

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

### **Stated Session Meeting**

**October 22, 2024 6:00 p.m.**

A Stated Session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held at Covenant Presbyterian Church on October 22, 2024. Moderator Tom Buchanan welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Tom Buchanan opened the meeting with prayer.

Elders present: Bob Brewster, Kathryn Fowler, Ansley Tweedell Land, Brian Herndon, Rebecca Silver, Dennis Calbos, Carolyn Hatfield

Elders present on Zoom: Bert Ballard-Meyer

Elders absent: Abby Horvath, Valerie Stone, Katie McGill

Others present: Tom Buchanan, Warren Combs representing Dick Zimdars

**Bob Brewster moved and Brian Herndon seconded to allow Warren to speak on the session floor (not able to vote). Following discussion, motion carried.**

### **Devotional**

No devotional was presented. Requests to review devotional sign-up and remind people

### **Review of Minutes**

The minutes from the September 24, 2024, Stated Session meeting, were reviewed. Brian Herndon moved and Bob Brewster seconded that the minutes be accepted as written into the official record. Following discussion, the **motion was carried**.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Dennis Calbos moved and Bob Brewster seconded that the agenda be approved with the addition of **G1- Adoption of Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Antiracism Policies; M1- Childcare Update; and M2 - Covenant Policies Update**. Following discussion, the **motion carried**.

### **Financial Report**

Kathryn Fowler, Finance Ministry Term chair, reviewed the Financial Summary as well as detailed financial reports for the month of September.

- Brian Herndon inquired about the use of “( )” in Christian Ed under expenditures. There is extra money - perhaps not reimbursed yet - Patrick McMaster will likely turn in his receipts in December and budget will be more accurate.
- Rebecca inquired about what Fellowship Misc. 5770 includes - \$199.32 extra - some contribution was made, perhaps at the bbq. Kathryn will ask Karen.

## **Clerk's Report**

A written Clerk's report was included in the Session packet. The Presbytery held a Session Minutes review and approved our minutes from 2021, 2022, and 2023.

## **Policy for Approval of Requests to leave Flyers / Information at Church**

At the September meeting, the Mission and Outreach Ministry Team was asked to formulate a policy for discussion and approval of personal or group requests to leave flyers or information at the church. Bert Ballard-Myer presented a draft of Advertising and Promotion Policy. Non-501C3 organizations cannot advertise on church grounds. The proposed procedure is to first approach chairs of the Mission and Outreach Committee and then engage Amy and Pastor Tom in the process. If there is still uncertainty, issue should be taken to the Session. Pastor Tom pointed out that this gives Mission and Outreach a lot of discretion. Should every request come to session?

- This rule is in regards to the unknown organizations and not ones that we already support such as Project Safe.
- Kathryn Fowler asked about situations where we may have an organization utilizing our facilities. If they publicize something, does the fact that they meet here make it seem as if we support it? If someone is using our building, what rules do they have to follow? Should we include this in policy?
- Rebecca Silver asked if vetted groups such as Project Safe are considered Partners? The term/phrase we use on our website is "Agencies We Support" under "Our Community." Our only Partnership is Olomouc because that is through the Presbytery.
- Brian Herndon said we should be careful with the term "endorse"

Bert received the feedback and will get back to us with the edited draft.

## **Adoption of Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Anti Racism Policies.**

A few years ago, it was mandated by the General Assembly that we have policies in all 3 of these areas, plus child protection. We already have a policy in place for child protection, but are lacking in the other 3 areas. Most churches are awaiting a standardized policy from the NEGA Presbytery, which is in process.

**Bob Brewster moved and Brian Herndon seconded that we adopt the policies of NEGA Presbytery regarding Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Anti Racism as written and amended by the Presbytery.**

- Kathryn Fowler asked if we are to post a statement of these policies?
- Pastor Tom will ensure that the policies can be easily found and knowledge of them will be made part of Session orientation. He will let us know their location.
- Brian Herndon suggested that these policies should be posted on our website. He also suggested that continuity we adopt the Child Protection policy of the Presbytery as well so that all 4 sectors are from the same source. When the Presbytery Policy on Child Protection is produced, we will compare it to ours.

- Carolyn suggested that we have a members only portion of the website. Asher will be consulted

### **Discussion - Follow-up of purchase of a Van**

Carolyn Hatfield consulted with Kathryn Fowler for information since she has experience with non-profit ownership of van(s). Carolyn suggested we **table the conversation until January** so we can collect more information and have the new session members in on the conversation as well.

