Minutes of the Stated Session Meeting

Faith Presbyterian Church

Tallahassee, Florida

July 26, 2020

1. Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Devotion

As was approved at the Called Session Meeting of March 25, 2020, the meeting was conducted via teleconferencing.

The Stated Session Meeting of Faith Presbyterian Church was called to order and opened with a prayer by the Moderator, Senior Pastor Brad Clayton, at 11:30 a.m. Tracy Morales provided the devotion.

The Ruling Elders (20) present were Bob Apgar, Lee Andre, Aggie Bell, Amanda Bevis, Alice Bonn, Leon Corbett, Ginny Dailey, Neal Evans, Andee Harrison, Bill Holliman, Mary Keyt, Laura Ketcham, Lee Marsh, Tracy Morales, Linda Shelley, Jason Taylor , Robert Volpe, Frank Walker III, Malikah Woody and Roy Youngblood. **A quorum of at least one-third of the members of the Session was present.**

The Ruling Elders (1) absent were Cory Hill. Ruling Elder Duff Maki passed away on July 20, 2020.

Associate Pastor Trinity Whitley (Teaching Elder), Barney Ray (Clerk of Session) and Randy Zepp (Church Administrator) were also present.

2. Sharing of Joys and Concerns – The Moderator asked if anyone had any joys or concerns to share. Prayers were requested for Peggy Maki on the passing of her husband and elder Duff Maki; parents, children, teachers and school administrators as they prepare for the start of school this fall; the Faith preschool as they transition to a new director and reopening this fall.

3. Clerk’s Report

1. Approval of the Minutes - The Moderator asked if there were any discussion or recommended revisions to the minutes from the **May 31, 2020 Stated Session Meeting and the Called Session Meeting of May 29, 2020.**

Hearing no corrections, the Moderator asked if there was a motion to approve all minutes as submitted. Linda Shelley so moved and Neal Evans seconded the motion. By acclamation, b**oth sets of minutes were approved as submitted.**

1. Presbytery Commissioners Report - Ginny Dailey and Linda Shelley shared a report of the June Presbytery meeting. Diversity of the churches represented was noted as well as almost 100 attendees via virtual technology as the first such Presbytery meeting of this type. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance provided a report during the meeting. The worship service was very connecting.

4. Pastor’s Report –

1. General Assembly Report – The Moderator reported that the meeting was conducted via virtual technology. The GA elected a Moderator and committee members as well as issued statements on racial equality and the pandemic.
2. New Staff Updates – The Moderator reported that Tony Tannahill was hired as our new church custodian and is doing a great job the two or three weeks on the job. He also reported that Renee Lemonier was hired to replace Pam Mills who retired. She will start working remotely this week.
3. Session Retreat in the Fall – The Moderator said to reserve the dates of September 25-26 for the retreat. We will discuss whether to hold this retreat at the August Stated Session Meeting.
4. Faith Online By the Numbers – The numbers for viewing the on-line worship were very good in April and May but have declined in June and July but that could be for a couple of different reasons. During normal times, summertime worship numbers are lower but some fatigue attending via computer could also explain the reduction. Tracy Morales asked when the numbers are pulled for this report since people might access the worship service on days other than Sunday. The Moderator said that Cheri Harkema pulled all of the numbers after the July 12 worship service so they are as up-to-date as of that date.
5. Reopening Phased Plan – The Moderator requested feedback from the Session on the draft reopening phased plan sent earlier this month. He said that while we do not know when we will start reopening, he wanted to have a plan approved by the Session so that when the decision to reopen is made; we know the plan for it. **Roy Youngblood made a motion to approve the plan and Bob Apgar seconded the motion**.

Neal Evans asked what the basis was for the limit of 20 people to enter the sanctuary in Phase 3. The Moderator said that he borrowed it from the plan that St John’s Episcopal uses for allowing people to enter their sanctuary for prayer. He said that he was not opposed to changing the number. He said that this part of the plan was not for an organized worship service such as a Taize service or Sunday morning worship. It was to allow people to come into the sanctuary for prayer and to begin getting them used to the precautions that will be in effect later such as use of hand sanitizer, etc.

