

Elders Meeting Agenda & Notes

July 21, 2025

6pm – 8pm

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

Next meeting: **August xx, 2025**

1. Devotional

- Ezekial 24 – a Shepherd’s Job Description
 - Strengthening the Weak
 - Praying over the Sick
 - Binding up the Injured
 - Searching for the Lost
 - Bringing Back Strays
- Verses 4-6 results of bad shepherding
- Versus 11-16 work of a good shepherd
- Soul Care and Spiritual Formation is a crucial organizing principle for elders

2. People

{{ various }}

3. Kaelble’s for Unity in Diversity (UiD)

Steve Walker has approached Alan and Suzanne Kaelble to restart this ministry. All elders except Bret supported restarting this ministry. Bret feels it best to let this ministry go fallow (more detail on concerns noted on-line [here](#)).

Alan and Suzanne Kaelble met with the elders to discuss their thoughts on the ministry.

Note: The Kaelbles have been involved in many ministries dealing with the outcast and marginalized, such as: Christian Family Services (CFS), racial reconciliation (Suzanne more so than Allan), prison ministry and reform, Room at the Inn.

- Reviewed the Unity in Diversity Mission Statement noted here - [.pdf](#) or [.docx](#).
- Summary of discussion between Steve Walker and the Kaelbles - [here](#).
- The Kaelbles expressed some reluctance about formally leading a ministry but are open to hosting occasional “field trips” to places like Crown Candy and East St. Louis.
- Kaelbles would narrow Unity in Diversity to be primarily an exploration of the African American experience, mostly here in St. Louis.
- MX currently has a racially diverse and welcoming congregation.
- Suzanne is aware that UiD can be sensitive and may risk alienating some members unnecessarily.
- Micha 6:8

This verse is a powerful summary of God's expectations: not religious ritual, but a life grounded in justice, compassion, and humble faithfulness. It's often quoted as a guiding principle for personal conduct and social ethics.

*"He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?"*

4. Documents to Finalize

- a. Andrew Owens Affirmation Service – August 10
 - Affirmation Service – Order of Worship here - [.pdf](#) or [.docx](#).
- b. Andrew Owens Onboarding Plan - [.pdf](#) or [.docx](#)

5. Small Group Ministry Reset

The health of our Small Groups was discussed and it was agreed they need more attention. We need someone to take the lead with our small groups and also feel that small group leader mentoring is important.

The *Small Group Restart* document reviewed is on-line here - [.pdf](#) or [.docx](#).

Bret Blackford may have time to provide some leadership when retirement starts October 1, 2025.

- Bret would like to meet with small group leaders to pray, plan, discuss, cast vision, etc.
- Bret would like to start 1 or 2 men's discipleship groups

6. Future of Eldership

- a. **Communication to Congregation** – not sure of dates
 - Recommend Jeff & Biata McGlawn as Shepherding couples
Use this as a starting point for a monthlong class on eldership. Will just have this one class on Sundays to maximize attendance. Will talk about the qualifications of an elder and note that "Husband of but one wife" does not mean divorce excludes eligibility for eldership.
 - Don Fitzgerald retirement
- b. Possible men: Bardowell, Kryder, Sewkarran, McPherson, Fuller, Eikle
Of the above the following were removed:
 - Kryder – best to give new minister Andrew Owens at least a year before Jeff Kryder starts as an elder. Want to Give Andrew space to find his own voice.
 - Sewkarran – a good man but needs more opportunities to lead. Possibly in Small Groups
 - Fuller – Chris has not raised young children but adopted a teenage daughter.
 - We will approach the other men to see if they are interested to sit alongside the elders for a time to understand expectations.
- c. Mentoring Plan – Mentoring of potential elders is currently informal and may benefit from a more structured approach.
- d. Time Line – TBD (discuss at next mtg)

7. Items to Discuss with Andrew Coming

- a. Elder's role for Owen's family reception/fellowship meal on August 10th. Some Info here - [.pdf](#)

8. Siebert Institute Analysis

Discuss at a future Elder meeting

Siebert Institute for Church Ministry – [Church Health Assessment \(CHA\)](#)

9. MX Parking Lot Issues

Although MX has signage stating that trucks and trailers are not allowed on our parking lots we still get occasional trucks parking or turning around in our lot. This is problematic as these heavy trucks can do serious damage to our asphalt parking surface. We discussed ways to prevent trucks and trailers from using the lot.

- We have been using safety cones to block the far south exit/entrance to the parking lot since it was sealed over a year ago. This has drastically cut down on large trucks using the lot.
- Considering adding additional cones and barriers to make it even more difficult for trucks to use our lot for turning. These cones and barriers will be moved for Sunday service.
 - Elders agreed to implement the above. It is the quickest, easiest, and cheapest of the alternatives discussed.
- Video of trucks on lot: June 21 – July 3 [here](#)
- Email discussion on problem and possible solutions - [here](#)

10. Sermon Series – The Chosen

- July 20 Jeff Kryder
- July 28 Matthew Bardowell
- Aug 3 Eric McPherson

11. LGBTQ+ Discussion Questions from Messy Grace

Discuss at August meeting. Elders to individually go through questions and answer with wives. Questions to consider from the book Messy Grace – [Attachment A](#) below

Attachment A

Messy Grace by Caleb Kaltenbach

LGBTQ+ Questions for Your Church to Consider

Would you allow a same-sex couple to attend your church?

What would the reaction be if two men were holding hands in the lobby of your building?

Could a lesbian couple who attend your church also attend a parenting class that you're putting on (because their child is in your children's ministry)?

Could an LGBT couple attend a community group or Bible study?

Could an LGBT couple serve anywhere in your church? If so, where? Why or why not?

Would an LGBT couple or person be allowed to go on a mission trip?

Would an openly gay man be allowed to attend a men's retreat if he wanted to?

What is the plan for the student ministry staff and volunteers when a teenager comes out or expresses same-sex attraction?

How do you love and support LGBT teenagers who are in your church?

Does your church have a plan to support parents whose kids have come out when the parents are unsure of how to respond?

What happens when someone involved in your church comes out and sees no contradiction between homosexuality and God's laws in Scripture?

Is your church a place where someone who has been in the LGBT community (but is currently not) can attend and be involved?

Would your church be open to having dialogue with people from the LGBT community who aren't in your church?

How does your pastor address LGBT issues in sermons?

What if a lesbian wanted to be baptized?

Could an openly gay man join your church as a member?

What would your staff do if an LGBT couple came to your church wanting to be married?

What would the reaction be if member had a sex change and still attended your church?

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](#)
 19. ***For The Bible Tells Me So***, by Dr. Katie Hays – [link](#)
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20. Elder Growth and Training:

- a. **Often Overlooked Values of High-Functioning Elder Teams** – [link](#)
- b. **Creating a Mentorship Program for Emerging Elders** – [link](#)
- c. **Best Practices for Shepherding People in the Congregation** – [link](#)

“I seemed to hear God saying, “Put down your gun and we’ll talk.”

— C. S. Lewis