- Create vetting process for drivers - look at driving records, awaiting estimates from insurance agent about liability, etc.

### **Discussion – Child Care for Session meetings**

Katie McGill is not here to discuss. Lily has not been approached about this. At present, Katie is the only person on Session or upcoming Session that needs child care, but it is still important to have something in place. Brian said that CE will work on conferring with Lily. It could be a selling point for the Nominating Committee to let people know that child care can be made available for Session meetings.

### **Resignation of Dick Zimdars from the Session**

On October 2, 2024, Dick Zimdars formally resigned from the session via email. Warren shared an email from Paula Zimdars saying that since May, Dick has had a mild heart attack, 3 stents, 3 mild strokes. They are doing well, all things considered, and appreciate the care of Congregational Care, Pastor Tom, and the congregation. They are not receiving visitors at this time unless the weather is good and they can visit outside - Dick does not need covid. **Warren will assume the chairmanship of the Worship Ministry Team and come on to Session to fill out Dick's unexpired term (1 more year).** We will receive Warren onto Session at the same time we receive the other nominees. Rebecca Silver moved and Carolyn Hatfield seconded that **Session accept the resignation of Dick Zimdars from Session with regret and gratitude.** Following discussion, **motion carried.**

### **Nominating Committee Update**

Bob Brewster reported that 3 people have agreed to be nominated as elders so far. The committee is still looking for a 4th, hopefully someone that is good with spreadsheets. Pastor Tom shared his plans for new Session member training - combo of virtual study as well as in person meetings. Kathryn suggested a review of the Session Manual at the Session Retreat.

## **Personnel Committee Report**

Dennis Calbos reported that the church now has a Personnel Committee folder in Google Docs (right now, available only to PC), standardized job descriptions in the same format - available to anybody that asks. We can expand as needed.

- **Childcare update** - We do need to look into the salary structure of our staff.
- **Covenant Policy update** - Debbie Millwood and Abby Horvath have begun to look into our policies and want to make church policies centrally available where they can be pulled up. The Session is interested as well. Right now, we are looking into how comprehensive this will be and what the end goal is.

## **Announcements - Ministry Teams**

### **Fellowship -**

- Hanging of the greens in the fellowship hall – Nov 24. Decorating Christmas tree in sanctuary is done by Worship MT
- Progressive Dinner - Friday night, December 6
- Choral Worship - Dec 15

### **Congregational Care -**

- Met 2pm, 10/20/24 – Twelve college students and 9 shut-in households will receive Halloween/fall cards.
- Will begin work on new Directory in January - use the same company as last time. It does not cost the church anything other than congregants purchasing prints of portraits if they so choose.

### **Building and Grounds -**

- The youth group will be putting down carpet squares for flooring in The Cove. Hank Tweedell is heading up the purchasing of materials and installation.
- Carolyn is getting quotes for the basement couches to be cleaned.

### **Finance Committee -**

- Revisit policies on restricted funds so that they are all inclusive

### **Mission Outreach -**

- Pronouns Meeting on 10/20 - 20 people attended. All youth group leaders were present. Hopefully this is the first, not only, conversation with Athens Pride (APQC). Bert thanked the church for putting on this presentation.

## Christian Education -

- Warren reported that youth participation in scripture reading has been awesome.
- Brian Herndon reports that our volunteer base is thin. Now that we've got the ball rolling, we need more adults.

## Worship Ministry Team -

- Warren presented a letter to the Session about the importance of session members presenting the holy sacrament on the first Sunday of the month. It is in the PCUSA Book of Order that Elders distribute the Lord's Supper
- Request that all Session members be present at the first Sunday of each month and come forward on the last verse of the hymn before serving the Lord's Supper
- 10:40 am call-time November 3rd in Sanctuary to review procedure for serving communion elements
- Warren led a walk-through in the sanctuary of how to serve communion after the adjournment of meeting

## Reports from Presbytery Meeting at First Pres Cleveland

- Bob Brewster reported on his experience of attending the Presbytery meeting with Pastor Tom. Uneventful meeting, but with much emphasis on congregations recovering from the recent storms and providing help.

## Motion to Adjourn

Pastor Tom reported that while he is still adjusting, he already feels close to our congregation. Kudos to our congregation for welcoming Tom and Lisa with open arms.

There being no further business, Dennis Calbos moved and Ansley Land seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried. Tom closed with prayer at 7:50 p.m.

***Next Stated Meeting: December 3, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Dennis Calbos will present the devotional.***

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Tom Buchanan, Moderator

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Ansley Land, Acting Clerk