

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA

Stated Session Meeting

September 28, 2021

A stated session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held via ZOOM on September 28, 2021. Rev. Ed Rees, pastor at St. Andrews Presbyterian in Augusta and oncoming Stated Clerk for the NEGA Presbytery, served as moderator for the meeting. Moderator Ed Rees welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Jennifer Frey presented the devotional based on a meditation from the Center for Action and Contemplation entitled "Contemplation Creates Compassion". Jennifer closed with prayer.

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

Elders absent: Paige Campbell

Others present: Bert Ballard-Myer, Julie Bower, Valerie Frey, Asher Hill, Abby Horvath, Pam Knox, Randy Parish, Ed Rees, Glenn Doak, and Luanne Rigsby.

Greetings from NEGA Presbytery Representatives

Randy Parish, Chair of the Personnel Committee, introduced Rev. Glenn Doak, former pastor of Athens First Presbyterian Church, who will serve as our Bridge Pastor beginning October 1, 2021. Rev. Doak is a native of western Pennsylvania. He was called in 1996 to Athens First Presbyterian Church from a church in Oklahoma. He has been retired for five years and lives at Presbyterian Village. Randy thanked Rev. Doak for his willingness to serve as our Bridge Pastor.

Minutes and Financial Report

The minutes from the August 24, 2021, stated Session meeting were reviewed. Don Bower moved and Jennifer Frey seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. There being no discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

Pam Knox reviewed the Financial Summary for August, 2021, and a detailed report for the month of August. She noted that pledges are coming in ahead of schedule and that \$5,000.00 from the sale of the old piano which was in the Worship Center has been placed in a restricted account. That money will be used for changes to the Worship Center. Chris Wilson moved and Linda Koehler seconded to accept the financial report as presented. There was no discussion the motion passed unanimously.

Kathy Boardman posed the question of whether the financial statements should be available for all to see. Pam clarified and Rev. Rees supported that the financial statements are part of the Session minutes and should be available to everyone to show good stewardship and transparency. Kathy Boardman then moved and Jennifer

Frey seconded we place a link in the Covenanter newsletter to the Session minutes so they may be more easily accessed by the congregation. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

In-Person Worship Update

Prior to the meeting, Julie Bower, chair of the re-opening committee, sent a letter to the Session asking whether the Session would like to take over the duties of monitoring the local updates on Covid-19 and make the judgement call regarding returning to in-person worship or if they would prefer the committee continue performing this function. Steve Rathbun moved that the committee meet one more time in mid-October and make a recommendation to the Session regarding in-person worship. Don Bower seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

WIFI Update Network

Prior to the meeting, Jim Newland, chair of Finance Ministry Team, wrote the Session that the Finance Ministry Team had identified funds with which to pay the \$6,000.00 cost of installing a new WIFI system in the church campus as outlined by Asher Hill and that Asher should proceed with the project. Asher said that he has designed the system and ordered the needed WIFI equipment, which should arrive the end of November.

Worship Center Renovation Update

Rich Reaves reported that renovation of the Worship Center is scheduled to begin the week of Sept. 27th. He also noted that at the request of the handbell choir director and the media production specialist, the Worship Ministry Team had voted to remove all remaining choir pews and the modesty wall. This will provide more space and flexibility for the area. He asked the Session to remind groups that meet at the church that once the pews are removed for the renovation, there will be areas that will be difficult to get in and out of because of the storage of the pews. Rich guessed that the renovation would be completed no earlier than the end of October.

NEGA Presbytery Meeting

NEGA Presbytery Meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on October 26, 2021, via ZOOM. Kathy Boardman, Linda Koehler and Jennifer Frey volunteered to serve as 3 of our 4 commissioners from Covenant. We need one more commissioner.

Refreshed Website Format

The Session thanked Asher Hill for revising and updating the Covenant website and agreed that Session members should be listed according to the Ministry Teams with which they are associated as well as by class.

Ministry Team Reports

Building and Grounds - Prior to the meeting, Rich Reaves sent an update on activities of the Building & Grounds Ministry Team for August and September. Rich encouraged the Session to read the B & G report carefully because it contains information the Session will need to know for making the decision on whether to replace the old HVAC system in the CE building with a gas furnace or a heat pump. If we decide to “go green” with installing solar panels, the heat pump would be preferable. Rich also inquired as to how many bids the Session would like B& G to obtain for the system. Don Bower moved that we call a special meeting to discuss the solar panel project and the pledge campaign to support it and that we obtain three bids for whichever type of system we decide on. Jennifer Frey seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion passed.

Congregational Care - Don Bower reported that Congregational Care has created a “Take them a Meal” sign-up for meals for Gene Holshouser. Others in the congregation who would appreciate a call or card are Pat Tinga with injuries after a fall, Carol Huber limited at home with arthritis and Nancy Omdahl undergoing new cancer treatment.

Worship Ministry Team – Jennifer Frey stated that the Worship Ministry Team needs volunteers to serve as hosts/liturgists for the live-streamed worship services. Email Jennifer or Julie Bower to volunteer.

The Session had received a letter from Julie Bower with a recommendation from the Worship Ministry Team to hold the October 10th service in the outdoor worship area, weather permitting, and in the fellowship hall as the alternate location. Upon discussion, due to uncertainty because of weather and the fact that an outdoor service could not be live-streamed, it was decided to instead plan an outdoor social gathering similar to the farewell gathering for Mark and Rindy for October 17th. Any ideas for that event should be sent to Julie Bower, Jennifer Frey or Kay Brooks.

Linda Koehler stated that it should be made clear in the Covenanter newsletter that the live-streamed worship service is at 10:00 a.m. and then also available later on YouTube.

There being no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by Chris Wilson, seconded by Kay Brooks and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:41 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: October 26, 2021, 6:30 p.m. will be moderated by Rev. Doak. Don Bower will present the devotional.

Ed Rees, Moderator

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk