

Covenant Presbyterian Church of Athens, Inc.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING/CORPORATION MEETING

November 15, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. via ZOOM

- I. Welcome, Calling Quorum, and Opening Reflection – Mark
- II. Presentation of Annual Budget – Pam Knox
- III. Review of Pastor’s Terms of Call – Rindy
- IV. Report by the Neighborhood Ministries Coordinator – Travis Williams
- V. Report from the Re-Opening Task Force – Julie Bower
- VI. Reading of the Minutes – Luanne Rigsby

**Covenant Finance Ministry Report
Congregational Meeting**

11-12-2020

On June 23, 2020, the Finance Ministry Team recommended a 2020-2021 annual budget to session for its approval. It was approved by session at the July Session meeting. Since then the Finance Ministry Team has met monthly to address current and ongoing financial issues of the church.

Our work includes tracking monthly income and expenses, and we can report that pledges received through October 31st are higher than anticipated pledges. The congregation should be thanked for this faithful giving with pledges being made both by mail and the church's online giving program.

The Finance Ministry Team is in the process of three financial projects on behalf of the church:

- 1) We are in the middle of conducting two financial reviews to verify that we are following sound, financial practices. The first review covers the Central PCUSA church's finances from its beginning through the close and final transfer of funds to Covenant. The second is a review of Covenant's 2019-2020 fiscal year's accounting records. Both of these reviews will be completed by December 31, 2020.
- 2) We are reviewing and reassessing Covenant's proper use of restricted fund accounts. Any changes will be recommended to session for approval by December 31, 2020.
- 3) We are analyzing the church's cash surplus in order to make a determination and recommendation for the proper stewardship of monies that may be available beyond the monies needed for ongoing operations during the 2020-2021 budget year. A report on the cash surplus will be presented to session for its input by December 31, 2020.

The goal of all of these financial reviews are to have as much information as possible for the reassessment of the 2020-2021 budget in January 2021. The original budget was created without knowing the impact the pandemic would have on our church. Taking a fresh look at the budget mid-year is appropriate to reassess how things have changed over the first six months. This will allow session and all church ministry teams to plan and budget for programs for the remainder of the budget year.

I want to thank the Finance Ministry Team members for their time and faithful service to Covenant's stewardship efforts. On behalf of the Finance Ministry Team, we want to thank all who continue to contribute to the work of the church. Your faithful giving during this unprecedented time is a truly a blessing.

Sincerely,

Bob Trouteaud, Chairperson, Finance Ministry Team

**Covenant Finance Ministry Report
Congregational Meeting**

11-12-2020

**Discussion of the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Approved Budget By Pam Knox for the Finance
Ministry Team**

Here is a financial summary of the July 2020-June 2021 fiscal year budget. The full budget is on the church web site at <http://covpresathens.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/approved-2020-2021-budget.pdf>.

The original proposed budget we sent out during the pledge drive was for \$525,230. It was ambitious but one we thought was possible. After the pledge drive began, the coronavirus drastically changed our lives and our worship at Covenant, moving us to online services and the end of all other in-person activities. Through it all, you gave faithfully to Covenant and our receipts almost exactly matched our pledges.

However, the pledges we received for the 2020-2021 fiscal year were only \$450,000, which was slightly less than what we received in pledges in 2019-2020 (\$461,484). I am sure that the uncertainty about jobs, health, and what the church should be doing in these unprecedented times all figured into your individual pledge amounts. As a result, the Finance Ministry Team asked each church ministry team to reassess what their needs were, assuming that there would be no in-person church through September, and each team provided us with an updated budget request. This reduced the total amount to about \$507,000. However, we felt that budget remained too high considering the pledges, especially since our other sources of income from rent and non-pledged giving have also been cut back severely.

The Finance Ministry Team also discussed the large surplus that we had in the 2019-2020 net budget. After consideration, we suggested to Session that some of the line items such as those for Montreat, a digital piano, and the mission trip be funded for 2020-2021 by using the excess income from last fiscal year to create a group of 1-year Special Restricted Accounts (SRAs) to pay for those items. If those accounts are not used (for example, if no mission trip is taken) then those SRAs would be closed and the amounts returned to the general fund. Session agreed and the budget was approved. You can see those SRAs listed at the bottom of the 2020-2021 approved budget with asterisks on the associated lines in the approved budget in the right-hand column.

