Minutes of the Stated Session Meeting

Faith Presbyterian Church

Tallahassee, Florida

September 26, 2021

1. Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Devotion

The Stated Session Meeting of Faith Presbyterian Church was called to order in the Fellowship Hall by the Moderator Dr. Brad Clayton and opened with a devotion by Jason Welty at 11:45 a.m. The Moderator offered an opening prayer.

The Ruling Elders (16) present were Bob Apgar, Courtney Atkins, Ruth Bedell, Leon Corbett, Neal Evans, Pat Farrell, Andee Harrison, Mary Keyt, Karen Linville, Lee Marsh, Wayne McDaniel, Matt Sirmans, Linda Shelley, Frank Walker III, Jason Welty and Roy Youngblood. **A quorum of at least one-third of the members of the Session was present.**

The Ruling Elders (4) absent were Aggie Bell, Amanda Bevis, Laura Ketcham and Robert Volpe.

Barney Ray (Clerk of Session), Allen McConnaughhay (Deacon) and Randy Zepp (Church Administrator) were present. Allison Lee (Faith Preschool Director) and Cindy Parry (member of safety committee) were present for action item regarding the Preschool COVID-19 policy.

The Moderator announced that Shannon Guse (Director of Christian Education for Youth and Young Adults) has accepted a position with a church in Dallas, Texas and her last Sunday would be October 17th.

Wayne McDaniel said he thought the Session should express its appreciation to Shannon. The Moderator asked the Clerk to include appreciation in the minutes of the meeting.

*The Session of Faith Presbyterian Church wishes to express its love and appreciation for Shannon Guse’s sixteen (16) years of faithful service to the youth and young adults of the church and in our community. She is deeply loved by the families and youth from middle school to young adulthood. Her leadership extended beyond the walls of Faith Church to the local community, the Presbytery of Florida including Dogwood Acres and area churches, Montreat Youth Conference, communities served by youth through local mission trips and to the Presbyterian Church, USA at large. We want her to know that while we would love for her to stay with us in ministry at Faith, we love her and wish her the very best in her new opportunity as she receives God’s Call to serve a new congregation and community.*

Action Agenda

1. **Preschool Board** **request for revision to the preschool COVID-19 protocol**. Elders Wayne McDaniel and Bob Apgar had expressed concerns that the preschool had implemented a policy which did not conform to the policy approved by the Session on COVID-19 policy that masks were required for everyone inside church buildings without exception. Preschool Director Allison Lee explained how the preschool policy was developed with input from teachers, families and advice from the local county health department. She said that all of the families and children were comfortable with the policy that allowed parents to request in writing that their children not wear a mask. She said she monitors daily for these protocols and for sickness and illness. All adults are required to wear a mask. She said that children are strongly encouraged to wear masks. She said that temperature checks are conducted daily. Copies of the preschool protocols were included in the Session packet for the meeting. Linda Shelley asked how many children were not wearing masks. Allison said 14 students are not wearing a mask of a total of 115 to 120 students. The Two Year Old class is attempting to wear masks. Ages younger than two are not wearing masks.

**Bob Apgar** thanked Allison for her thorough procedures and protocols however **he made a motion that the Session as the Board of Trustees of Faith Presbytery Church, Inc, which operates the preschool program, require that all children two years and older where a mask without exception. Wayne McDaniel seconded the motion.**

Discussion: Lee Marsh asked Allison if she had any feedback from parents who have opted out should the policy require a mask without exception. She said that one previously withdrew because masks were not required. She said she would expect more families would withdraw if masks were required. Courtney Atkins asked for clarification of the authority of the preschool director. The Moderator said that he was responsible for supervision of the director and the Preschool Board has some delegated decision making authority as a committee of the Session. Leon Corbett asked why a motion was necessary to explicitly state that the COVID-19 policy approved by the Session included the preschool program. Jason Welty said he was on the side of giving deference to the preschool to operate given that the preschool operates five days a week while church children’s programs are twice a week. He said that there needs to be some balance. Linda Shelley said that she believes that due to the current Delta variant, masks should be required. Lee Marsh said that the data provided by the preschool director show very low exposure reported to children and staff. Cindy Parry spoke in favor of requiring masks and not allowing an option to that policy in order to maximize safety protocols. Roy Youngblood asked why the previous preschool requirement to wear masks last school year changed. Frank Walker (elder on Preschool Committee) said that there is historical precedent for the preschool developing their own policies. He said that only one local preschool was requiring masks so it was changed due to this factor. Both Frank Walker and Allison Lee stated that they do not have any issues with implementing a policy requiring children two and older to wear masks if that is the will of the Session. Bob Apgar said he recognized that everyone involved in the preschool’s decision to change their policy did so with best intentions. Ruth Bedell said that parents who want their children to be in a safe school environment where everyone is required to wear masks would make Faith Preschool an attractive option for those families. Linda Shelley said that parents should be provided a grace period to find alternative preschools if they want to leave due the mask requirement.

