

Stated Session Meeting
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens GA
27 June 2023

A stated Session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held at Covenant Presbyterian Church and via Zoom on June 27, 2023. Moderator Dana Waters welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Elders Present: Clayton Adams, Bert Ballard-Myer, Kathryn Fowler, Abby Horvath, Linda Koehler, Valerie Stone, Ansley Tweedell, Donny Whitehead, and Dick Zimdars

Elders Absent: Katy Arora, Jennifer Frey, and Carolyn Hatfield

Others Present: Dana Waters

Devotional

Clayton Adams told us about online daily devotionals from d365.org. He read today's offering that included an invitation to *Pause* (and breathe), *Listen* (read Luke 6:22-23), *Think* (contemplate being hated for doing what you know is right and how Christ experienced this), *Pray* (ask God to guide our actions and help us act out of love), and *Go* (spread the word).

Review of Minutes

The minutes from the May 23, 2023 Session meeting were reviewed. Abby Horvath moved and Clayton Adams seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented.

Motion carried.

Approval of the Agenda

It was noted that Luanne Rigsby was absent, so Valerie Stone took the minutes. A motion was made by Linda Koehler and seconded by Donny Whitehead to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Financial Report

Kathryn reported that the Finance Ministry Team is working on developing financial policies, looking at what Covenant currently does and what policies other churches use. They are pulling together a working group to continue this process.

Nominating Committee Report

There was a motion from the Nominating Committee to hold a called Congregational Meeting on Sunday, July 16, after worship for the purpose of electing the third member

of the Nominating Committee to decide next class of elders. Donny mentioned that Jere Bowden is willing to serve, and he presented the motion. **Motion carried.**

Amending Interim Pastor's Contract

Abby Horvath made a motion to amend Rev. Dana Waters' interim contract to reflect the salary/housing allowance in the 2023/24 budget (salary=\$54,855; housing allowance = \$28,000). Kathryn seconded. **Motion carried.**

August Presbytery Meeting

Dana presented the need for two representatives for the Saturday, August 26 Presbytery meeting held via Zoom from around 10am to 1pm. Linda Koehler volunteered. Clayton said he could be a "maybe" and Kathryn said she could serve as a "backup maybe." Dana thanked those willing to serve.

Solar Panels and Fundraiser Concert

Dick Zimdars introduced a discussion about a fundraiser concert to dedicate the digital grand piano purchased in the summer of 2020. Dana pointed out that picking the solar panel project back up is the first step. Dick and Linda explained that many companies came to offer estimates but that not all estimates came in before a rebate from Georgia Power expired. Information from Rich Reaves was shared with the Session and it was noted that a third of the cost could possibly be covered by federal government rebates or tax credits. Abby pointed out that solar panels align well with our church mindset and mission of being good stewards of the planet. Kathryn suggested making sure the information we have is current and then discussing the solar panels again. She pointed out we need to have a time frame for checking and collecting new information so this long-considered project can move smoothly forward. Since Building & Grounds was not represented at the meeting, a date was picked that all felt would be reasonable. Abby Horvath made a motion to commission the Building & Grounds Committee to further research the solar panel project with updated estimates and information about government support, asking them to present their findings to the Session on or before the end of October. Clayton Adams seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

Interim Pastor's Paternity Leave Schedule

Dana shared a document with four weeks of tentative leave dates and a list of guest preachers as well as pastors on call. He explained this fell easily within the new PC(USA) policy giving twelve weeks. The Session encouraged Dana to take the time he needs to help his family and agreed to readily revisit the schedule should Dana wish for more time.

Summer Social Session Meeting

Dana noted that one summer Session meeting is traditionally a social gathering to build fellowship. Usually the July meeting (July 25) is a social time, but Dana suggested that

this be swapped with August 22 since his paternity leave will likely start before the August date. After discussion it was decided that the next Stated Session Meeting will be on July 25. The Session meeting in August will be social.

Announcements – Ministry Teams

Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) -- Kathryn Fowler shared that there was training in May from the Presbytery. They decided on co-chairs – Linda Rogers and Karen Foutz. They are trying to use institutional knowledge to keep the process moving smoothly. The Mission Information Form has been discontinued by the Presbytery, and Covenant is one of the first churches to utilize the new Mission Discernment Profile. Development of that form is now underway and this is the “public face” the church puts out to those who will apply. They are also trying to think ahead with their budget to make sure their needs are covered.

Mission Outreach – Bert Ballard-Myer shared information about the Athens Pride Parade on June 3. They sold 54 tee shirts and had over 30 people participating. About 26 people came to a pizza lunch at the church ahead of time. According to the ACC government, around 5,000 people attended. Bert said she was very proud to participate and thanked everyone from their support. She told about a person who attended church last Sunday because he saw Covenant in the parade and felt we are a safe place. Valerie gave an update on the Olomouc ministry and the Church Partnership Network conference that will be held July 9-14 at our sister church in the Czech Republic. Valerie, her son Eli, and Joan Prittie will represent Covenant. Valerie will write information about it for this week’s Covenant.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, Abby Horvath moved that the meeting be adjourned. Donny Whitehead seconded the motion. **Motion carried.** Dana closed with prayer at 8:05 p.m.

Next Stated Meeting: Tuesday, July 25 at 7:00 p.m. Luanne Rigsby will remind everyone who is doing the devotional before that meeting.

Dana Waters, Moderator

Valerie Stone, Substitute Clerk