Highlights of the approved budget include raises of 2 percent for all personnel to offset rising costs of living. We also provided an increase for Asher Hill, who has taken on added responsibilities for videotaping and producing our YouTube services, and an increase for Rindy Trouteaud to compensate her for her current workload. It also includes a position for a part-time neighborhood coordinator. Session members will also note a slight change in the compensation for Kim, our piano accompanist, since we forgot to change her compensation from 10 months last year (she started in September) to 12 months in the current fiscal year. The Community Outreach Ministry Team also recommended a restructuring of our local outreach gifts to better reflect the current neighborhood needs that Covenant supports. The rest of the changes, which are mostly quite small, came from adjustments by other ministry teams. Note that because of the uncertainty about when we can return to in-person worship, we plan to reevaluate the budget in January so that it reflects how the church actually operated in the last quarter of 2020 and the current status of the pandemic, which is still unknown.

Changes in Terms of Call
for Mark Harper
2020-2021
 (approved by Session)

Mark Harper	2019 - 2020	2020-2021
Salary	\$ 61,985.00	\$ 63,225.00
Health Insurance	\$ 20,646.25	\$ 20,956.20
Retirement-Pension	\$ 9,084.44	\$ 9,220.80
Dental Insurance	\$ 1,633.00	\$ 1,633.00
Death & Disability	\$ 825.90	\$ 838.20
Housing	\$ 20,600.00	\$ 20,600.00
Continuing Education	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Professional Expense	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Total	\$ 117,774.59	\$ 119,473.20

Report on the Central-Covenant Endowment Fund

November 20, 2020

“An additional blessing we received when our sisters and brothers from Central joined us was a sum of money received by them when Alps Road Presbyterian “bought” the campus on Alps Road.

The funds are held in an account at the Presbyterian Foundation known as the Central-Covenant Endowment Fund. A committee of four members from “Central” and three from “Covenant” oversee the activities of the fund. The earnings from the fund will be used to help support selected activities in our community.”

Jim Newland, Chair

Report to the Congregation, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA

2020 Activities of the Building & Grounds Ministry Team

Repurposed CE building basement and scout closet, with new entryway and workbench as well as shelves for more efficient equipment storage and maintaining a center for supplies

Installed underground water lines, along with a computer controlled 4-sector sprinkling system, for landscaping beds along Gaines School Road front of church buildings

Acquired cost estimate for painting of Worship Center

Acquired cost estimate for carpeting of Worship Center

Procured and coordinated installation of a Storage Building for FEAST distribution carts, in order to remove them from the Fellowship Hall-CE Building breezeway

Prepared and submitted a proposal to the Session recommending purchase of a solar panel array to produce electricity on-site, and to reduce reliance upon electricity bought from the Georgia Power grid

Posted notices at all building entrances to explain the Session's policies RE expected behavior as well as use of church property by overnight homeless residents / campers

Repaired sheetrock wear and tear in CE Building Hallway as well as in Worship Center

Conducted a COVID-19, Quarantine relieving, litter pick-up event around the church grounds for any who would attend

Collaborated with Andrew Ministry Team on the design and installation of new landscaping around the main sign as well as the street front of the Fellowship Hall near the main entrance

Transplanted various established plants, removed to allow for new landscaping, to Gaines School Road front corner of Worship Center as well as around rear driveway

Monitored use of church property by local homeless residents / campers

Maintained ongoing lawn care as well as pruned shrubs and trees around campus buildings, the interior courtyard, Jubilee Playground, and Memorial Garden

Closed off until further notice CE Building restrooms due to persistent leaks from deteriorating plumbing piping, while at about the same refurbished the main valve for one of the commodes in the Gathering Room restrooms

Approved development of a raised bed garden plot adjacent to the CE Building as an Eagle Scout project to be carried out by Wyatt Herndon

