

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA

Stated Session Meeting

July 25, 2023 7:00 p.m.

A stated Session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held at Covenant Presbyterian Church and via Zoom on July 25, 2023. Moderator Dana Waters welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Elders present: Katy Arora, Bert Ballard-Myer, Jennifer Frey, Carolyn Hatfield, Abby Horvath, Linda Koehler, Valerie Stone, Ansley Tweedell, and Dick Zimdars,

Elders absent: Clayton Adams, Kathryn Fowler and Donny Whitehead

Others present: Luanne Rigsby and Dana Waters

Devotional

Jennifer Frey presented a devotional on the healing power of forgiveness and moving forward from a Guideposts article, "A Love that Forgives", written by Carolyn Maull McKinstry. When she was a child, Ms. McKinstry was a member of the Birmingham church that was bombed on Sept. 16, 1963. Jennifer also recommended a book on racial justice, *Be the Bridge*, by Latasha Morrison which will be the subject of an upcoming Presbyterian Women study. Jennifer opened the meeting with prayer.

Review of Minutes

The minutes from the June 13, 2023, Email Vote, the June 27, 2023, Stated Session meeting and the July 16, 2023, Called Congregational Meeting were reviewed. Katy Arora moved and Abby Horvath seconded that all sets of minutes be accepted as written. **Motion carried.**

Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by Dick Zimdars and seconded by Valerie Stone to approve the agenda as modified to include an update on Dana's paternity leave. **Motion carried.**

Clerk's Report

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk, read two thank you notes she had received. Northeast Georgia Bells wrote in appreciation of Covenant providing them a place to practice and Rev. Hilary Shuford thanked Covenant for hosting the May NEGA Presbytery meeting.

Update on Guest Pastors and Pastors on Call During Dana's Leave

In light of Baby Waters' early arrival, Dana shared the revised schedule for his 4-week paternity leave which will begin Wednesday July 26, 2023, and run through Monday,

August 28, 2023. There are guest preachers scheduled to preach each Sunday and pastors on call for emergencies such as hospital visits or funerals. Dana provided contact information for the pastors who have agreed to serve in these positions during his time away. In case of an urgent need for a called Session meeting, the Session is to contact the Clerk, Luanne Rigsby, who will reach out to Rev. Tom Buchanan for help in securing a moderator to conduct the meeting.

Financial Report

Dana asked the session to review the Financial Summary for June, 2023, as well as the detailed financial report for the month. Finance Ministry Team didn't meet in July and will have an update after their August meeting. The Financial Report was accepted into the minutes.

Membership Postcard Results

Several months ago, in an effort to be able to provide an accurate church membership roll to the Pastor Nominating Committee, letters were sent to 18 households, identified by the Session, asking if they would like to remain on Covenant's membership rolls or be removed. Based on the response (or lack of response) to this letter, to phone calls and to lack of participation and pledges, Bert Ballard-Myer moved to remove the following 23 persons from the membership rolls: Deb Agostini, John Chamblee, Ruby Basham, Craig Barber, Emily Bower, Ayla & Rhys Dartez, Brandon Doughty, Mark, Peggy and Allisyn Johnson, Tim, Dianne, Alex and Ben Simpson, Jim Smith, Paul & Kathy Van Wicklen, Nat & Jeri Whitney, Jessica Wolfe, Rachel Wolfe. The motion was seconded by Valerie Stone. Following discussion, the **motion carried**. New membership total 230 - 23 = 207.

Presbytery Meeting - August 26, 2026

Elders Linda Koehler and Clayton Adams as well as former elder, Katy Terry, and one other to be determined will serve as commissioners to the NEGA Presbytery meeting to be held via Zoom on Saturday, August 26, 2023. Kathryn Fowler agreed to serve as back-up commissioner. Karen Wetherington will send information for registration and a Zoom link for the meeting.

Session Social in August

A Session Social will be held August 22, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at Athentic Brewing Co. Families are invited. Luanne will send a reminder email.

Announcements - Ministry Teams

Fellowship – Valerie reported she is working on food for Rally Day. She brought samples of cards used to invite and welcome visitors to church and prayer

needs/prayers of praise request cards that we might consider using as models for ones of our own.

Worship – Jennifer reported that Worship Ministry Team is trying to regroup a communion team of about 12 people to prepare and clean up communion in order to return to serving communion in our traditional way. There will be a training session once the group is established. Jennifer reminded everyone that on Rally Day, August 13th, we will return to having the Worship Service at 11:00 a.m. CE is working on Rally Day and Amy Baer is updating the Rally Day pamphlet. Church School for children will resume that day and there will be an overview of adult Church School classes, as well as other offerings for Christian Education.

Missions – Bert reminded every one of the back pack drive for Cedar Shoals High School students. Amy Baer and Bert plan to meet with several service organizations with whom Covenant might partner.

Valerie, Eli and Joan Prittie will make a presentation on their trip to Olomouc in the near future.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, Katy Arora moved the meeting be adjourned. Bert Ballard-Myer seconded the motion. **Motion carried.** Dana closed with prayer at 7:45 p.m.

Next Stated Meeting: Session Social August 22, 2023 at 7 p.m.

Dana Waters, Moderator

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk