

Stated Session Meeting Agenda
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA
June 28, 2026

Present: Warren Combs, Tom Buchanan, Deb Millwood, Jack Pannecoucke, Rebecca Silver, Caly DePalma, Melissa Cobb, Brian Herndon, Bob Brewster, Karl Barnett, and Brian Striggow
Absent: Dennis Calbos and Haylee Nunn

A. Welcome and Call to Order – Pastor Tom called the meeting to order at 11:38 a.m.

B. Opening Prayer – Pastor Tom

C. Review of Minutes

The minutes from the May 19 Stated Session Meeting and the June 14 Called Session Meeting were reviewed and accepted by consensus into the record.

D. Approval of the Agenda

- The agenda was accepted by consensus into the record.

E. Clerk's Report

- Nothing to report

F. Financial Report

- There was nothing notable to discuss.

G. Business

1. Haylee Nunn, current co-chair of the Christian Education Team will transition to serve as Chair of the Worship Ministry Team. Incoming Elder Mindy Hill will take Haylee's place on the Christian Education Team as Co-chair with Brian Herndon.

2. Finance:

Motion: Mission and Outreach Chair Bob Brewster moved that Judy Capie and Brian Striggow be deemed as responsible parties of the church for the purpose of opening and managing accounts at Georgia United Credit Union. No second was needed for this vote. **There was no opposition** from Session members, and **the motion carried**.

Budget

2026–2027 Budget

Finance Ministry Team chair Karl Barnett presented the proposed 2026–2027 budget.

Highlights included:

- Page 1: Music Director Aaron Enyi-Carter's salary reduced \$3,800 to offset a portion of the cost to hire an Assistant Music Director position at a salary of \$11,000. Discussion included concerns expressed by some congregation members regarding the Assistant Music Director salary. There is also inclusion of funding for a Christian Education Director, increasing budget by \$15,000, resulting in approximately \$25,000 in total salary increases.
- Page 2: Buildings and Grounds budget includes \$10,000 to supplement Evelyn's work and contracted janitorial services.
- Page 3: Funding for the Food Pantry has been added as a permanent budget line, reflecting the congregation's longstanding support.
- Page 4: Utilities budget increased by \$9,000 due to higher-than-anticipated Georgia Power costs.
- Page 5: Expected income includes strong pledge support, including a new \$20,000 pledge received this week. Non-pledged giving is estimated at \$20,000. While restricted funds may need to be used for some expenses, the additional pledges largely offset those anticipated drawdowns. Overall pledges increased approximately \$45,000, including the new \$20,000 commitment.

Karl recommended adopting a deficit budget, noting that he does not anticipate needing to draw from principal. Mission and Outreach Chair Bob Brewster asked whether funds remained available to cover expenses in the final days of the fiscal year, and Karl referred him to the financial report.

Motion: The Finance Ministry Team moved to approve the 2026–2027 budget. There was no second needed, and there was no discussion. **All voted in favor, and the motion carried..**

Personnel

Assistant Music Director

The Personnel Team reported that the search committee unanimously selected David Aina to serve as Assistant Music Director. David will begin doctoral studies at the University of Georgia this fall and is scheduled to begin employment on August 1, 2026..

Motion: The Personnel Team, moved to confirm the Search Team's choice of David Aina to serve as Assistant Music Director, effective August 1, 2026. There was **no further discussion, all voted in favor, and the motion carried.**

Christian Education Director Position

The Personnel Team and Christian Education Team presented the proposed job description and search process for the half-time Director of Christian Education and Family and Youth Ministries.

Discussion emphasized intentional reengagement with children, youth, and families on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. The position will not involve youth group leadership on Sunday evenings and at retreats unless needed. Preference will be given to candidates with experience in similar denominations. The position will also remain open to ordained candidates, with the understanding that salary and benefits would require additional consideration.

The position will be posted beginning July 1 under the leadership of Kay Brooks, chair of the search team, and will remain open until filled.

Motion: The Personnel Team moved to approve the job description and begin the search process. **After discussion**, the **motion carried unanimously**.

The proposed search committee will include:

- Kay Brooks and Katy Terry (Personnel)
- Brian Herndon (Christian Education)
- Tom Buchanan (ex-officio)
- Additional representatives from families with children, possibly including parents from either the Foskey or Adams family, along with a youth parent (Rebecca or Adam Rea). Betsy Burmeister will also be included Pastor Tom will follow up with prospective members and, once commitments are received, circulate the final committee membership for Session approval by email.

Tom will also distribute a list of recommended locations for posting the position, including Presbyterian schools, the Association of Christian Educators, the church website, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Worship

Session confirmed the following elders to serve Communion on **July 5**:

- Jack Pannecoucke
- Deb Millwood
- Melissa Cobb
- Bob Brewster
- Rebecca Silver
- Caly DePalma

Nominating Committee

Session discussed leadership and membership for the 2026–2027 Nominating Committee, including the changing composition of ministry teams and the future needs of Session.

Discussion included:

- Appointing an Elder to head the committee.
- Inviting nominations from the congregation with the nominee's permission.
- Avoiding asking inactive elders unless needed for a particular ministry team.
- Providing clearer descriptions of ministry team responsibilities to assist potential nominees (Warren Combs is making a list.)
- Pastor Tom will serve as an ex-officio member of the committee and will attend the first meeting for orientation of new committee members and convey specific needs of the Session but will not participate in discussions regarding individual nominees.

Buildings and Grounds Team Chair Jack Pannecoucke agreed to serve as the active elder representative and will invite Ansley Land to serve on the committee.

Motion: Fellowship Team Chair Rebecca Silver moved to approve Jack Pannecoucke as acting elder to serve on the Nominating Committee. Caly DePalma seconded, and there was **no further discussion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.**

Rally Day

Session discussed plans for Rally Day on August 16.

Ideas included:

- Hosting a ministry team fair.
- Encouraging members to explore ministry opportunities without feeling obligated to make long-term commitments.
- Serving portable refreshments while members visit ministry tables.

Christian Education Chair Brian Herndon and Fellowship Team Co-Chair Caly DePalma will meet with Pastor Tom to develop additional plans.

Covenant's 60th Anniversary

Session discussed plans to celebrate Covenant Presbyterian Church's 60th Anniversary (1966–2026), to be held tentatively on Reformation Sunday, October 25, 2026.

Ideas included:

- A special worship service celebrating Covenant's history and future.
- Inviting former members and pastors.

- Hosting a congregational luncheon or reception.
- Receiving a special offering for the Jim Bowden Fund designated for a specific ministry.

Pastor Tom proposed that a Task Force be formed. Music Director Aaron Carter-Enyi and Pastor Tom will coordinate worship planning, while Fellowship Team Co-chairs Caly DePalma and Rebecca Silver will assist with fellowship and event planning.

Ministry Team Announcements

Buildings and Grounds

- Exterior painting and pressure washing are underway.
- The Food Pantry cart shed has been painted to match the church's exterior.
- A new access ramp has been constructed for the shed.
- Jason Carver from Georgia Power met with the Buildings and Grounds Team regarding vegetation management around the property. Georgia Power is offering an incentive for clearing vegetation on both sides of the church, but the church is not obligated to participate.
- A new recycling center with trashcans instead of boxes has been installed.
- Dogwood Cleaning began custodial services on July 10, providing weekly cleaning on Saturdays of the Fellowship Hall, bathroom, and kitchen for \$900 per month.
- A recycling container with a larger opening is needed.

Christian Education

- Mindy Hill will be joining the team as Co-Chair with Brian Herndon.
- Planning continues for Rally Day and the Christian Education Director search.

Congregational Care

- Bob Brewster asked if a sufficient number of volunteers is available to contact those on the prayer list. Team Chair Melissa Cobb confirmed that there are enough volunteers.

Fellowship

- The traditional Fall Picnic will become a community Ice Cream Social on September 20.

Finance

- No additional report.

Mission and Outreach

- The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for the last Wednesday in July.
- The team is pursuing a Food Pantry grant of up to \$10,000 to expand food distribution, including increasing the number of bags for food, purchasing a freezer and ice maker, and improving participant signage. The grant may be renewable.

Personnel

- The annual staff luncheon is scheduled for July 8.

Worship

- Pastor Tom's Summer Saints series continues.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Tom expressed gratitude for nearly two years of ministry together and shared updates on the Summer Saints series and plans for the fall.

A sign-up sheet was circulated for Session members to stand with him following worship.

Pastor Tom requested approval for the following time away:

- **June 29–July 4:** At-home study leave (Monday–Wednesday) followed by personal leave (Thursday–Saturday). He will be present for worship on July 5 before traveling to Clemson.
- **August 12–15:** Personal leave to attend the funeral of Lisa's uncle in Silver Spring, Maryland. He will be present for worship on August 16.
- **October 16–18:** Personal leave, including absence from worship on Sunday, October 18.

Motion: Mission and Outreach Chair Bob Brewster moved to approve Pastor Tom's requested leave, and Rebecca Silver seconded. There was no further discussion, **all voted in favor**, and the **motion carried**.

Adjournment

Caly DePalma moved to adjourn the meeting, and Deb Millwood seconded. There was **no further discussion**, and the **motion carried**. The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m. following the closing prayer.

`Next Meeting

The next stated Session meeting is scheduled for Sunday, August 23, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.
Kirche Rogers has the devotional.