Neal suggested that a subgroup of the Session of 3 to 4 members work with staff to keep the plan dynamic and not wait for the next Session meeting. The Moderator said that after the Session approved allowing him to make decisions on postponing on-site church activities; he created a group of church members with medical training to advise him. He mentioned current Session members Cory Hill and Andee Harrison (Moderator of Worship & Music) and church members Jill David, Kevin Peters and Marilyn Capps. He also added that once we have an approved plan we will need to recruit people to work the plan including volunteers to help with cleaning the building.

Jason Taylor recommended adding to the plan to address what the church would do when someone tests positive for COVID-19. He also recommended that the plan should address posting notices around the facilities to clearly state what the expectations of anyone who comes on the church campus. The Moderator requested Randy Zepp (Church Administrator) update the facility use form to address this as well including the information provided by the church’s insurance company. He said that one of recommendations from the company was to close down for two weeks should someone who visits campus tests positive.

Mary Keyt said that she supported the suggestions expressed and stated that we should not be in a rush into reopening. We should make sure community testing numbers for positive tests are down and stay down. The Moderator said he agreed and that this plan is not intended to push us into reopening but to have a plan in place when we are ready. Neal Evans said he supporting adding Jason Taylor’s two suggestions to the plan.

Frank Walker asked about the Phase 2 proposal for group leaders to take attendance and whether that would or should apply to AA or NA groups that meeting in church facilities during the week when anonymity was a part of those programs. The Moderator said that one NA group meets Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights in the Delta Court building only. We could put on the facility use form the requirement that groups notify the church when someone in their group tests positive. Lee Marsh said that we do not need to know the identity of who tests positive, only when and where they were on campus.

Amanda Bevis expressed concerns about the plan not including any child care. She and other families with young children would likely not feel comfortable bring very young children into the Sanctuary during a worship service because of no child care. The Moderator said that the draft plan original did have child care in it but was taken out after review of other church plans that are currently meeting. He said that they could take another look at providing child care in the plan.

**The Moderator asked if he could draft the changes discussed and email them out for an electronic vote for the Session approval. By acclamation, the Session concurred with this recommendation.**

**The motion to approve the plan was tabled.**

5. Financial Report –

Randy Zepp provided an update to the financial information in the Session packet which was through June 30th. He said that as of July, current revenues were $693,541 and expenditures were $630,472. Compared to last year at this time, the numbers were revenues of $675,000 and expenditures of about the same amount as revenues. So overall, the financial position is still very strong as offerings are a little ahead of budget and expenses are less than budgeted at this time. The Moderator added that this without using any of the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan. He did say that the preschool did need to use their part of the PPP loan.

6. Diaconate Report –

Associate Pastor Trinity Whitley reported that the Diaconate had not met since May. She mentioned that while the monthly Manna on Meridian food distribution program has continued and precautions taken, someone did later test positive for COVID-19 and everyone who volunteered was notified.

She said that we have continued to post on-line the needs of the community programs we support such as Grace Mission, Second Harvest and Sealey Elementary. Aggie Bell requested that we send out another email to remind members of the cleaning supplies and disposable glove needs for Sealey Elementary School and the deadline for bringing them by church to drop off.

7. Consent Agenda – No items on the consent agenda.

8. Action Agenda –

a. The **Witness Committee recommended the Session’s approval** for the following action items:

i. **Community Corner in Faith Communications** -

That our weekly and monthly communications have an area for community concerns: announcements, meetings, educational opportunities dealing with social justice issues can be noted: environment, criminal justice, crime prevention, civil rights, race, LGBT, access to equal education, affordable housing, food insecurity, access to good health care.

**The motion was tabled.**

ii. **DART Partnership** -

That Faith Presbyterian become a member of the DART organization, make an annual $2,000 contribution to DART, that the witness committee will be the parent organization, and that the Rev. Trinity Whitley will be the DART board representative

Lee Marsh stated that he would recuse himself from discussion and voting on this motion because of his role in the judiciary.

Roy Youngblood said that he wasn’t sure if we was speaking in favor or against the motion but said that he had some concerns. He wondered whether Trinity had the time given her current terms of call to take on this additional responsibility. She stated that she was very much willing and participated in the discussion of this initiative during the committee meeting. Roy then expressed concerns that our church was a community initiative like this several years ago that resulted in our pastor at the time being out of pocket with some fraudulent uses of the entities credit card by a paid staff member.

Ginny Dailey said that she was on the Session then and that people passed the hat to cover the expenses so that the pastor did not have to pay for these charges. She said she remembers this event and shared Roy’s concerns however she believed that DART would fill a void in the faith-based community for social justice and that this effort is led largely by African-American congregations.

Mary Keyt said that she also participated in the committee’s discussion of this initiative and she thought a lot of steps were taken to address this type of issue. She said that what happened years ago could happen to any organization because of one dishonest employee.

Frank Walker asked if this annual contribution a currently budgeted expense. Trinity said that it was not currently in the base budget but there were enough surplus in the current budget of the committee to pay the initial year. They would the put in a request in the 2021 budget to increase their budget by this amount.

Robert Volpe said that he has been involved in efforts for social justice and said there is a real appetite for this initiative in our community.

Neal Evans said that while he supports social justice he felt uncomfortable about joining DART. He said while we might agree with many of the views expressed by this initiative it is also possible that they may express views that we do not agree with. He said the concept may be good but he worried that the advocacy could be high jacked by a few people. He also was concerned about the financial commitment.

Jason Taylor suggested that maybe we could commit for a year and see how it develops. Neal said he thought he read somewhere that they requested a three year commitment and Trinity said she remembered that was the case.

Bob Apgar said he understood the concerns expressed but that he supported making a three year commitment.

Trinity mentioned that 30 local churches are involved in DART which includes St John’s Episcopal and that she could send the list of all churches. The Moderator said that First Presbyterian hasn’t committed at this time but that he thought that was because the pastor was retiring and allowing the next pastor the opportunity in the decision making process.

Roy stated that after hearing the discussion, that he supported the motion.

**The motion received 14 votes to approve and 1 vote against the motion. The motion was passed.**

iii. **Remembrance Project Partnership -**

That Faith Presbyterian Church become a partner with the Remembrance Project in Tallahassee.

Lee Marsh read the motion and said that this recommendation had come from his committee just before the onset of COVID-19 and since that time the City of Tallahassee had adopted this project and said they would install a monument at the Gaines Street and Meridian Road across from Cascades Park which used to be the sight of the old city jail.

**The motion was passed.**

b. The **Youth & Families Committee recommended the Sesson’s approval** for construction of an outside structure (roof or open structure) so that groups could meet outside.

Bill Holliman said the idea expressed in the motion from his committee was still preliminary and did not include a specific recommendation for where and how this could be accomplished. He asked if we could form a group to explore and come back with a recommendation to the Session. The Moderator said that he did not believe it would take a motion to do this.

Bob Apgar recommended **referring the matter to the Buildings & Grounds Committee for development of a recommendation to the Session with input from Children & Families, Youth & Families and Adult & Families Committees. Ginny Dailey requested that the Preschool Board also participate.**

9. Items Not In Agenda – The Moderator asked if there were any items anyone wanted have considered to add by a 2/3’s vote. None were offered.

10. Informational Items/Committee Reports –

The Moderator asked if there was anything to share from the committees as informational items. Bob Apgar asked if the Session could get an update from Ginny Dailey on the Preschool.

Ginny Dailey said that the preschool was reopening on August 10th. She mentioned that the new preschool director is fantastic. She said that the preschool is different from K-12 schools and colleges and universities. She said that daycare and childcare centers in general did not close at any time during the pandemic and have remained open with success. She said the preschool plan was to limit enrollment to no more than 10 children per classroom. She expressed concern that if the preschool does not reopen, parents will find another program and the preschool would never reopen. She said that they have copied the procedures from the best daycares in Tallahassee.

Bob asked will parents acknowledge the risk. Ginny said that the student handbook has mentioned the possibility that children could become sick from exposure viruses in the classroom. She was not sure about a waiver of liability. The Moderator said that the insurance company said we should follow CDC guidelines and post notices around the facility. They even provided us with some examples. He also said that the Preschool Board has had a plan in place for a month and Beverly Sims (retiring director) has been involved with the development of the plan.

Jason Taylor said that a waiver of liability does not protect the church from our own negligence. He also said that if someone wanted to sue, they would have to provide evidence that the contracted the virus there which would be difficult to prove.

Neal Evans said that his two year old granddaughter will start at the preschool next month and that his daughter-in-law who is very cautious about these matters is comfortable with the plan.

Bob made a motion to require the preschool to develop a form of waiver to require parents to sign before their child could attend and that it specifically address the risk of contracting COVID-19. Alice Bonn seconded the motion.

Linda Shelley brought a point of order that since this was not on the agenda, a two-thirds vote to add this item to the agenda was required.

**The Moderator asked for a vote on whether to add this item to the agenda. Only four votes were in favor and more than four were opposed.**

The Moderator asked that Ginny Dailey seek clarification on what the preschool was providing parents on this topic to send to the Session next month.

11. Closing prayer - to conclude the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

**Actions of Session Approved by Email between May 31st and July 26th**

No requests for approval by email occurred during this time.

**Actions of Session Approved by Email between July 26th and August 23rd**

As discussed at the July 26th Stated Session Meeting, an email request for approval of the revised Reopening Plan attached to the email was sent on July 29th**. All votes were for approval of the revised plan**. The revised plan approved was as follows:

*Faith Presbyterian Building Re-opening Plan*

*This plan has been developed to prepare Faith Presbyterian Church to reopen the building for use. In order to complete each phase, a Covid-19 Task Force will be formed to advise the staff about reopening. The task force will be guided by best practices and advice offered by local officials, the CDC and our insurance company. The task force consists of the following church members: Cory Hill, Andee Harrison, Kevin Peters, Jill David, Marilyn Capps, and Brad Clayton.*

***Phase 1-*** *Office Re-opening Plan*

*Phase 1 will begin when our full staff is in place, volunteers are secured, and the church staff and task force advise that we are ready to open.*

* *All doors will remained locked with the exception of the main office door. Electronic Locks will be disabled.*
* *Volunteer must be seated at main office to welcome visitors.*
* *Anyone entering the office will be required to wear a mask, sanitize hands, and have a temperature check.*
* *Doors will be posted with entrance requirements: masks must be worn, temperature must be checked to enter the building during normal business hours.*
* *If their temperature ranges below 99 degrees he/she will be admitted and can meet with staff either in the conference room on in their office. If it is above 99 degrees he/she must remain in the office foyer.*
* *Staff will be able to work from home and may not have regular office hours. Appointments are highly recommended*
* *All other parts of the building remain closed (for Faith preschool, please see their separate reopening plan.)*

***Phase 2****- Small group re-opening plan*

*Phase 2 will begin when staff and the task force advise that we are ready to move to the next phase.*

* *Doors remained locked and electronic locks disabled.*
* *Small groups will be organized at three locations: Gazebo, Fire pit, and in the parlor.*
* *Small groups will be limited to 10 people per CDC advise.*
* *Doors will be posted with requirements for entry: Mask, temperature check, and hand sanitizer.*
* *For Parlor groups: All those entering the building must come to the office. They will be required to wear a mask, sanitize hands, and have a temperature check.* 
  + *Group leaders are expected to come early and wipe down door knobs, light switches, remote controls in the parlor. They will also be asked to wipe down these items after the meeting is over. Cleaning supplies will be provided at the office.*
  + *Group leaders must take attendance at each meeting. They must turn in attendance sheets at the office after the meeting is over.*
  + *Chairs will be set up six feet apart. No tables will be available.*
* *Bathrooms will be available in the office area. The rest of the building will remain closed.*
* *No sharing of food and the church will not provide food at group meetings.*

