

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA
Stated Session Meeting
February 27, 2024

A stated Session meeting, called according to the Book of Order, was held at Covenant Presbyterian Church and by Zoom on February 27, 2024. Moderator Dana Waters welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Elders present: Bert Ballard-Myer, Bob Brewster, Dennis Calbos, Kathryn Fowler, Carolyn Hatfield, Brian Herndon, Ansley Tweedell Land, Valerie Stone, and Dick Zimdars

Elders present on Zoom: Abby Horvath

Elders absent: Katy Arora, Rebecca Silver

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

Devotional

Bert Ballard-Myer's devotional focused on African American History Month and comments by Jim Wallis, theologian, activist and founder of *Sojourners* magazine. Mr. Wallis states that the most controversial sentence he ever wrote was "*The United States of America was established as a white society, founded upon the near genocide of another race and then the enslavement of yet another.*" We are urged to name racism as a sin which negates the work of Christ and the purpose of the church and then to repent from it as we are instructed in Matthew 2:3. Bert opened the meeting with prayer.

Review of Minutes

The minutes from the January 27, 2024, Stated Session meeting and the February 11, 2024, Called Session meeting were reviewed. Kathryn Fowler moved and Dennis Calbos seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. **Motion carried.**

Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by Dennis Calbos and seconded by Bert Ballard-Myer to approve the agenda as written. **Motion carried.**

Clerk's Report

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk, reported that with the addition of Jim and Pam Thompson as members, our new membership total is 215. The Clerk's report was received into the minutes.

Financial Report

Pam Knox, Treasurer, reviewed the Financial Summary for January, 2024, as well as the detailed financial report for the month. Pam said that pledges and non-pledged contributions are coming in higher than anticipated, and spending is lower than expected, so we are in good shape financially. We are about half way through the fiscal year and Pam urged the ministry teams to check their budgets. Ministry teams are to submit their proposed budgets for next fiscal year by Thursday, February 29th. Kathryn Fowler, chair of Finance Ministry Team, reported that the stewardship campaign for the July 1, 2024 - June 20, 2025, fiscal year will be March 15th - April 7th. The theme for the campaign will be "Good Stewards of God's Grace" from I Peter 4:10. The Financial Report was accepted into the minutes.

Updated Financial Policy Manual and Motion from Finance Ministry Team

Prior to the meeting, the Session received the new Financial Policy Manual from the Finance Ministry Team for their review. Kathryn explained that the team used Nacoochee Presbyterian Church's Financial Policy Manual as the template from which to create the Covenant's manual. The team also received much input from the office staff and from Lucy Keil, who has reviewed our finances for many years. The manual will be kept electronically and as a binder file in the office. On behalf of the **Finance Ministry Team, Kathryn Fowler moved to approve the Covenant Financial Policy Manual developed by the team with substantial input from church staff.** Coming from a committee, the motion did not require a second. Following discussion, the **motion carried.**

Personnel Update

For discussion of a confidential personnel matter, **Abby Horvath moved the Session enter into Executive Session.** Bert Ballard-Myer seconded the motion. Dana explained the procedure for Executive Session. Following discussion, **the motion carried.** The Session entered Executive Session at 7:43 p.m. **Dick Zimdars moved and Valerie Stone seconded we exit from Executive Session.** Following discussion, **the motion carried,** and Executive Session was ended at 8:26 p.m. **Abby Horvath moved to use \$800.00 from last year's surplus funds to cover leadership development training for staff.** Bert Ballard-Myer seconded the motion. Following discussion, the **motion carried.**

Report from Commissioners to February 24th NEGA Presbytery Meeting

Valerie Stone, Carolyn Hatfield, and Warren Combs served as commissioners to the NEGA Presbytery meeting held February 24th at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Augusta, GA. Valerie and Carolyn reported the highlights of the meeting. The NEGA Presbytery approved the examinations of five new pastors who will be going to churches in the presbytery. Included in this group of candidates was Rev. Karen Wilson Fletcher, who did an internship at Covenant in 2018. There was a remembrance for

elders and pastors who had passed away during 2023. The commissioners also enjoyed visiting with Steve and Lola Bell, former members of Covenant Presbyterian in Athens who now attend Covenant Presbyterian in Augusta and a delicious fried chicken lunch provided by WifeSaver Restaurant.

Motion from Building and Grounds Ministry Team

Carolyn Hatfield, Chair of Building and Grounds Ministry Team, explained that our original roof was asphalt. The old gutters were not changed when we put on a metal roof a few years ago, and they are not sufficient for the amount of water that comes off the roof. This has resulted in flooding and mud in the downstairs classrooms. B&G has received quotes for new gutters with leaf guards from two gutter companies, one local and one from Alpharetta. On behalf of Building and Grounds Ministry Team, **Carolyn Hatfield moved to use up to \$18,000 from carryover surplus funds account #9601 for purchase of gutters and drainage system.** Since the motion came from a committee, it needed no second. The surplus funds account has more than \$38,000 remaining in it. Following discussion, **the motion carried.** Carolyn also reported that a drain will be installed in the Memorial Garden by Brian Striggow to catch and redirect the rainfall that pools up in the garden.

Announcements

Dana announced that he and his family will be taking a vacation in France April 10-17th. Rev. Ron Gilreath will fill in for him in the pulpit.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, Dick Zimdars moved and Valerie Stone seconded that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.** Dana closed with prayer at 8:42 p.m.

Next Stated Meeting: Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. Valerie Stone will present the devotional. Ansley Tweedell Land will serve as acting clerk.

Dana Waters, Moderator

Luanne Rigsby, Clerk