'm curious about the other notation about mentoring with a group of unnamed multi-generational leaders. That is a great idea. However, I'm not sure it needs to be in this MOU. Who picks this group? How they are formed will matter greatly. It would be much better if Ethan has a lot of agency about such a group and he would initiate it. If it is a group that the elders or Jeff develop, then it could easily become another "management" group.

If mentoring is important to the MX elders (and I believe it should be), then I would recommend that the mentoring that Ethan really needs is from an outside, experienced minister. This is a standard practice that I do see in MOU agreements where elders make available some funds for a minister to compensate a mentor. I have a couple of ideas about an appropriate person if you wish to pursue that angle.

If I were Ethan I would also want to know a little more about my relationship to the elders--how do I relate to the elder group, do I help develop an agenda for elders' meetings, am I at the table in all decision-making, etc. I would also think he might want to know what does it mean to supervise staff--does he have hire/fire responsibilities, etc. I don't think that is necessary to be fully spelled out in the MOU--yet some clarity might be helpful.

David--I've probably made this too long. Happy to follow up if it would be helpful. Blessings as you and the elder group continue your prayerful deliberations!

Peace,
Carson

Attachment C

Steve Awtrey presented at the 05.06.2024 Elder mtg.
(on-line here - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1l-1KxQVyoWcJRrJCT9GiTauoSoafmDky/edit>)

Sunday schedule for August 25th through end of the year

Here are the dates for the Sundays from Jeff’s last sermon through the end of the year until Ethan starts, if we decide to hire him of course. This is “the liminal period”. ☺

August 25th – Jeff’s last Sunday/reception after worship

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|----------------|---------------|
| September 1 - | October 6 – |
| September 8 - | October 13 - |
| September 15 - | October 20 - |
| September 22 - | October 27 - |
| September 29 – | |
| November 3 – | December 1 - |
| November 10 - | December 8 - |
| November 17 - | December 15 - |
| November 24 - | December 22 – |
| | December 29 – |

January 5th – Ethan’s first Sunday

Here are some possible names that have been mentioned from my memory. In our discussions nothing was concrete, and neither is this list. This is just a list to get us started thinking about the future. Regardless of our plans with Ethan, this is a plan that we need to put together anyway. Are there any other ideas? Other names? Suggested series or every person for themselves? **If we decide on a series, I suggest Jeff help brainstorm about the series.** I would also suggest that if preaching is done internally, that we not pay them. If it is outside of our church we give an honorarium and expenses when applicable.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Names within our congregation: | Names outside our congregation: |
| Matthew Bardowell | Mike Root (do a series) |
| Jeff Fogarty | Dale Robinson |
| Travis Myers | Siebert people |
| Kaylynn Myers * | |
| Brad Stevens | |
| Phillip Matheny | |
| Melanie Sewkarran * | |
| Eric McPherson (3) | |
| Nathan Strickland | |
| Other elders/ministry leaders? | |

* reference 2014 MX Gender Study Summary document here - <https://www.shepherd.mx.mxcoc.xyz/positions/docs/McKnight%20Crossings%20%E2%80%93%20Gender%20Summary%20Fall%202014.pdf>.