***-Outside Mission Partners***

***-****Under phase 2, only two outside mission partners will be allowed use of the building-* ***NA Groups,*** *and* ***The Boy Scouts****. The NA groups typically have less than 10 people and the Boy Scouts meet outdoors near the fire pit. These groups will be required to sign a new* ***Facility Use Agreement Form*** *that includes new requirements for COVID-19 safety. They will not be required to turn in attendance sheets, but they will be required to notify Senior Administrator, Randy Zepp, if any attendee tests positive for Covid-19.*

*Phase 3- Sanctuary Open for Prayer—We will move to phase three when staff and the task force advise us to do so.*

* *We will provide three opportunities per week for prayer in the sanctuary. These sessions will be 30 minutes each. A staff member or volunteer must be present to make sure all attendees follow safety measures.*
* *Sanctuary doors will be posted with requirements for entry: Masks must be worn and hands sanitized.*
* *Members must sign up to attend in order to ensure space for social distancing. The balcony will be closed, and those entering will be expected to socially distance throughout the main floor. The number will be capped at 20 people, following the best practices of other churches in our area.*
* *Attendees must use the main sanctuary doors or the handicapped entrance. All other entrances will remain closed.*
* *Each prayer session will include time for silent prayer and may offer recorded music. The session leader will close the time in prayer and ask attendees to leave for cleaning.*

***Phase 4****—Sanctuary Re-opened for Sunday Worship—We will move to phase four when advised to do so by staff and task force, and* ***when approved by the session.***

* *There will be two identical worship services at 8:30am and 10:30am. The 10:30am service will be streamed live on Youtube so members can continue to worship from home. Livestreams are recorded and will continue to be available after the service is over.*
* *Requirements for entry will be posted at main sanctuary doors. Congregants will be required to use hand-sanitizer and wear masks to enter the sanctuary.*
* *Alternate Rows will be roped off to provide space between members and space will be clearly marked for each family. Once the sanctuary is “full,” others will be asked to worship online from home.*
* *All words will be projected and bulletins, bibles and hymnbooks will be available upon request. They will need to be cleaned after worship has concluded.*
* *Offering plates will be at each door and not passed during the service.*
* *Communion will not be served.*
* *Passing of the peace will be verbal only.*
* *There will be no congregational singing and no choir. Soloists and instrumental music will be provided.*
* *We will ask congregants to maintain social distancing throughout the worship service and as they exit. If necessary ushers will dismiss after the service to ensure social distancing is followed.*
* *Between services, volunteers will wipe down pews, and disinfect the sanctuary as much as possible. We will need at least 8 volunteers to help with cleaning each week.*
* *We will also need volunteers to run audio/video equipment for live streaming.*
* *The restrooms will be available in the narthex and behind the sanctuary. The rest of the building will be closed.*
* ***Childcare will be provided for children 3 and under****. Parents will drop off children at the blue breezeway and children will be taken by staff to the nursery. Parents will not be allowed to enter the nursery. Each child will have their temperature checked before entry and will be signed in/out by parents. Child-care staff will wear masks and be trained to keep space clean. Children 4 and older will be expected to worship in the sanctuary.*

***WHAT TO DO IF COVID-19 IS DETECTED***

*(Please see Preschool reopening plan for preschool procedure.)*

*If it is determined that someone has tested positive for COVID-19 and has entered the building:*

1. *The building will be closed for two weeks for cleaning.*
2. *The congregation will be notified that the building is closed.*
3. *If the person attended a small group event, each person who attended that event will be notified that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality for the individual.*

The next Stated Session Meeting is on Sunday, August 23, 2020.

Respectfully submitted by

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Barney Ray, Clerk of Session

Approved by Moderator

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Brad Clayton, Senior Pastor