

Parent Commitment Plans - Bret's thoughts

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

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Date: Wednesday, August 6, 2025 at 07:13 AM CDT

Let me provide some background and context for myself and others to help respond to suggestions outlined below.

Background/Context of Parent Commitment / Children's Dedication Sunday

The birth or adoption of a child is one of life’s most significant moments. During this season parents naturally focus on nurturing and dreaming about their child’s future. At McKnight we want to encourage parents to place their highest priority on raising their children to know, love, and honor our Heavenly Father.

To support this goal, McKnight offers a special opportunity—either individually throughout the year or collectively on a designated Sunday—to *charge and encourage parents* to raise their children according to God’s Word. During this time, the *congregation also accepts a role*, committing to support these families by praying for them, supporting children’s ministries, and modeling Christ-like living for the next generation.

What Parent Commitment / Children's Dedication Sunday is not

This is not a christening, confirmation, sacrament, or requirement for membership. It does not replace the child’s future, personal decision to follow Christ and be baptized. Rather, it is a moment of dedication—both for parents and the church family—to help the child grow in faith and knowledge of God until they are ready to make their own spiritual decision.

Target Audience

Any parent who has a young child they would like to commit to the Lord. We would hope the parent(s) would be a committed member of the McKnight Crossings church but we would still welcome any parent who with some ties to McKnight.

Response to Jeff's Proposal

With this context in mind, I believe the plan Jeff has outlined is thoughtful and aligns well with our core goals. The fellowship celebration is not essential, but it seems fitting and offers a meaningful time for connection.

While I personally prefer individual dedications soon after a child’s birth, I recognize that a group setting is practical, efficient, and offers a special opportunity for celebration and shared encouragement.

A couple of thoughts on specific elements:

- Laying on of hands: I’m not in favor of inviting the congregation to come forward and surround the families. In my experience, this often becomes a logistical distraction with limited benefit. I’d suggest we consider alternative ways to show congregational support.
- Decorations / Photo Area: I assume “light decorations” means simple or minimal, not decorations involving lighting. I’m neutral on the idea of the photo/selfie area—it’s a nice touch, but possibly more effort than it’s worth given how quickly families with young children often leave after service.

Thanks to Jeff McGlawn and the team for the planning and creativity going into this.

— Bret

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

From: Jeff McGlawn <jmcglawn@mcknightcrossings.org>

To: Kaylynn Myers <kmyers@mcknightcrossings.org>; MX MXElders <mxelders@mcknightcrossings.org>; Andrew Owens <aowens@mcknightcrossings.org>; Andrew Owens <aowens080@gmail.com>; Nathan Strickland

<nstrickland@mcknightcrossings.org>; Elizabeth McPherson <emcpherson@mcknightcrossings.org>

Sent: Tuesday, August 5, 2025 at 09:12:28 PM CDT

Subject: Parent Commitment Plans

Hi All (yes this is going to everyone and their brother and sister 🙌)

I wanted to get your thoughts on this idea we came up with today, before I work on the Letter to the Parents, which I hope to send out by next Friday (8/15) at the latest.

Here's a brief outline of how I envision this year's Parent Commitment event (Sept 28). We have 6 babies. It will be a bit different from the past two that Jeremiah led, but I believe these changes will make things smoother and more meaningful for everyone involved.

The morning will begin at **9:00 AM**, with families arriving in preparation for the commitment. This year, we're encouraging families to come early, and we may offer photo opportunities during this time as an incentive to arrive before 9:30.

Worship will begin at 9:30 AM. After the opening song, we'll offer a brief introduction, followed by bringing the parents and their child(ren) on stage. The details of this portion will be finalized as we get closer, but we plan to conclude it with one of the elders leading a special prayer. **Members of the congregation will be invited to come forward and lay hands on the families as a sign of love and support.**

After service and class, we'll host a **fellowship celebration** honoring the children and the families making this commitment. There will be a designated space for them, with light decorations, a slideshow playing, and a special photo/selfie area for families and friends.

Our goal is to:

- Help the congregation recognize and welcome the newest children and their families
- Surround the parents with love and support from the church family
- Celebrate together as a unified congregation

Let me know your thoughts or if anything needs to be adjusted.

Jeff

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Jeff McGlawn

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