

## **Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA**

### **Stated Session Meeting**

**January 26, 2021**

A stated session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held by Zoom on January 26, 2021. Moderator Mark Harper welcomed everyone, with a special warm welcome for the new Elders joining the session: Clayton Adams, Kathy Boardman, Jennifer Frey (2<sup>nd</sup> term) and Linda Koehler. Rev. Harper declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. He then presented a devotional based on reflection by Solvig Nelson-Goodin of the Salt and Light Lutheran Church from the early verses of the Gospel of Mark. He asked us to think about “Who are the John the Baptists calling for repentance today?” and also “How many of those John the Baptists have been silenced so their call for repentance has never been heard?” Mark closed with a prayer from the Book of Common Worship. Mark mentioned that Luanne will be sending out an email asking members of the Session to sign up to present meeting devotionals for the upcoming year.

Elders present: Clayton Adams, Kathy Boardman, Don Bower, Kay Brooks, Paige Campbell, Jennifer Frey, Linda Koehler, Steve Rathbun, Rich Reaves, Sarah Shannon, Brian Striggow, and Chris Wilson

Elders absent: None

Others present: Mark Harper, Rindy Trouteaud, Bob Trouteaud, Luanne Rigsby, and Travis Williams

### **Minutes and Financial Report**

The minutes from the December 3, 2020, meeting were reviewed. Paige Campbell moved and Steve Rathbun seconded that the minutes be accepted as written. The motion was passed unanimously.

The Financial Summaries for November and December, prepared by church treasurer, Pam Knox, and a detailed report for those months were reviewed. A motion by Steve Rathbun and seconded by Chris Wilson to accept the financial reports as written was passed unanimously.

Bob Trouteaud, chairman of the Finance Ministry Team, recapped that when the annual budget for July 2020 - June 2021 was put together, no one knew what was before us because of the pandemic. There were many unknowns as to the income and expenses for the coming year. The Finance Ministry Team decided to reassess the situation at the end of December and make any needed adjustments accordingly. Bob reported that pledges have been coming in faithfully and expenses have been down for the first half of the fiscal year. The Finance Ministry Team has created a formula to assess where the financial health of the church is at any point in time.

The formula is as follows:

Start with: Cash of hand (money in checking account)  
Add: Anticipated pledges (Jan - June 2021)  
Subtract: Estimated operating expenses (Jan - June 2021)  
Add: Restricted funds accounts that really should not be restricted  
Subtract: Cash reserve for 3 months of operating expenses  
Equals: Total Cash Surplus (unexpended expenses)

The Total Cash Surplus is unexpended funds that could be used for investment in the building and grounds, the community, in the Presbyterian Foundation or in other ministries as determined by the Session. Using the formula, the Finance Ministry Team estimates that there will be approximately \$150,000 in Total Cash Surplus for the fiscal year 2020 - 2021.

Several ideas of how to spend this “manna from heaven”, which may occur one time only, in a high impact manner were presented:

Mark Harper asked that the Session take the next month and come up with concrete proposals to present at the next meeting in the following categories:

1. Housing - Homelessness prevention assistance - helping families avoid getting evicted with rent assistance, help with security or utility deposits, help with furnishing an apartment and also housing assistance for individuals reentering society after prison – Travis Williams, Sarah Shannon
2. Medical Debt - Paying off medical debt for families in Athens - Clayton Adams, Paige Campbell
3. Building & Grounds Projects - Replacing carpet, 2 furnaces, 3 toilets, stucco work and installation of solar panels – Rich Reaves, Brian Striggow

### **Ministry Team Restructuring**

Rev. Harper passed out a list of Ministry Teams with Opportunities for Service. Due to changes in the congregation, restructuring of the Ministry Teams is something that needs to be considered. Before she rolled off the Session, Ellen Stoneburner, former chair of Care and Nurture of Young Children Ministry Team, suggested that due to a lack of young children presently in the congregation, Care and Nurture could be combined with Christian Education Ministry Team. Mark mentioned that Witness and Outreach Ministry Teams might benefit from being combined. Though both Ministry Teams are concerned with missions, in the past Witness MT has focused on national or global mission efforts while Outreach MT has been concerned with local missions. The Witness Ministry Team hasn't had a chairperson in several years. Chris Wilson moved that we combine Care and Nurture of Young Children with Christian Education Ministry Team under the name of Christian Education Ministry Team and

also combine Witness Ministry Team with Outreach Ministry Team under the name of Mission Outreach Ministry Team. Clayton Adams seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

The Ministry Teams are as follows:

Building and Grounds - Co-Chairs: Rich Reaves, Brian Striggow and Alex Clark

Christian Education - Chair: Clayton Adams

Mission Outreach - Co-Chairs: Paige Campbell, Steve Rathbun, and Sarah Shannon

Congregational Care - Co-Chairs: Don Bower and Linda Koehler

Congregational Fellowship - Chair: Kay Brooks

Finance - Chair: Bob Trouteaud

Worship - Co-Chairs: Jennifer Frey and Kathy Boardman

Clerk of the Session: Luanne Rigsby

### **Ministry Team Reports**

Steve Rathbun mentioned the thoughtful video sent to us by our sister church in Olomouc, Czech Republic, and suggested we think of something we could do in return.

Mark Harper urged the Session to participate in an upcoming Czech partnership zoom meeting on March 21, 2021 on how pandemic has changed our way of being church.

There being no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by Chris Wilson and seconded by Paige Campbell. Meeting was adjourned with prayer by Mark at 8:20 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: February 23, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

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Mark Harper, Moderator

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Luanne Rigsby, Clerk