Acquired cost estimates for equipping campus HVAC units with upgraded air-flow filtration, UV light applicators, and ionizer units, in the event airflow treatment becomes a useful method for fighting the hazards of COVID-19

Installed doorway from WORM Hallway into new shower room next to WORM restroom, and repaired wear and tear to that restroom

Confirmed pricing bids for solar panel systems, in order to establish a capital funds campaign for implementing on-site production of electricity by use of solar panels

Constructed an inclined ramp up to the FEAST cart storage shed from entry driveway parking lot

Began removal of rust from exterior surfaces of steel supports in the outdoor pavilion, in preparation for repainting these surfaces

Received an electronic systems-equipment upgrade report from James Malone recommending a series of improvements to address staff and building security as well as maintaining internet connectivity and data integrity throughout the campus

Removed anarchist and anti-Christian graffiti from the WORM building exterior, and desirable repair to stucco is under assessment

Began construction of footings for a handrail and pull bar along the handicapped sidewalk near the exit driveway,

Persons most directly, frequently, and recurrently involved in these undertakings were: Hank Tweedell, Alex Clark, Brian Striggow, Rich Reaves, Linda and Phil Koehler, Zeb Hendricks, Andrew Zimdars, and Ben Bruner

Covenant Presbyterian Church

Fellowship Committee Report

2020

The Fellowship Committee is chaired by Kay Brooks and meets monthly to create and coordinate Fellowship events for the church. Although the pandemic modified the annual calendar of Fellowship events, the committee has been involved with the following:

- February – Assisted with breakfast and lunch service for the NE GA Presbytery Meeting hosted at Covenant Presbyterian Church
- June – sponsored a Zoom Scavenger Hunt and Netflix Party and Movie Trivia Challenge
- October – coordinated Zoom Halloween baking challenge and pumpkin decorating contest
- December – possible outdoor Christmas Worship

We are currently exploring innovative ways to use Zoom to connect with each other over the coming months and have lots of ideas when live (socially-distanced) activities are a safe option including: zoom classes, zoom socials and networking events, Car Rally, and opportunities to serve our neighbors together. Our best ideas come from recommendations from you, so please feel free to reach out to share your vision.

Care and Nurture of Young Children

Care for children from birth through kindergarten was provided during the 10:45 services until March by volunteers and one paid worker who provided a consistent, familiar face each Sunday. Now preschoolers have been sent books for weekly Bible stories, and their parents are given accompanying activities to do with their children.

The ministry of care and nurture of young children will be incorporated in the Christian Education ministry in the new year.

Ellen Stoneburner, Chair

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM REPORT

Sarah Shannon and Mary Barnett, Co-Chairpersons

With the abrupt onset of COVID-19 sheltering-in-place requirements, the Christian Education program moved from in-person to virtual programming. In the "BP (before pandemic) Days", we were in the process of evaluating the spiritual formation needs of a changing congregation, and we initiated several "tweaks" including programming changes that we hoped would move the youth ministry identity from a siloed youth program where our young people are segregated in age groupings with age-specific programming to a more intergenerational identity where youths and adults meet, learn, and work together. We did this based on churchwide data that showed that young people growing up in churches with siloed youth ministries tended to leave the church upon graduation because of age-specific programming that did not encourage intergenerational relationship building. While we continued to offer some age-specific programming, we added regular, monthly service opportunities for our young people to work with adults in our church and community, i.e., FEAST, various mission projects). In addition, we utilized the middle school youth group gathering time and format for confirmation classes which included a pronounced mission component that called for significant adult volunteer participation.

With dwindling numbers in our elementary school aged Sunday morning program (WoRM), we began exploring changes in our curriculum and format. The WoRM program, utilized by CPC since 2006, is based on a rotation model which was popular in the 1990s because it included a flexible volunteer schedule. It allows a church to contextualize its Sunday School program, but it also requires a great deal of coordination. It became increasingly more difficult to secure volunteers on a weekly basis due to, we suspect, spotty, erratic attendance. The downstairs children's section of the Christian Education wing is designed to accommodate the Sunday School rotation model, and it has become clear that prior to regathering, it will need renovation to meet our changing needs. The wing used by our high school and middle school young people will also need updating. It should be noted that these rooms are also used by community groups, our CAVE ministry, and overnight Family Promise guests.

