

**Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA**  
**Stated Session Meeting**  
**December 5, 2023**

A stated Session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held at Covenant Presbyterian Church and by Zoom on December 5, 2023. Rev. Dana Waters welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Elders present: Clayton Adams (zoom), Bert Ballard-Myer, Kathryn Fowler, Carolyn Hatfield, Linda Koehler, Valerie Stone (zoom), Ansley Tweedell, Donny Whitehead and Dick Zimdars

Elders absent: Katy Arora, Jennifer Frey

Others present: Bob Brewster, Brian Herndon, Dennis Calbos, Rebecca Silver, Karen Foutz, Wyatt Herndon, Linda Rogers, Pam Knox (treasurer, zoom) and Dana Waters, Moderator

### **Devotional**

Kathryn Fowler presented a devotional based on Advent Book – On the Way to Bethlehem (put together with Czech Rep church friends) December 9 page Philippians 4:5-9. Jana V. from Czech “let your gentleness be apparent to all” and opened the meeting with prayer.

The Session gave approval for non-Session members to speak during the meeting.

Dana shared that he will have a hybrid work from home schedule in the next week or 2 as he helps his family as his mother approaches the end of her life in hospice. He gives thanks for our continued support.

### **Review of Minutes**

The minutes from the October 24, 2023, Stated Session Meeting were reviewed. Dick Zimdars moved, and Abby Horvath seconded that all sets of minutes be accepted as written. **Motion carried.**

### **Approval of the Agenda**

A motion was made by Kathryn Fowler and seconded by Linda Koehler to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion carried.**

### **Financial Report**

The session had previously received the Financial Summary, as well as a detailed financial report for October. Pam Knox, Treasurer & Kathryn Fowler, Finance Ministry

Team co-chair reported that the financial report for November, 2023, is not yet available as the meeting is being held so early in the month.

- Since the FDIC limit is \$250,000 per entity, Finance Ministry Team moved some money into CDs at 4.5% (one a 5 month and one a 12 month) and other money into Bank of America to stay under limits of FDIC.
- No concerns currently about going into the red this year
- The Team is developing Financial Policies for Covenant, based on policies shared with us by other churches. The Policies will put in writing the way financial assets are handled and safeguarded. They should be ready for Session review/approval in January or February.
- Need to find someone to shadow Pam Knox to be trained up as next treasurer before Dec next year.
- Dennis asked about the status of external audits – Kathryn and Pam said that is one of the things they are looking into.

**Examination of new class of Elders** (Bob Brewster, Brian Herndon, Dennis Calbos, and Rebecca Silver)

The Session was split into 2 teams – one stayed in library; others stepped out to couches – for 3 question tests for elders elect. **Motion: Bert Ballard-Myer moved and Donny Whitehead seconded to approve the examination of elders elect. Following discussion, the motion carried.** New Elders will be installed on January 7<sup>th</sup>

#### **Report and Motion from PNC (Pastor Nominating Committee)**

Kathryn Fowler, on behalf of the Pastor Nominating Committee, **moved Session approve Covenant's Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP)**. Coming from a committee, the motion did not need a second.

PNC co-chairs Karen Foutz and Linda Rogers and members Wyatt Herndon and Kathryn Fowler presented the completed Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) for approval by Session before being sent to the Presbytery Committee on Ministry for approval and publication for potential applicants. Karen and Linda gave background information on the process and on how the MDP content was developed and answered all questions. The PNC thanked the Session for the work of its Mission Study Committee and Final Report, which were the basis for much of the information. Covnetpres.org - Bert Ballard-Myer asked to include this under links/ our partnership w the PSC (Athens Pride and Queer Collective is included in description of Athens outreach) - decided to just add link, not add to narratives as there is a strict character count. Carolyn Hatfield asked to add something about bringing in families with children. Kathryn and Linda pointed out that the demographics show that our congregation is around 70% retired. Wyatt Herndon shared that all churches are struggling to capture young people and didn't want to portray our church as desperate. Applicants will also have access to the Holy Cow survey we conducted last summer. Kathryn shared that they have been improving the website as well. Dennis pointed out that the poverty rate the county does not match the tax bracket of our Oconee County resident wealthy

retired congregation. Things not covered in MDP are covered in church website, and any applicants will be looking at the MDP as well as other sources. Following discussion **motion carried unanimously**. Luanne Rigsby, Clerk, will help submit to Presbytery, whose next meeting is December 14<sup>th</sup>. Once that is passed through, our profile will be posted to the site where applicants can see and apply.

### **Motion From Worship Ministry Team**

On behalf of the Worship Ministry Team **Jennifer Frey, moved to approve guest musicians be allowed to receive donations at the Afropop Epiphany concert**. Coming from a committee, the motion did not need a second. The concert will be held at the church. Some helpers are traveling from ATL- church is not collecting, musicians can share their QR code/Venmo if anyone feels led to donate – kosher as far as money not going through the church (all safe for tax purposes). This concert could serve as a great outreach mechanism for the community – discussed idea of putting in Athens Banner Herald. **Motion carried**.

### **Motion from Building & Grounds**

Two 30-year-old HVAC units failed at the same time and another could use repairs. On behalf of Building and Grounds Ministry Team, **Carolyn Hatfield moved that the Session allocate \$22k from last year's surplus & zero out this year's budget line for HVAC (around \$8000)**. Coming from a committee, the motion did not need a second. Following discussion, **motion carried**. Water heater replacement in kitchen is \$3100 and coming from pre-existing funds in B&G

### **Announcements – Ministry Teams**

- Arin Lozefski has put in her 2 weeks, so it will just be Asher Hill working now – he could use some volunteer help for holiday events etc. We will continuously check in on him to make sure we don't need to hire another person.
- We will be doing the food pantry 12/21 and 12/28 - students will be home for holidays so we need help with distribution on those days 12:30-2:30. Dana did announce in church. Sign-up sheet is in Covenanter and posted on Sign-up genius if you type in [kwetherington@covpresathens.com](mailto:kwetherington@covpresathens.com) (all events are under that)
- Eli Stone will eventually need a liaison for his eagle scout award.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

There being no further business, Donny Whitehead moved and Bert Ballard-Myer seconded the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried**. Dana closed with prayer at 8:30 p.m.

***Next Stated Meeting: Session Retreat at Rock Eagle Conference Center January 26-27, 2024. Kathryn Fowler will present the devotional. Ansley Tweedell will serve as clerk.***

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Dana Waters, Moderator

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Ansley Tweedell Land, Acting Clerk