

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA

Stated Session Meeting

October 24, 2023

A stated Session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held at Covenant Presbyterian Church and by Zoom on October 24, 2023. Rev. Dana Waters welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Elders present: Clayton Adams, Katy Arora, Bert Ballard-Myer, Kathryn Fowler, Jennifer Frey, Carolyn Hatfield, Linda Koehler, Valerie Stone, Ansley Tweedell, Donny Whitehead and Dick Zimdars,

Elders absent: Abby Horvath

Others present: Luanne Rigsby, Clerk and Dana Waters, Moderator

Devotional

Ansley Tweedell presented a devotional and prayer from D365.org entitled "The Way of Peace" based on Micah 6:8. Justice and mercy are not oppositional. It is possible to act justly and to love others mercifully at the same time. In the words of Pope Francis, "Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace."

Review of Minutes

The minutes from the September 26, 2023, Stated Session Meeting, October 8, 2023, Called Session Meeting and October 13, 2023 Email votes were reviewed. Dick Zimdars moved and Carolyn Hatfield seconded that all sets of minutes be accepted as written. **Motion carried.**

Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by Jennifer Frey and seconded by Donny Whitehead to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion carried.**

Clerk's Report

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk, reported that with our four new members, Abby Ryder, Caly DePalma, Kirche Rogers and Deb Millwood, the membership total is 210. Since Luanne won't be able to attend the December Session meeting, Ansley Tweedell will serve as Acting Clerk with Katy Arora as backup. Clerk's report was accepted into the minutes.

Financial Report

Session had previously received the Financial Summary, as well as a detailed financial report, for September, 2023. Kathryn Fowler, Finance Ministry Team co-chair, reported that we are doing well with pledges and expenses but are not expecting a surplus for this fiscal year. On behalf of the Finance Ministry Team, Kathryn made the following two-part motion:

We move that Special Restricted Account/Special Funds 2022-2023 Line Item 9030 of \$1,275.00 for 3 months transition salary and Line Item 9031 of \$116.85 for 3 months transition health care be closed and the \$1,391.85 total budgeted funds be reallocated to 2023-2024 Temporary Restricted Account Worship Line Item 009013 for Music Interns.

We move that Special Restricted Account/Special Funds 2022-2023 Line Item 8004 of \$450.00 for June Montreat be closed and the \$450.00 in budgeted funds be reallocated to 2023-2024 Temporary Restricted Account Missions Local/UW line 008796 for Mission Events.

The above restricted accounts were budgeted but not used in 2022-2023. This action will make money available for emerging needs without impacting the approved regular budget for 2023-2024. Since the motion comes from Finance Ministry Team, it does not require a second. Following discussion, the **motion carried**.

Kathryn also noted that the surplus from last year will be expressed in the financial report as a line item in Restricted Accounts called Carry Over Surplus. Kathryn said that Pam Knox, Church Treasurer, is willing to continue serving through the calendar year 2024. The Financial Report was received into the minutes.

Presbytery Meetings Report

Jennifer Frey and Gijs Schimmel served as Covenant's commissioners to the NEGA Presbytery meeting in Cornelia, GA, on October 24, 2023. Louise Schimmel and Dana Waters also attended the meeting. Jennifer reported that much business was conducted at the meeting. Keynote speaker was Courtney Pittman the new pastor in Madison, GA.

Motion from Personnel to extend Rev. Dana Waters' contract

On behalf of the Personnel Committee and chair Abby Horvath, Bert Ballard-Myer made the following motion:

We move to extend Pastor Dana Waters Contract another 12 months with the current compensation already included. Covenant has the option to end the contract earlier if and when Covenant finds a permanent Pastor, with up to 3 months of compensation to support his transition to his next role. Since the motion comes from Personnel Committee, it does not require a second. Following discussion, **motion carried**.

Motion from Worship Ministry Team

On behalf of the Worship Ministry Team, Jennifer Frey moved **to take down the notice recommending masks due to the decrease in Covid cases in our area.** Should cases increase again, we will more to reinstate the mask recommendation. Since the motion comes from a ministry team, it does not require a second. Following discussion, **motion carried**.

Announcements

Dana announced that he will be attending a conference on pastor's well-being in San Antonio Nov 14-20. Our new NEGA Presbytery Committee on Ministry liaison, Jacob Douylliez, will be on call for pastoral care. Amy Baer, Bert-Ballard-Myer and the Mission Outreach Ministry Team will be in charge of the worship service that Sunday.

Ministry Teams Announcements

Building and Grounds - Carolyn Hatfield noted that Rich Reaves sent out an informational update on the solar panel project. It is possible to apply for and receive a 30% reimbursement from the government for the project, and we are waiting for IRS rules and forms to be completed. We have an installer for the panels.

Mission Outreach

Bert Ballard-Myer reported on three items:

1. Bake With Me - There is a group who is baking bread which will be distributed at the food distribution on Thursdays.
2. PrideFest - Covenant was one of the sponsors and several people attended.
3. Presbyterian Student Center - Covenant is preparing meals for the PSC the first Tuesday of every month. Mission Outreach encourages anyone interested in helping with the meals to go to signupgenius.com and search for kwetherington@covpresathens.org to sign up for any Covenant sign-up activity.

Worship

Jennifer Frey said that we will have our Christmas Eve Service at 5:30 on Sunday, December 24, 2023. The tree has been ordered and will arrive November 26th.

Fellowship

Valerie Stone announced that we will no longer be having Friday game nights.

Valerie also stated that Family Promise is making big changes. They will be leaving Milledge Avenue Baptist Church and housing the families in two Habitat for Humanity houses located on Magnolia Street which is between Broad and Baxter Streets. There will still be volunteer opportunities, but we are waiting to hear the details.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, Valerie Stone moved and Bert Ballard-Myer seconded that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.** Dana closed with prayer at 8:00 p.m.

Next Stated Meeting: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Kathryn Fowler will present the devotional. Ansley Tweedell will serve as clerk.

Dana Waters, Moderator

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk