

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA
Stated Session Meeting
February 28, 2023

A stated Session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held at Covenant Presbyterian Church and by Zoom on February 28, 2023. Moderator Dana Waters welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

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

Elders present on Zoom: Clayton Adams

Elders absent: Katy Arora

Others present: Pam Knox, Luanne Rigsby and Dana Waters,

Devotional

Bert Ballard-Myer's devotional highlighted a subject the Session has been discerning for the past year: Where is God is calling us to be? Bert read a quote by Anna Pappé, "Every time you spend money, you are casting a vote for how you want the world to be." Our goal at Covenant Presbyterian is to help others in our community and be the hands and feet of Jesus. Bert opened the meeting with prayer.

Review of Minutes

The minutes from the January 28,2023, stated meeting and the February 10, 2023, and February 15, 2023 email votes were reviewed. Jennifer Frey moved and Abby Horvath seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. **Motion carried.**

Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by Valerie Stone and seconded by Dick Zimdars to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion carried.**

Clerk's Report

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk, presented the following items for discussion:

- Remove Bob Reinert from active membership rolls (Bob passed away on Feb 16). New membership total:229 active members
- Add Charles Naveen Arora, baptized on Feb 19th, as baptized member

The Clerk's report was received into the minutes

Financial Report

Clayton Adams, co-chair of the Finance Ministry Team, reviewed the Financial Summary for January, 2023, as well as the detailed financial report for the month and said that pledges are coming in as anticipated. Clayton urged the ministry teams, who have not yet done so, to submit their proposed budgets for the next fiscal year and their decisions on what to do with the restricted accounts under their ministry teams. The Financial Report was accepted into the minutes.

Leadership Check-In

Rev. Dana Waters spent a few minutes affirming and encouraging the Session in the work they are doing known as Holy Experimenting, or trying new things for a period of time to see how they work out. We are in the “push back” stage of that process and Dana discussed ways to best handle that phase:

1. Direct the question to the ministry team in charge of that subject
2. There is strength in all doing this together and being supportive of each other.
3. Decide if an issue is a mountain or a molehill
4. Avoid triangles (bringing 3rd person into conflict)
5. Some issues should be taken care of by the ministry teams and some decided by the Session. Have trust in the ministry teams to make decisions and execute the big picture vision of the Session. Some chaos is OK!
6. Make responsibilities clear
7. Educate the congregation on the “why”. Our biggest growth area for 2023 should be how to share the “why” and do it proactively.

Presbytery Meeting

The NEGA Presbytery meeting on Tuesday, May 23, 2023, will be held at Covenant. The commissioners to the recent meeting in Augusta, Randy and Susan Parish, Donny Whitehead and Dick Zimdars, will be asked to take leadership for hosting the meeting. Bert Ballard-Myer, Linda Koehler, Carolyn Hatfield and Kathryn Fowler can also help. Julie Bower has also hosted in the past and may be able to assist. The Presbytery has sent us a packet which will be helpful in the planning of the event.

Homeless policy review and next steps

At the November 1, 2022, called meeting, the Session made changes in our policies concerning homeless persons who stay on Covenant’s property overnight. The plan was to reevaluate how those changes were working in 3 months (February). Some of the changes proposed have been completed but not all of them. Since some of those projects have not been completed or fully evaluated, Carolyn Hatfield, on behalf of Building and Grounds Ministry Team, moved we continue our trial period until the end of May. Following discussion, **motion carried.**

Christian Education Motion

Donny Whitehead, co-chair Christian Education Ministry Team, reported that having church school from 9:30 -10:30 a.m. with a 30-minute break for fellowship between church school and church hasn't worked out as anticipated. On behalf of the CE Ministry Team, Donny moved that beginning March 12, 2023, church school begin at 9:45 a.m. and end at 10:45 a.m. Following discussion, the **motion carried**.

Announcements

Called Session meeting - Dana announced that there will be a called meeting on Sunday, March 19, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. in the library to receive new members. We need a quorum (1/2 +1 or 7) for that meeting.

Building & Grounds - Carolyn Hatfield announced that there will be a B&G Work Day on March 25th from 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. to work on a three-phase landscaping plan for the front of the church. B&G will be planting flowering evergreen bushes, spreading mulch and sprucing up for the Presbytery Meeting. Carolyn invited anyone who would like to help to come for the work day.

Mission Outreach - Bert Ballard-Myer thanked the Session for approving use of space by the Athens Free Clinic. The first free clinic was a big success, and they already have a full slate of patients signed up for the March clinic.

Bert announced that the volunteer recognition event will be April 30th after church.

ECCB-PCUSA Virtual Conference - Valerie Stone reminded everyone of a Zoom conference on The Church and the Environment, on March 5, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, Abby Horvath moved and Jennifer Frey seconded that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried**. Dana closed with prayer at 8:26 p.m.

Next Stated Meeting: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Dick Zimdars will present the devotional.

Dana Waters, Moderator

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk