Minutes of the Stated Session Meeting

Faith Presbyterian Church

Tallahassee, Florida

February 28, 2021

1. Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Devotion

The Stated Session Meeting of Faith Presbyterian Church was called to order via teleconferencing and opened with a prayer by the Moderator, Senior Pastor Brad Clayton, at 11:45 a.m.

The Ruling Elders (16) present. Present via teleconferencing with Zoom were Bob Apgar, Aggie Bell, Amanda Bevis, Alice Bonn, Ginny Dailey, Neal Evans, Andee Harrison, Cory Hill, Laura Ketcham, Lee Marsh, Tracy Morales, Linda Shelley, 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 (5) absent were Lee Andre, Leon Corbett, Mary Keyt, Bill Holliman, and Jason Taylor.

Associate Pastor Trinity Whitley (Teaching Elder), Barney Ray (Clerk of Session), Susie Clemons (Deacon) 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 Heidi and Heather Scalf who mourn the passing of their husband/father Lance Scalf. Also for Sylvia Fleischman whose husband passed away. Prayers were requested for the health of members Mary Rivers Cooper and Janet Evans. Joys were expressed for the new class of officers ordained and installed during the morning worship service and for the combined efforts of the Youth & Families and Buildings & Grounds committees on installation of the new awning over the patio to the north and adjacent to the Fellowship Hall. The Moderator led in an opening prayer mentioning all of these things.

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 **January 24, 2021 Stated Session Meeting or February 21, 2020 Called Session Meeting.** Hearing none, **the minutes were approved by acclamation.**
2. Winter Presbytery Meeting Report - Linda Shelley and Malikah Woody provided a report from the meeting on February 23rd. Actions included the installation of Trinity Whitley as vice moderator of Presbytery, ordination and installation of a candidate for ministry who will serve at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital. Two churches in the Presbytery were dissolved. One in Pensacola and one in Port St Joe. The Presbytery adopted a new Committee on Congregational Revitalization Handbook. April 18th was designated at Dogwood Acres Day. A two year covenant agreement with Florida Disaster Assistance Network, Inc. was also approved. Presbytery approved the terms of call for the General Presbytery and the 2021 budget.
3. Communications – Pastors received an invitation to participate in an Ecumenical Day of Prayer and Fasting for Christian churches in Tallahassee on March 8th. The event is promoted by local African-American churches and they are requesting permission to use the name of churches participating in this event. Both the Moderator and Associate Pastor provided background and shared the proposed schedule for prayer that day. They both expressed support and explained that it did not include other faiths due to the emphasis on Jesus Christ as a part of the prayers. **Ginny Dailey moved to approve authorization to use the churches name as a participant in the advertisement of this event. Linda Shelley seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

4. Pastor’s Report

1. Tree of Life – For his dissertation for his doctorate, the Moderator presented his work on the spirituality and theology of giving and the use of endowments. He said that he had organized a focus group of members to participate in this work including Bob Apgar and Roy Youngblood. He provided a list of several scriptures and read Psalm 1: 1-3. He said that the Stewardship Committee has adopted this scripture as the basis for an endowment campaign titled “Tree of Life”. Included in the meeting packet was a draft of ideas for starting a policy. He said that the Presbyterian Foundation can provide resources to assist the Stewardship Committee with developing a church policy for investments. He said that the Presbytery Foundation would be a great resource to help the church with making investment decisions. He said that the goal is to come to the Officer Retreat in April with a policy. He expressed gratitude to members of the focus group. Tracy Morales said she remembered an endowment campaign called Circle of Faith. The Moderator said that the campaign never materialized in receiving funds for an endowment. Roy Youngblood and Bob Apgar both spoke in favor of this initiative. Linda Shelley asked if any amount had been discussed for any funds received and deposited to the Reserve Fund to sweep and transfer to the Restricted Fund. The Moderator said that the concept had been discussed but without any specific numbers.

1. Anti-racism Initiative – The Moderator referred to the Presbytery’s statement on racism from the *I Stand With You* task force in the session packet. He reminded the Session that they have approved to adopt an anti-racism initiative for 2021. He asked that elders consider making themselves vulnerable to sharing honest conversation on this subject. He started with sharing a personal story and thoughts. Aggie Bell, Tracy Morales and Bob Apgar also shared personal reflections and observations on this topic. The Moderator asked that the Session review the eight statements from the Presbytery statement on racism for the next Session meeting.
2. In-Person Worship – The Moderator requested that the Session consider returning to Phase 4 of the church plan for reopening the worship services to limited in-person attendance. He said that the church had installed new filters in the Sanctuary so that it would not be necessary to open windows and doors. Linda Shelley and Lee Marsh spoke in favor of returning to Phase 4 of the plan. Roy Youngblood also spoke in favor and asked the Moderator if there had been any discussion about Easter Sunday and the desire for many members wanting to attend that Sunday. The Moderator said that an outdoor worship services for Easter Sunday in addition to traditional sunrise service is under discussion. **Neal Evans made a motion to return to Phase 4 with limited in-person worship services. Roy Youngblood seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

5. Financial Report – Cory Hill reported budgeted receipts of $223,000 compared to actual receipts of $182,000 year-to-date although he estimated $23,000 from on-line giving in February were not included in the reported receipts. Budgeted expenditures of $208,000 compared with $190,000 in actual expenditures. He said that the current year financial position is still very good. He reported that the federal Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) load had been officially forgiven. He said that each committee will be asked for one or two priorities for use of prior year carry forward funds resulting from the loan forgiveness. Trinity Whitley asked if the Diaconate would also be included in this request. He replied he assumed they would.

6. Diaconate Report – Susie Clemons reported that the Manna on Meridian food distribution occurred for February and that they are asking for people to place an emphasis on donating peanut butter for next month. She said that the Diaconate elected George Reynolds as Moderator, Susan McLeod as Vice Moderator and Will Armistead as Secretary for the coming year. They are still operating the backpack program for Sealey Elementary School students and need shoppers to buy groceries for students to take home in their backpacks for the weekend to provide food for their families.

7. Consent Agenda – The Moderator asked if anyone wanted to pull anything from the consent agenda for discussion. Hearing no such request, the Moderator asked if there was a motion to approve the consent agenda. Robert Volpe moved approval and Tracy Morales seconded the motion. **The consent agenda was unanimously approved.**

1. **Stewardship Committee** requested that the Session approve the membership report which included the following changes to the church rolls:

Deceased: Elizabeth “Liz” Clemons, June MacDonald and Bob Torrescano.

Total membership of 821

8. Action Agenda

a. **Preschool Committee** requested approval of School Year 21-22 Fundraising Plans. The plan goal is to raise $13,000 for Campus Improvement/General Fund and $57,000 for Scholarships. Fundraising events in the plan included Trike-A-thon, First Christmas Drive Thru, Lucky Goat Coffee Sales, Gift wrap sales, Fall Parent Party, Family Fun Night, Preschool Sunday, School pictures, Giving Tuesday Campaign Solicitation Letter and End-of-the-School-Year solicitation Letter.

The Moderator asked if there were any discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote of the motion. **The motion was approved.**

b. **Personnel Committee** requested approval the Session’s approval of proposed revisions to the Salary & Performance Evaluation Administration Policy. The Committee proposed to delete the formal detailed Performance Evaluation System and replace it with more frequent informal evaluations of employee performance including:

1. Requiring written feedback to employee at least once each quarter.

2. Requiring an annual review of the employee’s job description.

3. Requiring supervisors to report at least once a year to the Personnel Committee on employee performance evaluations.

The changes are consistent with nationwide trends away from formal written evaluations toward more frequent, personal interactions. The Committee believes this approach is more appropriate for Faith’s relatively small staff.

The Moderator asked if there were any discussion. Roy asked since the revised policy mentions informal evaluations how will we know that that is done. Bob Apgar said that supervisors will still be required to report the Personnel Committee on evaluations annually. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote of the motion. **The motion was approved.**

9. Items Not In Agenda – The Moderator asked if there were any items anyone wanted have considered adding 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.

Ginny Dailey reported that the preschool is staying open despite some limited COVID-19 exposure among teachers and parents. She said that the plan for this school year was for enrollment of 80 children but current enrollment is 90. Registration for next school year is planned for full enrollment of 120 to 125 and is going well. She said that fundraising is down due to cancellation of planned in-person events due to COVID-19 so they will have a shortfall in the budget which the Session approved covering at last month’s Session meeting. One of the goals in the preschool mission statement is to improve the campus. She said that work is planned for improving the playground and installing a sprinkler system in the laundry room. She said six scholarships are planned for next year. She said that they are forming a task force this summer to study and visit other summer programs with a goal of launching a summer program in summer of 2022.

Linda Shelley reported that the church had received a notice from the counseling center renting space in the Delta Court building that they would reduce their monthly rental payment from $1,350 to $950 beginning in March. She said that it may be time to think about alternative uses of the building.

The Moderator expressed gratitude to the class of elders rotating off the Session following this meeting and highlighted some accomplishments during their three year service such as creating of a new communications committee, creating on-line giving via a mobile application, streaming worship services virtually during the pandemic, the largest year of giving in recent history of $1.5M.

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

**Summary of Motions Approved by the Session**

* **Approved returning to Phase 4 of the church COVID-19 reopening plan for limited in-person attendance at worship services.**
* **Approved authorizing the churches name as a participant in the Ecumenical Day of Prayer and Fasting on March 8, 2021**
* **Approval of the minutes from Stated Meeting on January 24, 2021 and the Called Meeting to exam new officers on February 21, 2021.**
* **membership report from Stewardship Committee**
* **Approved revised Salary and Performance Evaluation policy from Personnel Committee**
* **Approved Preschool fundraising plan for School Year 21-22**

**Actions of Session Approved by Email between January 24, 2021 & February 28, 2021**

On January 10, 2021, an email was sent at the direction of the Moderator to the Session requesting an electronic vote on whether to continue limited in-person worship or to suspend in-person worship due to recent increased COVID-19 positivity rates.

Option A:  Return to Phase 4 modified in-person worship by February 21st.

Option B: Remain in virtual worship only and revisit at the Session meeting on February 28th.

**The Session approved by email Option B**

Respectfully submitted by

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Barney Ray, Clerk of Session

Approved by Moderator

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Brad Clayton, Senior Pastor