

Elders Meeting Agenda & Notes

April 14, 2025

6pm – 8pm

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

Next meeting: **April 21, 2025**

1. **Ross Brown Concerns** – Due to time constraints at our April 7 meeting, we were unable to fully address the concerns brought by Ross Brown. This special meeting was called primarily to discuss those concerns.

Some of the concerns Ross Brown mentioned ...

- a. Influence of a Vocal Minority

Ross expressed concern that the elders might be swayed by a vocal minority rather than acting on what we collectively believe is right.

The elders appreciate the number and thoughtfulness of the responses received from the congregation. While we carefully considered the feedback, our decision was based on what we believe is best for the congregation and the church as a whole—not on fear or pressure. We recognize that unity will require grace from all sides, given the congregation’s diversity in theology (traditional vs. progressive), culture (Southern/Northern), and background. The elders are committed to leading with conviction and are not afraid to challenge the congregation when necessary.

We acknowledge that our culture is currently very sensitive (hypersensitive) to various hot-button issues. As leaders, our challenge is to navigate these concerns without compromising Biblical truth.

- b. Follow-Up on Congregational Feedback

Ross asked whether elders follow up on vague or subjective feedback, such as comments about a candidate’s “delivery.”

We agreed that personal follow-up conversations are important, though often uncomfortable and avoided. When individuals feel unheard or marginalized, it is our responsibility to engage them directly. People need to be heard (though not always affirmed) and sometimes lovingly challenged.

- c. Can a conservative white southern man be Lead Minister at McKnight?

The elders believe the answer is yes. Our willingness to seriously consider John Gunter—a conservative, fundamental preacher—demonstrates this.

Ross indicated he plans to continue worshipping at McKnight but will also visit other churches with his family about once a month. While understandable, we discussed whether this is spiritually healthy. One analogy shared: if a marriage is struggling, is it helpful to periodically date others to evaluate your commitment?

2. Homosexuality and LGBTQ+ Issues:

This is a complex and culturally sensitive topic, and we agreed it warrants deeper discussion at the **May 10 Elder Retreat**. Key questions include:

- When and how should the church respond?
Should we poke a sleeping bear? Is there a current issue forcing this decision? Should this be an announced decision or just a position we affirm as elders?
- How should we deal with those personally struggling with LGBTQ+ issues?
Do we allow them to worship with us? Do we exclude LGBTQ+ from our worship? Do we draw the line at those wanting membership?
- How then do we handle similar non-LGBTQ+ issues?
Do we call out all forms of promiscuity outside of marriage? Do we address publicly or case by case?

3. Next Preaching Series. The following was presented by Steve Awtrey, however, is subject to change:

Date	Series	Topic	Preacher
April 27	Small Things Wise and Wonderful	Galatians 6:10	Jeff Kryder
May 4	Small Things Wise and Wonderful	Mathew 25	Susie Burge
May 11 Mother's Day	Small Things Wise and Wonderful	Feeding the 5,000	Eric McPherson
May 18	Senior Day		Nathan Strickland
May 25 Memorial Day	Small Things Wise and Wonderful	1 Corinthians 12 "The Least"	Matthew Bardowell
June 1	Start work on next preaching series (A)		
June 1	Small Things Wise and Wonderful		Melanie Sewkarron
June 8	Small Things Wise and Wonderful		Katie Holloway
June 15 Father's Day	Small Things Wise and Wonderful	Matthew 18:20 "Where 2 or 3 are gathered"	Chris Fuller
June 22	Small Things Wise and Wonderful	Luke 2:36-38 The Prophetess Anna	Jason Vincent
June 28	Next Gen		Nathan Strickland

4. Jeff Kryder Assisting with Sermon Development (and delivery)

Jeff Kryder has offered to assist with sermon development and preaching while we continue our search for a new Lead Minister. His proposal:

Do you think it would be helpful for the church for me to preach and coordinate and mentor the preaching part-time while you continue to do administration? I might be willing to do 2 sermons a month, design the series and coordinate 2 others each month. Of course, for reasonable pay. Just a thought.

- *Only if it will be helpful*
- *The church's feedback in response to my message has been quite high. Though there may be some less than enthused.*
- *I don't see it as permanent.*
- *I think pay is appropriate in light of the commitment.*
- *I would still be able to travel.*
- *I will still continue to work with Betty on Christian Formation.*
- *No additional pastoral or funerals or weddings expected.*

Elder response was mixed. Some were enthusiastic; others expressed caution, referencing the Siburt Institute's advice about the value of a liminal (transitional) period. We will continue to reflect, pray, and revisit this conversation.

5. Leadership Development

Again, we recognize the need to identify men in the congregation who have the potential to be Shepherds. We need to start taking more active steps to meet with these men and start inviting them to sit along side the Elders. We should also commit to being intentional in mentoring, putting time on calendars to meet individually with these men to disciple.

Here is a tentative list of men identified previously (per Bret). Note, we plan to discuss the restriction of divorce as a criterion, so the list may increase after that discussion.

- Matthew Bardowell
- Cas Grimshaw
- Jason Vincent
- Greg Walton
- Leon Sewkarran
- Others ???

6. Lead Minister Candidate:

We agreed to meet with [Andrew Owens](#) on April 26 for further consideration.

Depending on that meeting, **Steve Awtrey will reconnect with [Josh Nix](#)** to gauge his interest in revisiting the Lead Minister role (see prior correspondence on this topic - [here](#)).

Misc. Documents:

1. 2024 Member Info: Births, Baptisms, etc. – [link](#)
 2. Sr. Minister Search Summary document – [here](#)
 3. **2014 MX Gender Study: Women’s Role** – [here](#)
 4. **2025 MX Gender Study: Women’s Role** – [here](#)
 5. Communion Guidelines – [here](#)
 6. **What Do We Believe?** – [here](#)
 7. Betheline Outreach Center – [link](#)
 8. Qualification of an Elder: Study Documents – [here](#)
 9. What Are Elders supposed to Do? - [link](#)
 10. MX Shepherding Covenant – [link](#)
 11. MX Shepherding Model – [link](#)
 12. MX Core Beliefs – [link](#)
 13. MX Core Values – [link](#)
 14. Instrumental Music in Worship – [link](#)
 15. MX Welcome Packet (for new members) – [link](#)
 16. Elder Hospitality: draft document – [link](#)
 17. Mauritius – Camden Subarayadu March 2025 newsletter - [link](#)
 18. **2025 Church Calendar** - [link](#)
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Philippians 4:6–7 – *Peace That Guards Your Heart*

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”