The pandemic has encouraged us to explore virtual programming, and since June, we have provided families with curriculum created by Illustrated Ministry that can be used in the home. We mailed this curriculum to families with elementary school aged children every week during the summer, and since Rally Day, we have provided curriculum on a monthly basis for families to pick up and use at home. Every week the church website is updated with additional activities that families can choose to use to enhance learning. For our preschool aged children, we purchased a book of Bible stories in nursery rhyme format which were mailed to families, and every week the church website is updated with a playlist of activities for parents and friends to use with preschoolers. We try to emphasize the need to access resources on our website from the pulpit and occasional articles in the church newsletter.

Interestingly, our adult Christian Education program has gained in its robustness since the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Every Sunday we have three well-attended synchronous Sunday School classes which allow ample time for learning and fellowship - the Emmaus Road Class, the Journey Class, and the Upper Room Class. In the early spring, the Emmaus Road and

Nautilus classes merged. Midweek classes for adults continue and are well attended, too. We have been encouraged by the number of visitors, churched and unchurched, these classes have attracted.

After tracking pre-pandemic middle school and high school participation in our Sunday morning programs, we decided to invest our time and resources in the Wednesday evening Covenant Connection program. Our children and youth offerings on Wednesday evenings consistently had greater levels of participation, perhaps because of the mix of programming which included a children's choir program, the inclusion of a community meal, and the casual, open format. Every week the young people from the community using our basketball facilities were invited to participate so the Wednesday evening program was a hands-on opportunity to practice hospitality in a spontaneous and fun way. Securing adult volunteers on a weekly basis was a challenge, however, and eventually, our elementary school aged children were invited to serve our church family by helping with the meal set-up.

Although the future is a bit unclear, we do know that the pandemic has pushed us to rethink our Christian Education ministry. What are the needs of our young people and adults? How can we continue to nurture discipleship utilizing a virtual programming format? How do we meet our need for volunteers? How do we structure a vital ministry that undoubtedly will continue to change? We are blessed to have great support for this ministry...great volunteers, great participants, great resources. Thank you for sharing our commitment to nurture the spiritual formation of our church family and friends!

Congregational Care Ministry Team Activities for 2020

Congregational Care is a wonderful ministry team of active, caring, talented and engaged members. Like many of the other ministry teams, we have struggled with how to best care for the congregation when there is very little personal contact. We hosted several funeral receptions at the beginning of 2020. However, after the advent of Covid-19 in March, most of the usual activities of Congregational Care, such as receptions for the confirmation class and funerals, visitors/new member lunches, Andrew Ministry, Knitters and Knotters, home visits, meals for the sick, visiting with our homebound and transportation to appointments were put on hold.

In April and again in June, Congregational Care Ministry Team members reached out to each household in the directory (190) by email, calls or written notes. The purpose was to check on everyone and to see if they would like to be contacted periodically. We were also interested in hearing how well we were meeting the needs of the congregation during the time of quarantine and how could we do a better job at that - especially for people who don't do social media. Though there wasn't much response from the congregation to inquiries either way, those who did respond seemed to appreciate us reaching out.

One activity of our team not affected by Covid-19 has been our greeting card ministry. Mary Anna Wynes has faithfully mailed greeting cards to members of the congregation for special occasions throughout the year. Congregational Care was also able to continue our tradition of sending Valentine and Halloween Cards to our homebound and college students, with enclosed Chick Fil-A gift cards for our hungry students.

Though we suspended meal delivery to the sick for a few months, this fall we have tentatively resumed delivering meals in a Covid-safe way, if desired by recipients.

Some ideas for the Christmas season include a mega-bake of Christmas cookies to be exchanged, and/or given to food pantry clients and possibly sponsoring several needy families' Christmases.

