

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA
Stated Session Meeting
June 23, 2024 1:00 p.m.

A Stated Session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held at Covenant Presbyterian Church on June 23, 2024. Moderator Teresa Franklin welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Elders present: Bert Ballard-Myer, Bob Brewster, Dennis Calbos, Kathryn Fowler, Carolyn Hatfield, Abby Horvath, Ansley Tweedell Land, and Valerie Stone

Elders present on Zoom: Rebecca Silver, Dick Zimdars

Elders absent: Katy Arora, Brian Herndon

Others present: Teresa Franklin, Luanne Rigsby, and Rev. Tom Buchanan

Devotional

Kathryn Fowler read II Corinthians 5:17-18 and Isaiah 43:19 on grace and new beginnings. God invites us to release yesterday's burdens and embrace the promise of tomorrow. Because of grace, it is never too late for new life! Covenant has been through a period of difficulty, but we have had wonderful helpers and leaders to help us face those challenges and move ahead with faith. In the months ahead, how can we as a Session nurture continuing renewal and hope as we help Covenant and our new pastor build relationships and make plans to move into a future? Kathryn closed with prayer.

Review of Minutes

The minutes from the May 19, 2024, Stated Session meeting were reviewed. Abby Horvath moved and Valerie Stone seconded that the minutes be accepted as written. **Motion carried.** The minutes from the June 13, 2024, email vote were reviewed and approved as written by consensus. The minutes from the June 23, 2024, Called Congregational Meeting were reviewed and approved as written by consensus.

Approval of the Agenda

The Session approved the agenda with the additions of approving the minutes of the June 23, 2024, Called Congregational Meeting, the Personnel Committee Minutes supplement, and a discussion about the youth group.

Clerk's Report

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk, explained that Karen Wetherington contacted her about a discrepancy in the total membership number. Eli Stone was already listed as a member so didn't need to be added after his confirmation. Steve Raybon was still listed as a member though he had transferred his membership when he moved, so his name was

removed. The total membership as of last month should have been 213 rather than 215. With the passing of Jim Verbrugge, the total membership is 212. The clerk's report was accepted into the minutes

Financial Report

Kathryn Fowler, Finance Ministry Term co-chair, reviewed the Financial Summary for May, 2024, as well as the detailed financial report for the month. Kathryn reported that it looks like we will end the year with a surplus. She asked the ministry teams to turn in any expenses that need reimbursement and to go ahead and do any spending they need to do before the end of the fiscal year on June 30th. There may be an additional \$10,000 that was set aside for moving the new pastor that won't be needed since he already lives in Athens. Some elders were concerned that as of May, pledges received were almost \$13,000 less than anticipated. The 2023-2024 fiscal year's pledges totaled \$426,000 and 2024-2025 pledges totaled \$436,520. The financial report was received into the minutes.

Nominating Committee for Next Class of Elders.

Dick Zimdars, chair of the nominating committee for the 2027 class of elders, said that inactive elder, Stephanie Cahill, is willing to serve on the nominating committee. Dick and Stephanie will solicit nominations from the congregation for a non-elder to represent the congregation as the third member of the committee. Dick, Stephanie and that individual will be elected at a congregational meeting in the near future.

Report from Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Kathryn Fowler, member of the PNC, introduced Rev. Joel Thomas (Tom) Buchanan, Jr. as the newly called pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church. Tom told a bit about himself and his wife, Lisa, and expressed his gratitude and excitement for this call. He answered questions from the Session and said that he hopes to learn as much as he can about Covenant to get up to speed as much as possible before he begins work. Teresa invited him to the Covenant Coffeehouse on July 17th and to the Session Fellowship meeting on July 25th at Cali 'N Titos. **Kathryn Fowler moved and Valerie Stone seconded that July 31, 2024, be Rev. Teresa Franklin's last day as interim pastor and August 1, 2024, be Rev. Tom Buchanan's start date. Following discussion, the motion carried.**

Covenant to Host the NEGA PW Workshops on September 14, 2024

The NEGA Presbytery's Presbyterian Women's Workshop, originally planned for June, will be held instead on September 14, 2024. Since Covenant was slated to host the meeting in June, Presbyterian Women asked if we could host the meeting in September. Following discussion, Session approved by consensus that Covenant host the Presbyterian Women's Workshop on September 14, 2024.

Discussion of Youth Group

Valerie Stone informed the Session that Kim Ness, youth director at First Presbyterian Church, has recently resigned. Since our youth have been attending the youth group at First Presbyterian for the past few years, this would be a good time to offer something at Covenant for our youth. Discussion will be continued with a meeting with Valerie and interested parents with the Christian Education Ministry Team leaders, Katy Arora and Brian Herndon, in the near future so that programming can be offered in the fall.

Announcements – Ministry Teams

Mission and Outreach Ministry Team – Bert Ballard-Myer, co-chair, announced the following two new outreach offerings that Amy Baer is working on for this fall:

- Experiencing Creation Through the Arts – The first meeting to be held at Good Dirt Clay Studio and offered for all ages. (Mission Outreach may be able to supplement cost at Good Dirt)
- Theology on Tap – Bible Study for ages 21 and older meeting at Authentic Brewing Co. quarterly.

Fellowship Ministry Team - Covenant Coffeehouse talent show will be July 17th from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Those interested in sharing their talents may sign up at the name tag/welcome table on Sunday morning or by emailing Music Director, Aaron Carter-Enyi, at acarterenyi@covpresathens.org. Those interested in bringing a dessert may contact Valerie at valeriefreystone@gmail.com.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, Teresa closed with prayer at 2:30 p.m.

Session Fellowship – Thursday, July 25, 2024, 5:00p.m.-7:00 p.m. Cali 'N Titos

Next Stated Meeting: Sunday, August 18, 2024 1:15. Abby Horvath will present the devotional.

Teresa Franklin, Moderator

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk