

Elders Meeting

July 15, 2024

6pm – 8pm

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

Next mtg.: Monday August 5 – Brad Stevens chair

1. Psalms 96

Remember that **God is in control !**

2. People

{{ various }}

3. Children's Minister Search

The search committee contacted [Siburt](#) for additional guidance. Had a 1 ½ hour conversation with Jennifer Schroeder (<https://www.siburtinstitute.org/schroeder>). Summary of initial discussion in July 2024 noted at **Attachment B**. Considering a **Minister Candidate Tool** (see example [here](#))

During conversation, Jennifer Schroeder gave McKnight a lead on a candidate:

- Mackenzie Clepper Kenzee510@gmail.com

4. Phase 2 – Preacher Search (Steve Awtry and Steve Walker)

All shared their disappointment of Ethan Laster declining offer (email [here](#))

As the Vision Elders restart the process there are already three possible candidates:

1. **Lane Hamm** – Lane is considering a new career and moving back to St Louis as an “Executive Minister”. See his email to Steve Walker [here](#) and at **Attachment E**. Lane has limited ministry experience but extensive administrative experience. If we were to get an Administrative Minister, like Lane, we could then get someone newer in ministry but with desire and passion, like a [Michael Santiago](#) or an [Ethan Laster](#) (part-time). Lane has not formally applied and elders decided to take a wait approach until other more traditional candidates are vetted (see below).
2. **Kerry “Rex” Butts** - A seasoned minister looking to move back to Missouri. Resume available on-line [here](#). More information on Rex on the Newark Church of Christ website [here](#).
3. **David Mahfood** – Leaving academia to pursue ministry. Resume available on-line [here](#), and cover-letter [here](#).

The above information has been added to the master summary sheet [here](#). Again, the Vision Elders will work through these candidates as per schedule/flow outlined earlier ([here](#)).

5. Preaching Schedule

Elders agreed that non-MX preachers could receive up to a \$300.00 stipend. Steve Awtry will start drafting a calendar, using the schedule noted at **Attachment C**. (also here - <https://tinyurl.com/5n9yvc37>). Steve Awtry will start by getting ~~Mike Root~~ and Jerry Jones on the calendar.

Speakers will be instructed to not address politics, abortion, LGBTQ+. or other hot-button social issues.

Proposed Sermon Series:

- A. **“You Can Count on It!”** – Hope, knowing our future is better. Presented by the elders
- B. **“Operation Everybody!”** – Talk about the priesthood of all believers. Working together for God’s kingdom. 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, 1 Peter 4, Ephesians 4
- C. **“God’s Faithfulness”**
- D. **Misc. Jerry Jones** – see **Attachment G**

Using a video series to compliment the sermons seems to work well. Need to make sure the sermons for remainder of year occasionally touch on key Gospel message.

Sunday Classes – see **Attachment D**.

6. Siburt Church Health Assessment

The [Siburt Institute](#) offers a [Church Health Assessment](#) (CHA). Email from Shelby Cole providing some information on the CHA is noted at **Attachment F**. Elders discussed if an assessment might bring value and provide actionable next steps. Value/benefit undetermined and will discuss again at a future elder meeting.

7. Jeff Kryder Retirement Reception

At the last elder meeting a budget of \$3,500 was approved for the reception (food, decorations, mailings). Steve Awtrey communicated the budget to Kari Furguson, who seemed fine with that budget.

Here are the notes from last meeting –

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 approved \$3,500 for food (main course) and decorations. Kari Ferguson will take the lead on the luncheon.

Checks for money-tree and retirement gift. To eliminate any inurement, individuals wishing to contribute will give cash or checks to Steve Awtrey, who will manage the collection and final presentation of cash (along with Karie Furgeson).

8. LGBTQ+ Conversation

Steve Walker shared the [Rooftop Community Church Statement on Gender and Sexuality](#).

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.

Other earlier discussions on the topic:

July 10, 2023 notes:

LGBTQ+ discussion – Dave Weiler mentioned study with Brian Hill and Bret Blackford on Sundays after worship. Brian Hill has a homosexual uncle and uncle asked McKnight’s position on the matter. Dave Weiler explained that McKnight’s position is that a marriage recognized by God is one man and one woman for life, but that homosexuals and those on the LGBTQ+ spectrum should be welcome to worship with the McKnight body. Books we are reading as part of this study:

1. [For the Bible Tells Me So \(the biblical-theological necessity of LGBTQ+ inclusion in the church\)](#) by Katie Hays
 - Dave, Bret, Brian Hill reading jointly
2. [Messy Grace : How a Pastor with Gay Parents Learned to Love Others Without Sacrificing Conviction](#) by Caleb Kaltenbach
3. [Messy Truth: How to Foster Community Without Sacrificing Conviction](#) by Caleb Kaltenbach

Other documents:

- July 17 Email Bulletin - [link](#)
- July 17, 2024 MXYG Newsletter - [link](#)
- July 17 Kidmin Newsletter – [link](#)
- [Rooftop Community Church Statement on Gender and Sexuality.](#) - [link](#)
- What Do Elders Do? – [link](#)
- McKnight Crossings Shepherding Model – [link](#)
- McKnight Crossings Shepherd’s Covenant – [link](#)
- McKnight Crossings Core Beliefs – [link](#)
 - Note: includes the following statement:
*We affirm that **marriage is ordained by God as a covenant made between a man and a woman, which is the foundation of the family and representative of Christ and His church.** Eph. 5:22-33; Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 2:23-24*
- McKnight Crossings – Gender Summary (Fall 2014) - [link](#)
 - Note: includes the following statements:
*We, the leadership, have asked ourselves whether we want to be among those contributing to the benefit of the next generation? If so, how? Our answer is that **we would like to do our part to strengthen the body of Christ and the mission of God, by allowing women every role our current understanding of the Scripture will enable***
*Therefore, as a leadership, at this time, **we do not believe that a woman should be the primary teaching minister (which necessarily requires leadership) for the church or serve in the role of an elder.***
*If our principles **allow women to use their gifts more fully ... We will encourage and build upon an inclusive use of gifts ... including leading worship and preaching a sermon.***

“One of the most fundamental problems in the spiritual order is that we sense within ourselves the hunger for God, but we attempt to satisfy it with some created good that is less than God. Thomas Aquinas said that the four typical substitutes for God are wealth, pleasure, power, and honor. Sensing the void within, we attempt to fill it up with some combination of these four things, but only by emptying out the self in love can we make the space for God to fill us. The classical tradition referred to this errant desire as "concupiscence," but I believe that we could neatly express the same idea with the more contemporary term "addiction." When we try to satisfy the hunger for God with something less than God, we will naturally be frustrated, and then in our frustration, we will convince ourselves that we need more of that finite good, so we will struggle to achieve it, only to find ourselves again, necessarily, dissatisfied. At this point, a sort of spiritual panic sets in, and we can find ourselves turning obsessively around this creaturely good that can never in principle make us happy.”

— Bishop Robert Barron

Attachment A

Below from an email between Steve Walker and Carson Reed. Also shared as part of the July 1, 2024 MX Elder Mtg Notes.

Proposed Scope of Collaboration Between MX and Siburt

- A. Have a Q&A with Jennifer to better familiarize Siburt with MX. This will help her to be better prepared to make recommendations to candidates who has openly expressed an interest in finding a new opportunity, as well as candidates that are on her pocket list.
- B. Discussion to better understand the role of Children’s Minister vs Family Minister and the qualifications of the candidates for each of the roles.
- C. If we establish a different direction for the role, we will have a discussion on the Job Description (JD).
- D. Miscellaneous Topics
 - a. Value of posting sites such as churchstaffing.com and churchjobs.net in addition how to best utilize Facebook.
 - b. Discussion of factors that contribute to long-term tenure.
 - c. Discussion of best practices for interim period with and without the position having an interim staff person.
 - d. Process for reviewing resume.
- E. Post-Hire
 - Factors that would promote healthy collaboration between ministers, staff and leadership.

Siburt Response:

Good afternoon. I hope you all are doing well, and I am so glad that you have people reaching out about the job.

I printed out your email and made some notes regarding estimations of time. In my experience, the most involved (and thus lengthiest conversations) of the items that you have listed in A through D would come out of items B, C, D2, and D3. I would also say that other essential pre-hiring conversations would be:

With that being said, I would estimate about 2-3 hours for all of the items that you listed in A through D, and maybe an additional 30-60 for the bullet points that I listed. If it is more about me needing to convey information so that you had the information at hand, then I could move significantly more quickly (and in even less time than I indicated above). If the desire is to give you space to really ask some questions, then it would be the upper time limit.

On the post-hire list that you made, I would estimate 1-2 hours. Again, the number is contingent upon conveyance of information versus conversation with space for questions.

And all of this would be done at the Siburt consulting hourly rate (\$200/hr, charged in 15 minute increments).

Yes, I could do multi-hour meetings. I am somewhat of a high energy person, and so I could make that work easily.

Estimate charge for services will be \$800-\$1,000.

Contact: **Jennifer Schroeder, D.Min., DMA**
Summit Director, Siburt Institute for Church Ministry
Jennifer worked 17 years as a Children Minister

Attachment B

Below summary from Steve Walker re his conversation with Siburt's Jennifer Schroeder (<https://www.siburtinstitute.org/schroeder>).

A. Have a (Q&A) with Jennifer about McKnight Crossings (MX) to better familiarize Siburt with MX.

Jennifer approached the questions from the standpoint of the most often asked by candidates.

a. Women in leadership. Are we a church that's gender inclusive. Mentioned:

- Kaylynn preaching.
- Women regularly give communion thoughts.
- Active member and contributor to the spiritual formation team.
- Worship leaders.
- Ministry leaders.
- The role that Jeannie held was briefly referenced.

B. Are we solely Acapella. Do we use instruments. If so, which instruments are we using?

B. Discussion on the Children's Minister vs Children & Family Minister (C&FM) role for McKnight Crossings.

- College graduates are being trained as either a C&FM or Y&FM.
- The components parts for equipping parents and children are interconnected and can't be separated.
- C&FM plays an important role for pastoring families and engagement with parents which is critical to the success of the children and parents' spiritual formation.
- The C&FM approach lay the groundwork for a healthy mechanism for parent and children as families transition to YM.
- Usually when churches are hiring just a CM they are viewing it more programmatically- heavily focused on the CM tasks.
- C&FM focuses on the tasks but also the pastoral and relational components - someone who can walk alongside families. A resource for the children as well as the parents.
- Generally, the FM or NexGen person usually serves as the visionary and overseer for the CM and YM and provides cohesiveness to the CM and YM ministries.

C. Once we've decided on the direction of the next minister's role, advise on job description for the role.

- Creative compensation benefits: flexibility with schedule something that's workable for both the person and ministry.
- Prioritize the parenting responsibilities of the minister. A C&FM mom with school age children may need more flexibility in the summer.

Job Description:

- Giving the candidate a clear vision of the church and what we hold as our priorities.
- Our expectations for the job read very task driven. Missing relationships driven. Relational tasks are especially important for a candidate who is more naturally relational to see him/herself in the role.
- It's a little more challenging to hire someone who will be a pastor to a group of people than hire a person to check off a task list.
- Add 5-7 relational expectations and peel away some of the things that can be inferred in the job.

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 –“You can Count on it” All elders | October 6 – “Operation Everybody” |
| September 8 –“You can Count on it” All elders | October 13 – Jerry Jones |
| September 15 – Church in the Park | October 20 – Jerry Jones |
| September 22 – “Operation everybody” (CFS Day) | October 27 – God’s Faithfulness |
| September 29 – NextGen 5 th Sunday | |
| November 3 – God’s Faithfulness | December 1 - giving |
| November 10 - God’s Faithfulness | December 8 - giving |
| November 17 - God’s Faithfulness | December 15 - God’s Faithfulness X-mas |
| November 24 - Thanksgiving | December 22 – God’s Faithfulness X-mas |
| | December 29 – NextGen 5th Sunday |

January 5th – Elders do something with beginning of the year

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 | Jerry Jones (do a series) |
| Travis Myers | Dale Robinson |
| Kaylynn Myers * | Siebert people <- decided no |
| Brad Stevens | |
| Phillip Matheny | |
| Melanie Sewkarran * | |
| Eric McPherson (3) | |
| Nathan Strickland | |

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

Attachment D

Below notes from Jeff McGlawn, noting scheduled classes for remainder of 2024.

Notes
CFT Meeting
July 8, 2024

- NT Wright series seems to be going well.
 - People are in different places in their faith journey; some still are questioning.
- There is no plan for collecting Back to School Supplies
 - Betty will check with Barb Eickele about the possibility of providing supplies for Food Pantry patrons.
- **The schedule for “But What Does It Mean – Part 2” class is set.**

Date	Name	Topic
8-Sep	Brett Ferguson	Covenant
22-Sep	Matthew Bardowell	Love
29-Sep	Steve Awtrey	Repentance
6-Oct	Travis Myers	Faith
13-Oct	Kaylynn Myers	Kingdom
20-Oct	Todd Mayberry	Justification
27-Oct	Betty Vaughn	Grace & Mercy

- **The next class after the Part 2 class will be “[Living God’s Love](#)”.**
 - Start date: 11/3
 - Teachers: Jeff Fogarty, Jeff McGlawn (if able), Tim Nicholson
 - Class Meeting Dates: 11/3, 11/10, 11/17, 11/24, 12/1, 12/8, 12/15, 12/22, 12/29
- Discussion on getting people to be more involved in Bible Study.
 - Jeff Fogarty will start a list of members not currently involved.
 - We will work on building relationships through lunch dates.

NEXT MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

Attachment D

Below is an email sent July 10, 2024. Full copy here - <https://www.shepherd.mx.mxcoc.xyz/positions/docs-24/07.09.2024-McKnightLeadMinisterDecision.pdf>

Hi Ethan,

While I haven't consulted the other MX shepherds, I feel comfortable expressing our collective sentiments. Yes, we are disappointed that you won't be working with us next year, but we fully understand your decision.

Please know that we continue to pray for you and Sarah, and we firmly believe that God has a plan for you, even if it's not at McKnight.

You are a learned man, soon to be a PhD, and a gifted speaker with wisdom beyond your years. These qualities are exceptional, but what truly captured our attention was your desire to serve God and work with His body. We believe you have a calling that extends beyond academia, and my prayer is that after you finish your PhD, you will be open to using your gifts to serve and minister somewhere.

We are excited for you and Sarah as you eagerly await baby Miriam. You may be surprised at how much a child can deepen your love and understanding of our Father.

Please continue to pray for McKnight as we trust God to guide us in our next steps. This is His plan. I may not always understand it (or like it), but I trust it will lead to a greater good, even if I never see it.

---- Bret

On Tuesday, July 9, 2024 at 10:24:11 AM CDT, Ethan Laster <ethan.laster@slu.edu> wrote:

Dear McKnight Shepherds,

I know that this may come as a disappointment, but I am writing to let you know that I will be declining the offer to become the next lead minister at MX. I just got off the phone with Jeff informing him of the decision, and I also wanted to reach out to all of you directly.

As Sarah and I prayed about and discerned this offer over the last few weeks, we found, somewhat to our surprise, that the answer kept returning to "no." There was much about this job that made sense for us—a loving church in a city we love is a rare and wonderful thing. But the more we discussed how we wanted our lives to look, and how to best live into our values given the current demands and pressures placed on us, we came to realize that saying "no" was the right choice.

The biggest factor for us was probably the time and attention I would be able to give Sarah and Miriam. By declining this offer, I have the opportunity to spend consistent time being with, and caring for, Miriam for the first 1-2 years of her life in a way that few fathers get. The closer we have gotten to Sarah's due date, the more we have realized how much we would need to sacrifice to make full-time ministry and dissertation writing work—both financially and attentionally—and it was family life that always suffered in that calculus. I also kept hearing from my family that they wanted me to prioritize my degree as much as possible, given the time and effort already invested. Programs like mine are extremely hard on families, and I wanted to honor their request to see it through.

This decision was especially hard for us, but we feel like it is the right one. I still think that ministry is in my future—it is such a wonderful calling—but after reviewing the offer, and taking the time to discern, I don't think that now is the right time.

We were so grateful for the warm welcome we received at McKnight, and we loved getting to know all of you, your wives, and the congregation you lead a little better. I hope you will understand, even if there is frustration and disappointment at my choice.

On a final note, I do want to say that I will still be around St. Louis for the time being, and while we will remain at Lafayette, I would be happy to fill in as the occasional preacher or teacher, should you be interested and have need.

Thank you, again, for your wonderful hospitality—I pray God's blessings over all of you and over your community.

All the best,
Ethan

Attachment E

Below is an email exchange between Steve Walker and Lane Hamm

Steve,

Hope that you and Gwen are doing well. I am making final preparations for All Teen week down at Neotez, kicking off on 7/21. Kim, Alanna and I will be representing the Hamm clan this year.

Speaking with Eric earlier this week on a few final camp items and he told me that your candidate for the ministry position declined to join McKnight. Sorry to hear that, very few things more disappointing than pursuing a candidate and having them turn you down.

The last time we spoke, you asked me when we were moving back to St. Louis. At that time, the answer was not sure if that would happen. Still not sure it will ever happen but I can say that Kim and I aren't that excited about being in Phoenix for a lot of reasons that I won't bore you with. In short though, we have decided that it is time to start thinking about what is next for the two of us.

I shared what was going on with me personally with Brianna and Alanna as they were with us last week. Brianna said something to the effect that, "yeah, neither of you are living your best lives." That hit me pretty hard and is accurate. I'm underwhelmed at work, underwhelmed at church and haven't played basketball consistently since leaving St. Louis. Kim often feels lonely as the church here is friendly but very difficult to penetrate on the personal relationship front. They both said they would like it if we moved back to St. Louis. So ideal landing spots would be there or Kansas or Dallas to be closer to either Kim's folks or my Mom.

As a result, I have shared with several people in my network that it is time to ramp up a job search. I'm in the process of collecting advice and looking for points of contacts with folks who can help me find what is next for us. One of my personal challenges is that I had told myself that this job was the last one. To gear up to do it again is exhausting mentally and I feel like I'm giving up on something which is hard for me to do.

One of the possibilities I am strongly considering is a move into ministry. While I don't have the qualifications on paper for it, I do have a heart for people and for Jesus. A big part of me thinks that I would like to spend the last 10+ years of my work life giving back and using the skills I have developed over the past 30 years to greater acts of service. (Another part of me thinks I'm crazy)

You know me fairly well, would love to get your thoughts as a trusted advisor.

Thanks,

Lane
Sent from my iPad

Attachment F

I am happy to give some more information about Siburt's Church Health Assessment and concur with Carson that McKnight Crossings' engagement with it can only be helpful to you all in this season! I know Carson and I shared with your elders last June when we met via Zoom that one of our resources is the [Church Health Assessment](#). We have deployed the instrument in over 55 congregations and it measures the congregation's attitudes and perspectives on nine areas we believe to be pivotal to a church's health:

- Vision, mission, and goals
- Ministry and activity effectiveness
- Family life stages
- Spiritual formation and discipleship
- Worship
- Congregational culture, communication, and conflict
- Leadership
- Church relationships
- Finance and facilities

Through an online survey link specific to your church, congregants are invited to participate and a report is made of the data collected. The areas listed above are given the category of green (perceived strengths), yellow (special attention required), or red (needs immediate attention). This report is then shared with the leadership of the church (normally during a Saturday morning gathering) and then with the whole church (normally during Sunday class time).

The information gathered from the Church Health Assessment gives data to the perceptions of the church regarding these areas, and provides a framework for conversations and next steps for the leadership. The CHA can be particularly helpful to churches who are ministerial transitions to have a tangible assessment of themselves for future conversations, and shows prospective candidates that McKnight Crossings is aware of its perceived strengths, attention areas or softer spots. Conversations that result from the report then begin to engage questions like, "How does McKnight Crossings leverage its strengths to attend to other areas? What might be the 2-3 leading areas for McKnight Crossings' leadership to purposefully engage in together? How does knowing our strengths and attention areas inform conversations with prospective candidates and strengthen the knowledge of who might be best to lead with us given these realities?"

If this raises specific questions, I'm happy to answer them. Also, if it would be helpful to engage a Zoom call for the elders to ask questions and learn more about the CHA, we can get something scheduled.

Hope this is helpful,

Shelby

Attachment G

Jerry Jones, possible interim preacher, offered some of the following topics:

1. **Who are we?** – Ephesians 1
2. **Expositions of Philippians: What knowing Christ Meant for Paul**
3. **Will God Run?** (Luke 15)

Jerry does not have PowerPoint slides for these but could create some if needed.

Jerry has been preaching some new sermons at Troy for the past two years. He has PowerPoint slides for these.

1. Jerry has two sets of sermons that might be called a series:
 - a. Two sermons from Ephesians using the two prayers. Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21
 - b. Forgiveness: Forgiveness Defined. How are we forgiven?

2. The Five Roles Barnabas Played:
 - a. Paul the Preacher – Acts 20
 - b. Exposition of Mark defining Discipleship
 - c. Security of the Believer: How Can I Know I am Saved?
 - d. Little Faith: Worry. Fear of the Future. Doubt God's Word