

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA

Stated Session Meeting

July 27, 2021

A stated session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held on July 27, 2021, with fifteen persons attending in person and four attending via Zoom. Moderator Mark Harper welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. Steve Rathbun presented a devotional based on the book, *Inhabiting Eden: Christians, the Bible and the Ecological Crisis* by Patricia K. Tull, as well as readings from Psalms, Isaiah and the Gospel of Mark reminding us that we can all feel closest to God in nature. Steve closed with prayer.

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:

Others present: Mark Harper, Rindy Trouteaud, Pam Knox, Randy Parish, Hilary Shuford, Marc Galvin and Luanne Rigsby.

Minutes and Financial Report

The minutes from the June 22, 2021, stated session meeting were reviewed. Chris Wilson moved and Clayton Adams seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

Church Treasurer, Pam Knox, reviewed the Financial Summary for June, 2021, and a detailed report for the month of June. She stated that we were only \$2.03 short of receiving the total amount pledged for the fiscal year of July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, and we ended up with a surplus of \$26,670.14 for the year. That amount will be put into special 1-year restricted fund which will be used to fund several items which were removed from next year's budget in order to balance the budget. Pam will present a written summary for the past fiscal year in the Covenanter in August. Sarah Shannon moved and Paige Campbell seconded to accept the financial report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Budget for 2021-2022

Pam presented the budget prepared by the Finance Ministry Team for July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, as well as an overview of the budget highlighting changes from last year. The expected income from pledges and non-pledged income is \$449,547.00. When added to \$18,450 from the special restricted fund from this year's surplus, the total expenditures amount to \$467,997.00. Paige Campbell moved and Chris Wilson seconded we amend the proposed budget to move \$25,000.00 from the special restrictive fund #00916 into Building and Grounds miscellaneous account # 008264 for

the purpose of updating the HVAC system. After discussion, the Session unanimously approved the amendment to the proposed budget. The Session then unanimously approved the proposed budget from the Finance Ministry Team with the addition of the amendment.

Presbytery Report

Rev. Hilary Shuford, Northeast Georgia Presbytery General Presbyter, and Ruling Elder Marc Galvin, the Presbytery Committee on Ministry liaison, spoke to the Session concerning the “passing of the mantle” upon the departure of Rev. Mark Harper on September 30, 2021. Rev. Shuford first commended Mark and Rindy for their exceptional service to the Northeast Georgia Presbytery and to Covenant Presbyterian Church. Rev. Shuford presented the timeline for Mark’s departure. Since he has 2 weeks of unused vacation, Mark’s last Sunday to preach will be September 12, 2021, and his last day to perform pastoral duties will be September 8, 2021. Hilary emphasized the importance of “saying goodbye well” and offered a prayer for both Mark and Rindy.

Both Hilary and Marc assured the Session that they and the Committee on Ministry would be there to support and walk hand-in-hand with Covenant during our transition.

The General Presbyter outlined the steps we must take to move forward:

1. Hire an Interim minister – search committee appointed by the Session
2. Congregational Self-Study/Mission Study – led by Interim and Session
3. Congregation elects a Pastor Nominating Committee

Paige Campbell moved and Chris Wilson seconded the Session appoint the Personnel Committee to serve as Interim Pastor Search Committee. Members of the Personnel Committee include: Randy Parish, Chair, Bill Barstow, Charles Hunnicutt, Gloria Pylant and Katy Terry. Following discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

Nominating Committee Report:

Kay Brooks, Chair of the Nominating Committee for the upcoming class of Elders, reported that the nominees for the class of 2024 are: Katy McGill Arora, Bert Ballard-Myer, Abby Horvath and Valerie Stone. Mark thanked Kay and the Nominating Committee for their excellent work.

Congregational Meeting

Paige Campbell moved and Clayton Adams seconded that we call a “hybrid” (in person and by ZOOM) Congregational Meeting after the 10 o’clock service on August 15, 2021, for the purpose of:

1. Presentation of the new budget and approval of the terms of call of Mark Harper beginning July 1, 2021.

2. Election of new officers for the class of Elders for 2024. Nominees are: Katy McGill Arora, Bert Ballard-Myer, Abby Horvath, Valerie Stone.
3. To dissolve the call of Mark Harper as of September 30, 2021, at his request.

After discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

Mark reminded us that this Sunday, August 1, 2021, we will regather in person, as well as online, for worship at 10 a.m.

There being no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by Steve Rathbun seconded by Clayton Adams and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: August 24, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Mark Harper, Moderator

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk