

Sept. 21, 2025: Thoughts on Announcements and Current Events

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

To: bret_blackford@yahoo.com

Date: Sunday, September 21, 2025 at 04:16 PM CDT

MEMO to FILE re: assassination of Charlie Kirk

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Don Fitzgerald <dona1dfitzgerald@att.net>

To: Stephen Walker <srainey6@yahoo.com>

Cc: Steve Awtrey <steve.awtrey@gmail.com>; Jeff McGlawn <jmcglawn@mcknightcrossings.org>; M Bret Blackford <bret_blackford@yahoo.com>; Andrew Owens <aowens@mcknightcrossings.org>; MXElders MX <mxelders@mcknightcrossings.org>

Sent: Saturday, September 20, 2025 at 04:37:51 PM CDT

Subject: Re: Thoughts on Announcements and Current Events

Bret, I love the prayer 🙏!

On Sep 20, 2025, at 4:27 PM, **Stephen Walker** <srainey6@yahoo.com> wrote:

My thoughts align with Don's.

On Sep 20, 2025, at 4:13 PM, **Don Fitzgerald** <dona1dfitzgerald@att.net> wrote:

Bret what you have written is well thought out and stated but I'm inclined to think it would not be the time...we have not mentioned numerous other tragedies over the years (with only a couple of exceptions) and I think too many people could interpret this wrongly in the current environment...principles better presented later when they can't be wrongly interpreted by specific current events.

Personally, I have been praying for Charlie Kirk's family since it happened and I am not going to judge his faith in Jesus but I do take great exception to some of his proclamations...thereby focusing differently on his tragic death than others doesn't feel right to me...just my thoughts.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 20, 2025, at 1:31 PM, **Steve Awtrey** <steve.awtrey@gmail.com> wrote:

I'm just not sure if anything should be said because of how people will interpret it. Silence on this may be a better interpretation. I'm not sure. I'll go with what you guys think.

On Sat, Sep 20, 2025 at 11:26 AM **M Bret Blackford** <bret_blackford@yahoo.com> wrote:

Guys,

I have the closing tomorrow and wanted to check with you before saying anything to the congregation. I don't know that we need to address current events, but in case you think otherwise, I've attached some possible comments for your review.

Please let me know your preference—whether to say something or keep it as is—so we're on the same page. I want to make sure any remarks reflect our shared values and avoid sounding political while pointing people back to Christ.

Thanks,

--- Bret

On Sunday, September 14, 2025 at 01:57:50 PM CDT, M Bret Blackford <bret_blackford@yahoo.com> wrote:

Fellow Elders,

I'd like to raise a question for us to consider: **How should we handle announcements in response to current events, especially when they may touch on sensitive or divisive issues?**

We have already agreed that politics should stay out of the pulpit. Still, I think we need a consistent approach for moments when events weigh heavily on our congregation or community. For example, after today's service, a few people asked why nothing was mentioned about the recent assassination of well-known speaker, Charlie Kirk. In the past, we made announcements around other national events, such as the George Floyd and Mike Brown incidents, so I think it would help us to clarify how we want to handle these situations going forward.

My suggestion is that any response should focus on biblical truths rather than political positions—acknowledging pain, calling for prayer, pointing people to Christ—without sounding like the church or its leadership is taking sides. For instance, in hindsight, it might have been appropriate to recognize the tragedy itself and the brokenness of our world while avoiding commentary that could be interpreted as partisan.

The reality is that we live in a fallen world filled with anger, division, and “hot-button” issues. Our role as leaders is to point people to the Gospel and to model Christlike responses. As our current class on *Unoffendable* reminds us, learning to live faithfully and graciously in this environment is crucial.

I'd like to hear your thoughts so we can develop a consistent, biblically grounded approach for the future.

— Bret

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Heavenly Father, We come before You grateful for Your love and mercy.

Today, we lift up the work of *Church on the Streets* and all efforts to feed, clothe, and care for the poor, hungry, and hurting in our city. Give us hearts of compassion and hands willing to serve, so that Your love may be seen through us.

Help us resist the temptation to choose only what is easy or comfortable. Teach us to love one another as family—especially when we disagree on politics, economics, or other matters of life. Unite us under the lordship of Christ and the common bond of our love for You.

May our lives reflect sacrificial generosity—toward each other, toward our neighbors, and toward those in need.

We thank You for bringing Andrew to serve as our Lead Minister. Fill him with Your Spirit and wisdom so that he may boldly proclaim the good news of Jesus and help us grow in our love for You and for one another.

We also lift up Jeff Fogarty and Alex Hill as they minister in France. Strengthen and encourage them as they serve and bless the believers there.

Lord, we know the enemy seeks to deceive and divide. We ask for healing in our divided nation. Use times of anger, frustration, and uncertainty to open doors for us to share the hope and truth of Your Kingdom—a Kingdom greater than any earthly nation or culture.

May Your peace go with us as we leave this place, and may Your Spirit guide us in all we do.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

NOTE: This was not shared with the congregation

Church,

As we come to the close of our worship today, I want to pause and recognize what's happening around us. Recent events in our country, like the assassination of Charlie Kirk, have stirred up a lot of tension. People are taking sides and emotions are running high.

Current events in our country have again awakened us to the fact that we live in a broken and corrupt world. The events of the past week have not changed that but just brought to the surface the reality that has always existed – there are spiritual battles we are not always aware of but occur daily. I hope the friction in America will teach us a couple things:

One – we need to be reminded that we are living in a broken world and that Satan, the great deceiver, is real and always working, even when things seem to be quiet and peaceful.

Two – we need to show each other charity. Not as in sharing our wealth, but charity as in given the other person the benefit of the doubt. I am speaking here especially to this body of believers here at McKnight. Our first impulse should be to assume that our brother's motivation is good and pure. My guess is that we are all 99% aligned on the issues but differ in implementation. As an example, I know all of us believe it is right and proper to follow our Lord and to feed the hungry and take care of the poor, the widow, and the orphan. We may differ on how we feel best to do that but our motives are the same. I even feel it is good to discuss how we might best carry out these activities in the most efficient, effective, and pragmatic way. However, we should not criticize those who may have different opinions on how best to do God's work. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord warns us to not call our brother a "fool". Think about how we respond to social media posts. It is so easy for us to purposefully jab at someone we disagree with.

In Junior High school I struggled with math and often got problems wrong. That did not make me morally weak or a sinner. I was just ignorant. We should be able to disagree on how to solve problems without it always being labeled an issue of spiritual character.

Three – Christ went out of his way to NOT have a political message.

Again, we should try and be as effective as we can in carrying out the wishes of our Lord. And I firmly believe there is right and wrong in this world. But we need to extend charity to one another. The pulpit should not be a place where politics is discussed and God's name should be glorified regardless of what political party is running our country or even if our church is in a different country, like France.

I hope we are sensitive to the harm and damage that occurs around us, both in our society but mostly in the people we interact with. May we always remember that only the Gospel message can bring true healing, peace, and purpose.

If you have concerns or questions about how we as a church should react please come and talk with one of the elders. Especially if you feel raw about something specific.