Luanne Rigsby, Chair

WMT Activity Report 2020 for the Annual Business Meeting Nov 15 2020

The Worship Ministry Team (WMT) has held monthly working meetings throughout the year with a brief interlude during the pandemic while learning how to conduct virtual meetings. Current membership includes: Betsy Burmeister, Carol Huber, Chris Wilson, Dick Zimdars, Don Bower, Frank Allen, Jacob Douylliez, Judy Capie, Juergen Wiegel, Julie Bower, Karen Foutz, Mark Harper, Pam Knox, Rich Reaves, Rindy Trouteaud, Robyn Malone, Kim McClain, David Boardman, and Co-Chairs Jennifer Frey and Tamara Stam.

Subcommittees:

Banners, altar cloths, communion table, and narthex seasonal change ministry

Budget Subcommittee

Choirs: Adult, Children's, Chime, Hand Bell

e-Worship Team

Floral ministry

Piano acquisition, sales, and maintenance,

Re-opening Task Force

Special Services Planning

Ushers & Greeters roster and training

Normal business has included coordinating, planning, and support of the following:

2020-21 WMT Annual Budget planning, proposal, approval, January 2020.

COVID-19 revision of 2020-21 WMT Annual Budget, June 2020: the annual budget for WMT (and all other ministries) was revised and approved to reflect changes related to suspension of in-person worship during the pandemic.

Digital grand piano purchase, delivery, staff training (subcommittee led by Dick Zimdars). Acoustic grand piano is currently being advertised for sale. As no interest in purchase was expressed locally, advertising was extended Presbytery-wide.

Event planning and support – Feb NEGA Presbytery Meeting, Carol Wheeler funeral, Sept Rally Day.

Special Services – Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. Currently planning for Advent 2020, Christmas Service, and Epiphany 2021.

Weekly liturgical floral arrangement ministry support (ministry of Juergen Wiegel).

e-Worship support (e-Worship Team includes Mark Harper, Rindy Trouteaud, Jacob Douylliez, Bob Trouteaud, Asher Hill, Juergen Wiegel, Kim McClain, and extra musicians, pianists, and guests). Banners have been changed by Kay Brooks and family.

Music Intern support (overseen by Jacob Douylliez).

Bell Choir support (overseen by David Boardman). Currently practicing in small groups.

Piano repairs and tuning (Tuning and repair services were halted during pandemic while pianos remain unused. A new piano tuner is being sought to replace the current tuner who is very ill).

The Re-opening Task Force was established in June 2020 to process information and guide Covenant's response to the pandemic (led by Julie Bowers). The subcommittee recommended to the Session in September not to re-open given the danger of contagion. Experts predict very high rates of contagion through the colder months especially surrounding the holidays, thus the task force will re-convene in January 2021 to re-assess. A few small groups are meeting at the church with permission from Mark Harper and are using recommended guidelines for safety during the pandemic.

Respectfully submitted by co-chairs Tamara Stam and Jennifer Frey

Report to the Congregation, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA

2020 Activities (September - November) of the Neighborhood Ministries Coordinator:

Supported food pantry volunteers in serving more than 1,400 food insecure Athenians

Secured hot meals, prepared by UGA's Campus Kitchen program, that we distributed out to our unhoused neighbors weekly.

Assisted in facilitating efforts to financially assisting several Athens families facing eviction, utility disconnection, and other assorted family emergencies

Coordinated a collaborative partnership with UGA's Grow-It, Know-It that provided more than 75 pre-packaged dinners for low-income elementary and middle school youth in East Athens.

Worked with Athens Area Diaper Bank to coordinate a diaper drive throughout the month of November

Facilitated the first of a four-part, and ongoing, Social Justice Book Club covering Matthew Desmond's "Evicted"

Prepared to assist Athens Community Council on Aging in the preparation of meals for their annual Turkeypalooza program

Planning a toiletry drive and distribution program to help Athenians in need make it through the winter

Strengthen relationships with our unhoused neighbors

Collaborated with local school officials to present our community as a helping force

Monitored the effectiveness of the new port-a-potty