**McKnight Mtg**

**Sept. 28, 2023**

Brad Stevens, Keaton Jones, Steve Walker, Bret Blackford, Dave Weiler

**Re:** tension with some individuals

Shelly Chrum:

She is currently separated from her husband, and they have four children. Two younger twins and two older children (eldest is 19).

Shelly is currently fighting cancer. She was originally diagnosed and treated several years ago and has been in remission for a few years, but the cancer has returned. Shelly has relied on a cancer specialist in California to help guide her treatment.

Her eldest child, aged 19, texts with Carrie Strickland and occasionally mentions conflict with her mother. Shelly was also disruptive earlier this summer when she visited Ne-o-tez when her two older daughters were at camp. Her 15 year old daughter was going to be baptized so Shelly wanted to come down for the baptism on her way to Branson. Shelly was hoping to stay the night at Ne-o-tez but there was no room so she was asked to leave. This upset Shelly and she made a scene.

Carrie Strickland: (member)

Carrie has known Shelly for years and has a relationship with Shelly’s older children.

Mindy Kelly:

Shelly’s Dr informed her that Mindy Kelly had called their office asking for medical information confirming Shelly’s cancer diagnosis. Apparently, Mindy questions whether Shelly has cancer or the extent of the disease.

Nathanial Jones: (member)

Nathanial has a romantic interest in Shelly.

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**Possible next steps discussed:**

1. Get all involved parties together for an Elder facilitated discussions
2. Get with each individual separately to discuss issue
3. Request Shelly produce proof of cancer treatment
4. Do nothing / wait
5. pray and think over the situation and discuss on Sunday or next elder meeting

It was decided that step **5** would be wise at this time.

**Note**: Steve Walker has the elder prayer on Sunday October 1, 2023. It was thought that Steve could give an admonition to gossip, and an encouragement to work out conflict with your brothers/sisters (Matthew 5:23-24)

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**Other considerations:**

1. As elders, what is our responsibility to non-members?
2. As elders, what is our responsibility to disputes between members?
3. As elders, what is our responsibility for disputes between members and non-members?

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**Related scripture:**

Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18: 15-16; Proverbs 15:18

Proverbs 16:28; James 4:11-12

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**Update from Oct. 2, 2023 Elder mtg.**

attending: Dave Weiler, STeve Awtry, STeve Walker, Brad STevens, Bret Blackford, Keaton Jones

continued discussion about tension between Shelly Chrum and Nathaniel Jones on one side and Carrie Strickland and Mindy Kelly on the other.

Amy & Chris Jones and Erich McPherson seem tangentially involved but it was decided they would not need to be involved in any counseling or intervention.

Keaton Jones received documents from Shelly Chrum supporting diagnosis. However, documents were not evidence of any treatment, like an explanation of benefits (EoB) document..

Comments from Erich McPherson relayed by Steve Awtry:

Per Erich, Shelly Chrum wanted to visit camp Ne-o-Tez but Lane Hamm didn’t want her to come and informed Shelly there was no room. Note that Ne-O-Tez Board wants to limit who is at camp and Zoey Dickerson also wanted to vit camp but was told no. AFter Lane said no Shelly contacted Kim Hamm to see about staying at camp. EVen after these conversations Shelly still came to camp and Lane informed her that there were no beds, no place for Shelly to stay. Shelly then came back down mid-week.

Then Shelly’s daughter Camille was to be baptized on Friday. Shelly was busy Friday and wanted Camille to change baptism to Thursday, which Camille did not do (baptism was Friday).

Erich also indicated that Mindy Kelly wanted to get a referral on an Oncologist for a friend and contacted Shelly for some information. Mindy later called the cancer center SHelly used and asked for some information. Erich thought Mindy talked with Shelly and got her permission to talk with the doctor.

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Although Bret Blackford did not feel the need for the elders to get involved the rest of the elders felt intervention was appropriate. There was discussion as to what intervention would be helpful and it was decided that Steve Awtry could offer to facilitate a conversation between the group and have an elder or two also present. A voluntary invitation would be made of key parties and those willing to participate would be able to attempt to reconcile with the guidance of Steve Awtry (similar to family counseling).

However, no date of action was set and elders are to pray about this course of action before contacting anyone.

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**Update from Oct. 14, 2023 Sunday am Elder mtg.**

attending: Dave Weiler, Steve Walker, Brad Stevens, Don Fitzgerald, Keaton Jones

Below are notes from David Weiler …

Hello Bret and Steve:

Since you two missed the meeting Sunday morning before church, I said I would summarize it for you. Sorry I'm a little late getting this summary to you. Steve, I know you heard us elaborate more at the elder's meeting Monday night, but I wanted to include you in case it's helpful.

Shellie, her dad (Denny), mom (Lois), sister (Dana), and Nathaniel Jones all met with us. Shellie was late getting there, so we only had about 20 minutes before church started. Their tone was always respectful and pleasant, albeit emotional at times.

Shellie shared her and her family history with the church (Baptized at O'Fallon c of C, dad was a deacon, etc). She then told of her cancer diagnosis, recovery, and recurrence. She brought documentation like she shared with Keaton previously.

She also shared that she is still married, but separated from her husband since 2017. They are still married because his military benefits cover her and the children's health insurance. This has been of high importance to them since her cancer diagnosis in 2020.

Shellie said she has felt loved and encouraged by the church at MX, and originally by her MX small group. Eric McPherson leads it and the group includes Carrie Strickland and Mindy Kelly and several others. She told of Mindy's attempt to call her doctor in California pretending to be Shellie, and she offered to play the recording of the call which her doctor had made. We were late on time and she said she could send it to us. That has not occurred to my knowledge, but Keaton has heard the recording and says it is clear that Mindy is pretending to be Shellie to get information. Mindy has made other claims about the call.

Shellie was very clear that she wants to be at MX and that she wants our help to "clear her name". The doubts about her diagnosis are unfounded, and she does not know what else to do other than offer the proof to us as she has done.

She said her 15 year old daughter feels betrayed because texts she shared with Carrie were shown to other people. (Content of those texts was not discussed.)

Shellie feels betrayed because her phone call with her 19 year old daughter at Neotez was left on speaker for several people around to hear without Shellie's knowledge. Carrie and Mindy were among those present. (Content of the phone call was not discussed.)

Shellie's dad pointed out that Mindy calling Shellie's doctor and pretending to be Shellie was a crime. He "wants someone to be held accountable".

Brad informed them that we were aware of much of what they had shared, and that we asked Steve Awtrey to offer to meet with the affected parties together to promote reconciliation. (We decided at the elders meeting later Monday that it would be best to extend that offer to Shellie/Nathan, Carrie/LaGrand, and Mindy/Ben.)

Brad also pointed out that neither Shellie nor Mindy are members, so we are glad they attend, but we are a bit limited as elders to deal as directly as they might want us to.

Don expressed directly to Shellie and her family that we support her in her cancer fight, and that we want her to be welcome at MX and to help her however we can.

Keaton expressed that we are many members at MX but one body. All the members are loved, and we hope to get things worked out. He then lead a prayer.

Shellie and her family all stayed for the Sunday assembly, which seemed an encouraging sign.

Bret, I should also mention that Eric [McPherson] has a different opinion on how to proceed which he made known to Steve Awtrey. We decided at the elder's meeting Monday night to invite Eric to our prayer time before church this Sunday. As the leader of the small group that contains all the affected parties, it makes sense to hear his perspective. We may also need to correct him on some factual details he may not be aware of. If you can be at church at 8:45 am Sunday Oct. 22, it would be worthwhile.

That's long enough. I can fill in gaps if you have questions.

I hope your travels have been a blessing. Please keep praying,

Dave

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On **October 22, 2023**, the MX elders met with Erich McPherson. Audio available [***here***](https://www.shepherd.mx.mxcoc.xyz/positions/docs-23/10.22.2023-MX.m4a) – <https://www.shepherd.mx.mxcoc.xyz/positions/docs-23/10.22.2023-MX.m4a>.

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On **October 25, 2023**, the MX elders met for more discussion. Audio available [***here***](https://www.shepherd.mx.mxcoc.xyz/positions/docs-23/10.24.2023-MX.m4a) – <https://www.shepherd.mx.mxcoc.xyz/positions/docs-23/10.24.2023-MX.m4a>.

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**Below is an email thread from Oct. 23 thru Oct. 25, 2023 …**

Re: **Role of the Elder**

Yahoo/Inbox

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M Bret Blackford <**bret\_blackford@yahoo.com**>

To:mxelders@mcknightcrossings.org,keaton.jones@sbcglobal.net,jkryder@mcknightcrossings.org

Wed, Oct 25 at 12:20 PM

Thank you Steve Walker,

Much wisdom in your last two email.

 --- Bret

On Wednesday, October 25, 2023 at 09:06:35 AM CDT, **Stephen Walker** <srainey6@yahoo.com> wrote:

What is the role, responsibilities and disposition of God’s Elders?

\* Watch over the church in Godly humility.

\* Settle disputes in the church.

\* Watch over the flock’s spiritual well-being.

\* Pray without ceasing.

\* Work with God when we are fearful.

**Elders are to watch out for the church in humility.**

1 Peter 5:1-2

*1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed:*

*2 Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve.*

**Elders help to settle disputes in the church.**

Acts 15:1-2

*1 Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”*

*2 This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.*

**Elders are to watch out for the spiritual life of the flock.**

Hebrew 13:17

*Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.*

**Elders are to spend their time in prayer and modeling the words of God**.

Acts 6:2-4

*2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.*

*3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them*

*4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”*

**Fear of persecution, loss or reputation should not stop God’s children from doing His work.**

2 Timothy 1:7

*7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*

 I respect and honor each one of you. I apologize if I am misrepresenting some of you when I write not one of us is equipped to handle this situation alone. However, God brought this group of Elders together to teach, lead and protect His flock. I acknowledge I don’t have answers or certainly about next steps and there is a likelihood we will experience some unpleasant things ahead. I believe by prayerfully, trustingly, obediently moving forward is what we are called to do in this situation.

On Oct 24, 2023, at 7:49 PM, **Stephen Walker** <srainey6@yahoo.com> wrote:

I think the intent is a good one. We understand our intention but I wonder if generalizing something is amiss without being specific (which I’m not recommending we be specific) may be confusing to the majority and possibly open the the door to inquiries and/or speculation.

Sent from my iPad

On Oct 24, 2023, at 7:29 PM, **M Bret Blackford** <bret\_blackford@yahoo.com> wrote:

All,

I just checked and it looks like I have the Shepherd's prayer this Sunday 10/29. Give some prayer and thought on if we want to use this as an opportunity to talk in a general way about love and forgiveness.

 ---- Bret

On Monday, October 23, 2023 at 06:59:00 PM CDT, **Steve Awtrey** <steve.awtrey@gmail.com> wrote:

This is a complicated situation to say the least. I can't make it tomorrow because of my counseling. Our involvement and approach is a head scratcher! Here are the main issues that come to my mind as I look at everything after we have talked with both sides.

1. Mindy appears to have lied in calling her doctor. She asked permission from Shelley but it seems that Mindy took it further than what she had stated. Mindy apologized but it appears that she did not apologize for what she truly did. It could become a legal issue but Shelley stated that she was not going to pursue it. It seems like Mindy needs to go back to Shelley and have another discussion and another apology.
2. Camille talked to her mom on the phone under false pretenses. She lied to her mother about others listening. It appears that Carrie and Alexandra Striker were a part of the deceit. That should be dealt with and apologies made for the false pretenses.
3. Shelley has been diagnosed with cancer and has been treated for several years. We should recognize that and affirm her struggle with this.
4. Many believe Shelley has some significant mental health issues but we don’t know her full health history. As we deal these issues, this should be considered.
5. Shelley insisted on coming to camp but did not get permission from the director, Lane Hamm. This one is out of our arena but knowing this might confirm some other actions that seem unusual.
6. Shelley is married and dating someone that is not her husband. In their minds they are divorced but not legally, because of financial reasons. I really don’t know how you deal with this or if that should be dealt with. She is not a member but she is dating a guy that is a member. I am not sure how that should be dealt with or if it should be dealt with in this situation but we can’t ignore that fact.

> On Oct 23, 2023, at 12:44 PM, **dave-n-amy-weiler**@juno.com wrote:

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> Hello All:

> I appreciated the discussion with Eric yesterday before church. I recommend we not wait until our next elder's meeting on 11/6 to process it and decide if this changes our action plan. I can think of two options to confirm consensus:

> **Option 1**) We share our thoughts on this email thread and see if we are on the same page. (I still think we should proceed with Steve A and another elder initiating a voluntary meeting with Shellie/Carrie/Mindy as previously planned.)

> **Option 2**) Brad, Don and I will be meeting for a Finance Committee meeting at 6:30 tomorrow (10/24) at MX. We could all meet at 6pm beforehand if it's better to get together and discuss in person and in more detail what to do next and when.

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> Please reply to all to share your preference between Option 1 and 2 above. If you prefer Option 1, please also share your thoughts on whether the input from Eric should change our path forward.

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> I'm thankful for each of you,

> Dave

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**Sunday, November 5, 2023**

Shelly Chrum and Nathanial Jones were both at church.

Dave Weiler prayed for Shelly’s cancer during worship, affirming the illness and our concern for SHelly.

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**Thursday, November 9, 2023**

Steve Walker met with both Shelly Chrum and Nathanial Jones.

Some biblical context …

The Bible addresses the issue of giving false charges or bearing false witness. In the Ten Commandments, which are found in the book of Exodus and the book of Deuteronomy, one of the commandments specifically prohibits bearing false witness against your neighbor. Here is the relevant commandment:

Exodus 20:16 (NIV): "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

Deuteronomy 5:20 (NIV): "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

These commandments emphasize the importance of truthfulness and honesty in interpersonal relationships and legal matters. Giving false charges or false testimony can lead to unjust accusations, harm to innocent individuals, and a breakdown of trust within a community.

In addition to the Ten Commandments, the Bible contains other passages that address the sin of false witness or lying. For example, Proverbs 19:5 (NIV) states:

"A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will not go free."

And in the New Testament, Ephesians 4:25 (NIV) instructs believers to speak truthfully:

"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

These passages highlight the biblical teachings against bearing false witness and emphasize the importance of honesty and truthfulness in one's interactions with others.