

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA
Stated Session Meeting
May 25, 2021

A stated session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held by Zoom on May 25, 2021. Moderator Mark Harper welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. He thanked Katy Terry for serving as acting clerk for the April meeting. Chris Wilson presented a devotional based on writings of Barbara Brown Taylor, on how we, as Christians, can become fully human by imitating the life of Christ and his teachings. Chris concluded with a prayer that God will help us be the kind of church that extends the love of Christ to everyone we meet.

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

Elders absent: Clayton Adams and Paige Campbell.

Others present: Mark Harper, Rindy Trouteaud, Pam Knox, Zeb Hendricks, Julie Bower and Luanne Rigsby.

Thanking Zeb Hendricks

Mark introduced Zeb Hendricks, who has been working on Covenant's grounds and property since September, 2018. Zeb has played a big part in the transformation of the property, working worked on projects including the steps and walkway from the back door to the outside worship center, the storage shed with ramp for storing grocery carts for the food distribution, the wheelchair ramp and rail, and beautification of the grounds. Zeb has also shown a caring attitude towards those in need. He will be moving back to Oklahoma next month. Mark and the Session expressed their deep gratitude for all of Zeb's contributions and wished him many blessings in his future.

Minutes and Financial Report

The minutes from the April 27, 2021, meeting were reviewed. Chris Wilson moved and Linda Koehler seconded that the minutes be accepted as written. The motion was passed unanimously.

Church Treasurer, Pam Knox, reviewed the Financial Summary for April, 2021, and a detailed report for the month of April. She stated that we are ahead of expected pledged income in our receipts by about \$8,000.00 for the year to date and that it looks like there will be a surplus of money at the end of the fiscal year. She asked all ministry team chairs to look at their team's budget and make sure all expenses are turned in by the end of June. Steve Rathbun moved and Rich Reaves seconded to accept the financial report as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

Stewardship Campaign

Pam gave an update that the Stewardship Campaign is going slowly. As of last week, there were 64 pledging units that had not made a pledge for the coming fiscal year which begins July 1st. The revised proposed budget includes salary for a technical director and \$25,000 to improve the HVAC system. It totals about \$572,000, and the estimated pledged amount is quite a bit lower than that. Pam urged everyone to send their pledges in by mail, delivery to the office or emailing to her or Karen Wetherington.

Nominating Committee Update

The Nominating Committee for the upcoming class of elders, Kay Brooks, chair, Tim Foutz and Chris Wilson, is hard at work and has a good list of potential candidates. Kay asked for additional suggestions from the Session and congregation.

Covenant Summer Camp Update

Mark Harper reported we received a MOU from UGA stating that UGA will not cover liability insurance for student interns working with "Know It, Grow It". This information has called into question whether we will be able to conduct the summer camp as planned. The church has contacted our insurance company to see if it can cover the students' liability and is waiting for a reply. Travis is working on alternate plans.

Re-Opening Update

Rindy Trouteaud reported that she had reached out to families with children, who are not eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine yet, concerning their feelings about Covenant returning to having in-person inside church services, as well as continuing with online services. Most felt that they would not attend in-person services until their children can be vaccinated but thought that we should go ahead and begin services for those adults and youth who have been vaccinated and/or feel comfortable attending in person.

Prior to the Session meeting, Julie Bower, chair of Covenant's Reopening Committee, emailed the Session a draft document, "**Guidelines to Attend the Covenant June 6, In-Person, Outdoor Hybrid Church Service Honoring Our High School Seniors**", for a brief service to be held in our outdoor worship area at 9:00 a.m. on June 6, 2021. The guidelines included wearing masks, social distancing with families sitting together, signing an attendance roster, a contact-free experience encouraging no hugging or handshaking, and no congregational singing. Chris Wilson moved that we hold the outdoor service on June 6th to honor our high school graduates. Kay Brooks seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

Julie also submitted a similar draft document "**Guidelines to Attend the Covenant Phase I In-Person Hybrid Church Services**" with the date to be determined by recommendation of the Re-opening Committee with the approval of the Session. She asked the Session for any suggestions or recommendations, regarding the document and the plan for regathering in person for worship services, to present at the next

meeting of the Reopening Committee on May 26, 2021. Julie will send the Session any recommendations from the committee after their meeting. If the Session members don't feel a need to meet to discuss the issue further, the vote will be submitted by email. Mark expressed everyone's appreciation for the careful and thoughtful work being done by the Re-Opening Committee and for Julie's leadership.

Worship Center Renovations

Rich Reaves from Building and Grounds Ministry Team reported that the committee for selecting carpet and paint colors for the worship center has been working hard and has turned in its recommendations. Rich will be contacting the companies doing the work to get a start date set. As far as the HVAC systems, Rich reported that there is no HVAC filtering system that guarantees protection from the Covid-19 virus. He suggested that we focus on things we can do to purify the air of bacteria and molds. He will send out a document to the Session with recommendations for improvements to be made to the HVAC system, as well as his suggestions on prioritizing the projects. Mark thanked Rich and the Building and Grounds Ministry Team for their hard work on renovations to the church.

Montreat

Mark reported that the high school youth will be attending Montreat this summer, leaving on June 6th after the worship service. Advisors Bert Ballard-Myer, Sue Goodyear and Mark Harper will also be attending. Our group will be staying at the Georgia Lodge.

Other

As a note of information, this Thursday, May 27, 2021, the Georgia DPH mobile vaccination clinic will be at Covenant offering Covid-19 vaccines.

There being no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by Kathy Boardman, seconded by Kay Brooks and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:26 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: June 22, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Mark Harper, Moderator

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk