

Elders Meeting Agenda & Notes

Sept. 8, 2025

6pm – 8pm

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

Next meeting: September 22, 2025

1. Devotional

- 1 Corinthians 18

2. McKnight Crossings Position on LGBTQ+ Issues

- After months of prayer, study, and discussion, the Elders finalized a position document to ensure a consistent, biblical, and compassionate response to LGBTQ+ questions.
- Purpose: Provide a consistent, compassionate, and biblical response to questions.
- Document available: **Attachment A** and on-line [here](#).

3. Conflict of Interest

- Needed for all leaders to ensure transparency and awareness of potential biases.
- Forms will be available online for completion before new leader selections.

Complete conflict of interest forms will be available here – [link](#).

4. Small Group Ministry

Bret Blackford shared updates:

- Preliminary list of small groups, leaders, and participants distributed (initial list here – [link](#)).
- Goal: A *Small Group Reset* is planned later this year to encourage participation, strengthen leadership support, and emphasize small groups as a key tool for spiritual growth
- Emphasis: Small groups are key to spiritual growth and congregational care

5. Discussion on McKnight's Leadership – What is the Role of an Elder?

- Reviewed draft document on “Role of an Elder” for Q4 teaching class. Bret Blackford prepared this draft based on previous older documents and discussions (draft on-line here - [.pdf](#) or [.docx](#)).
- Request: Elders to review and refine document for clarity and alignment with Scripture and McKnight practices. Treat this draft it as a starting place, and modify as needed to come to a workable leadership structure that provides sufficient clarity to explain the roles and responsibilities of the McKnight elders.

6. People

{{ various }}

7. Old Business

- a. Books on shepherding for consideration and selection to review together with new potential elders starting Q1 2026:
 - [They Smell Like Sheep: Spiritual Leadership for the 21st Century](#) by Lynn Anderson
 - [Like a Shepherd Lead Us](#) edited by David Fleer and Charles Siburt
- b. Hospitality – this was the topic of last Sunday’s sermon ([Sharing a Meal](#)) and has been an area we Elders have been challenged to grow in ([link](#)).
 - Elders to send list of people we have had over to our homes, met for coffee or lunch, or otherwise shared time with, to Steve Awtrey so he can get a picture of how well we are doing in this area.
- c. Children’s Minister – we are still looking for someone to fill this part-time position. Suzy Burge has been approached but unlikely to apply.

8. New Business

- a. McCarthy Brothers – the quarry adjacent to the McKnight church building will be closing in a couple of years and that land is being considered for a mixture of residential and possibly light industrial usage. More information noted at **Attachment C** below.
- b. Camp Ne-O-Tez –
 - Board failed to file IRS 990 forms; working to prevent loss of 501(c)(3) status.
 - Very low risk to McKnight’s nonprofit status but noted for awareness.
- c. Nathan Strickland to Present his “Family Ministry Analysis Project” – the question of “Why?” was brought up, and there are least three possible reasons:
 - i. Someone has thoroughly read the paper and found compelling practical reason it may benefit MX. Topic has been vetted by an elder and recommended for full Elder discussion. Recommendation should include a few sentences on why topic is relevant.
 - ii. To honor Nathan and give him an “atta’ boy!”
 - iii. No standards exist on what can be considered for an Elder meeting. Are there any guidelines to limit topics to minimize any immaterial, insignificant, unrelated, untimely topics from getting added to agenda? And are there guidelines to time spent discussing agenda items? ¹

Should criteria exist for Elder meeting agenda items?
- d. Books Referenced on mxchurch.org website –
 - All content on the church website should be current, relevant, and understood by leadership. Outdated or unclear materials should be reviewed and removed if necessary

As best possible, it is important to keep our website updated, including materials that have been referenced in the past but may now be dated or no-longer understood. An example would be books referenced at the *Unity in Diversity* page here -

<https://www.mxchurch.org/mxunity->. If none of the Elders are of why these books are referenced and have read these books or can speak clearly on content, then they should be removed. This should be the case for all content on the website – do we know why it is there, can we speak knowledgably of it, and is it still relevant?

¹ Bret recommends that only topics introduced by an elder with direct, working knowledge of the issue, topic, paper, or book be considered for full Elder meeting discussion. Items known only second-hand should first be reviewed by one of the Shepherding subgroups (Vision, Administrative, or Pastoral). If the reviewing elder or subgroup believes the matter warrants broader attention, they can then recommend it for inclusion on the full Elder meeting agenda. Recommendations should also include a brief explanation of why the topic is relevant and important for consideration. This approach helps ensure meetings remain focused, efficient, and informed while still allowing important issues to be addressed.

9. Devin Daniel

The Elders still see potential in Devin working in ministry at McKnight. He might be very helpful in working as a Family or Small Group minister. Steve Walker and Steve Awtry plan to have a discussion with Daniel this week to explore Daniel's interest and possible part-time opportunities at McKnight church.

It is important for our new Lead Minister, Andrew Owens, be involved in any later substantive discussions to make sure he is aligned.

10. Next Meeting:

- September 22, 2025

Action Items:

1. Complete conflict of interest forms (All leaders)
2. Submit hospitality outreach lists to Steve Awtry (Elders)
3. Review "Role of an Elder" draft before Q4 class (Elders)
4. Meet with Devin Daniel re: ministry role (Steve Walker & Steve Awtry)
5. Monitor Rock Hill Quarry closure plans (Brad Stevens)
6. Review MX website content for accuracy and relevance (All Elders)

Attachment A

McKnight Crossings Position on the LGBTQ+ Community

Introduction

In recent years, American culture has experienced significant shifts in the areas of gender, sexuality, and identity. These cultural conversations have also surfaced within our congregation, raising questions about how the McKnight Crossings Church of Christ should engage with the LGBTQ+ community.

The Elders have spent many months in prayer, study, and discussion on this important issue, including extended conversations during our May 2025 retreat and in our August 18, 2025, Elder meeting. This statement summarizes our current position and provides guidance for how we intend to shepherd the church with both conviction and compassion.

Our Convictions

After prayer, study, and discussion, we affirm the following:

- Marriage is a sacred covenant designed by God between one man and one woman.
- We hold to Scripture's teaching that same-sex relationships are not consistent with God's design.
- At the same time, we warmly welcome all people — including those in the LGBTQ+ community — to join us in seeking Jesus.
- As with every form of brokenness — greed, gossip, addiction, pride, and more — we extend both grace and truth:
 - Grace: to love people as they are.
 - Truth: to call all people to transformation in Christ.

We desire to be a church where it is safe to belong while learning to believe, and where every person is invited into the lifelong journey of becoming like Jesus.

Ministry Practice

As we seek to live out these convictions, the Elders provide the following guidance:

1. Baptism and Salvation

- We will not require perfection before coming to Christ.
- Therefore, individuals from the LGBTQ+ community may be baptized and begin their walk of faith at McKnight Crossings.

2. Participation in Church Life

- We welcome all people to attend worship, classes, and fellowship activities.
- As with other social norms, appropriate behavior and respectful conduct are expected (e.g., avoiding crass language, dressing modestly). Concerns will be addressed privately and lovingly.
- Individuals experiencing same-sex attraction may participate in many ministries (e.g., Food Pantry, AV team, building maintenance, service projects). Leadership and teaching roles will remain aligned with our core beliefs.

3. Membership and Discipleship

- McKnight Crossings encourages all believers to pursue a lifestyle consistent with the mission and teachings of Christ.
- For those in the LGBTQ+ community, this means affirming God's design for sexuality and marriage. While same-sex attraction itself is not sin, acting upon those desires in same-sex relationships is inconsistent with biblical teaching, as is acting on heterosexual desires outside of marriage.
- We distinguish between those who experience same-sex attraction and remain celibate, and those who are actively practicing homosexuality.

4. Marriage and Weddings

- Because we hold to the biblical covenant of marriage as between a man and a woman, we will not permit same-sex marriages to be performed in our building.
- Likewise, Elders and ministers of McKnight Crossings will not officiate same-sex weddings.

Our Aim

The mission of the church is not to make people comfortable, but to make disciples of Jesus Christ. This call to discipleship requires change from all of us and often brings discomfort — yet it is the only way to find true life, purpose, and joy.

Our commitment is to walk alongside all people with love, patience, and humility, extending the same grace we ourselves have received, while holding firmly to God’s Word as our guide.

Resources and Ongoing Reflection

In forming this position, the Elders considered the questions raised in *Messy Grace* by Caleb Kaltenbach (see [link](#)). These questions continue to help us think carefully about how to extend both hospitality and holiness in our ministry.

Attachment B

From: **Nathan Strickland**

To: MX, and 2 others · Wed, Aug 13 at 4:14 PM

Message Body

MX Leadership,

I'm excited to share that I have officially completed my first course for my Practical Ministry graduate certificate. This summer I had the blessing of taking "Church and Family Ministry," finishing with a 98.19% in the class.

My final project was a Family Ministry Analysis that I conducted on our very own church, as most of you know. I was waiting until it was graded to share. I got a 24/25, with this comment left from my professor:

"Thank you for this carefully written description of your congregation and its context, people, vision, and resources. You balance appreciation of what is with an attainable challenge for the future."

That being said, as promised, I am sharing my final results with you. I created the MX Family Ministry survey, which collected 63 responses. You can access results here or from Google Drive (MXSharedFiles -> Surveys). These responses aided my final project. I believe there are some good, insightful, and interesting responses here. I highly recommend going through them together.

[MX Family Ministry Survey Results \(Google Form\)](#)

[MX Family Ministry Survey Results \(Google Sheets\)](#)

The main piece is the actual FMAP. Read it, digest it, learn from it, pray over it. I read many books and did much research this summer in preparation for this. I'm happy to have had the opportunity to work on this in hopes of furthering MX's family ministry practices!

Let me know if you have any questions or comments about it. I'd be happy to discuss. Thanks!

NOTE: Copy of the [Family Ministry Analysis Project](#) is available on-line here – [link](#).

Attachment C

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

From: M Bret Blackford <bret_blackford@yahoo.com>

To: MX MXElders <mxelders@mcknightcrossings.org>; Jeff McGlawn

<jmcglawn@mcknightcrossings.org>; Andrew Owens <aowens@mcknightcrossings.org>

Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 at 02:37:42 PM CDT

Subject: Rock Hill Quarry Closure Plans & Potential Impacts on McKnight Crossings

All,

As mentioned previously, the Rock Hill Quarry is planning for closure over the next several years. Because the quarry property directly borders the McKnight Crossings Church property, it will be important for us to understand the scope and timing of these plans.

Specifically, we will want to monitor:

- **Traffic impacts** during the landfill closure and any future redevelopment
- **Noise and dust** concerns from construction and capping activities
- **Potential effects on property values**, including both the church and our rental properties along Rock Hill Road

Brad Stevens will touch on this topic in our meeting tomorrow, but I wanted to share the official Rock Hill Planning & Zoning Commission meeting materials in advance:

- [Meeting Packet PDF](#) (Bret's summary of packet here - [link](#))
- [Planning & Zoning Commission Website](#)

The packet includes details about the **Rock Hill Quarries Plat 2** proposal:

- The property totals **76.7 acres**, most in Ladue, with a small portion along McKnight Road in Rock Hill.
- The landfill (Lot B) will be **closed and capped within the next 2 years**.
- The remaining land (Lot A) will be consolidated for **future redevelopment**, with plans yet to be determined.

As we learn more, we will need to stay informed about public hearings and engage with city officials to ensure the church's interests are represented.

— Bret

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](#)
 20. Steve Walker’s draft MX Organization Chart – [link](#)
 21. MX Leadership Development Model (draft) - [link](#)
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22. Elder Growth and Training:

- a. **Often Overlooked Values of High-Functioning Elder Teams** – [link](#)
- b. **Creating a Mentorship Program for Emerging Elders** – [link](#)
- c. **6 Best Practices for Shepherding People in the Congregation** – [link](#)

“Chesterton's fence is the principle that reforms should not be made until the reasoning behind the existing state of affairs is understood. The quotation is from Chesterton’s 1929 book [The Thing](#), in the chapter entitled “The Drift from Domesticity”:

In the matter of reforming things, as distinct from deforming them, there is one plain and simple principle; a principle which will probably be called a paradox. There exists in such a case a certain institution or law; let us say, for the sake of simplicity, a fence or gate erected across a road. The more modern type of reformer goes gaily up to it and says, “I don’t see the use of this; let us clear it away.” To which the more intelligent type of reformer will do well to answer: “If you don’t see the use of it, I certainly won’t let you clear it away. Go away and think. Then, when you can come back and tell me that you do see the use of it, I may allow you to destroy it.”

— G. K. Chesterton