The Moderator asked if there were any further discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote by raising hands for the motion. The hand vote was eleven (11) in favor of the motion and five (5) against. **The motion was approved by majority vote.**

Wayne McDaniel said that while he did not agree with her position on this topic, he did thank Allison Lee for all of her work as the preschool director.

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 **August 22, 2021 Stated Session Meeting.** Hearing none, **a motion to approve was made by Roy Youngblood and seconded by Neal Evans. The minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.**
2. Commissioners for Presbytery Meeting – Volunteering to serve as **commissioners were Leon Corbett and Karen Linville subject to her confirming her availability. Roy Youngblood and Wayne McDaniel agreed to be alternates in case Leon and/or Karen could not attend.**

4. Pastor’s Report

Pumpkin Patch Committee requested approval and guidance and on whether to have movie nights in the pumpkin patch this year. Jason Welty moved to approve movie nights for the pumpkin patch/ Frank Walker seconded the motion. Pat Farrell said Youth & Families voted to not have trunk or treat or other outdoor activities. He said no food or face painting either. Touchless policies initiated due to COVID-19 last year are likely to continue beyond the pandemic. A verbal vote of **the motion was** **approved with 3 against the motion.**

5. Financial Report – Roy Youngblood provided a report that revenues are $100,000 less than budgeted however receipts are $24,000 greater than expenses. Historically, revenues in the last quarter come in greater than prior months. Randy Zepp said that prepaid pledges have not been transferred to revenues received through September yet. Wayne McDaniel asked if we were close to paying off the Delta Court loan. The current loan balance is about $61,000. Question asked if the church should refinance to get a get a better interest rate off if we had sufficient reserves to pay off the loan. Karen Linville said that given the current balance, it probably wouldn’t save money by refinancing due to closing costs but that she would check into it.

6. Diaconate Report – Allen McConnaughhay reported that the Diaconate is planning for Jubilee on October 17th and a completely outdoor event and subject to weather. He said people are asked to bring their own chairs and blankets. He said the church tents, tables and chairs would be set up. He said the Fellowship Hall would not be used except maybe for cake walk (with masks and prepackaged cakes). Activities spread out across the grounds. Initial thought is we would use Honey Baked Ham for box lunches. He said they are requesting preorders for box lunches. No bounce houses but outdoor games.

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. **Wayne moved approval and Jason 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: Doris Stauffer. The total membership is now 813 members.

8. Action Agenda

b. **COVID-19 Exposure and Quarantine Protocols for Faith Nursery Staff**

(page 42 of packet). The Moderator said that he received word that the CDC had updated the quarantine period from 10 to 14 days. Discussion from Wayne McDaniel asked if volunteers should be included in this protocol since it only addresses paid nursery staff. He also asked if nursery staff are required to be vaccinated. The Moderator said that there is no such requirement for employees of the church. He then wondered if we should require a rapid test each morning before allowing them to work the nursery. After further discussion of whether to table the motion or to vote on the motion, **Jason Welty moved to amend the motion to change the quarantine period from 10 to 14 days and Wayne McDaniel seconded the motion. The amendment was unanimously approved. Wayne McDaniel made a motion to add volunteers working in the nursery to this protocol and Leon Corbett seconded the motion. The second amendment was also unanimously approved. Jason Welty moved to approve the amended motion and Mary Keyt seconded. The amended motion was unanimously approved.**

c. **Finance Committee** requested transfer of $50,000 from the Clemons Estate in the Undesignated Fund to the Tree of Life Endowment once it is established.

Discussion: Bob Apgar asked if someone has thanked the family. The Moderator said he had but we could send something from the Session as well.

**Motion unanimously approved by voice vote**.

9. Items Not In Agenda – The Moderator asked if there were any items anyone wanted have considered adding by a 2/3’s vote.

Andee Harrison said she received a request for **baptism of Grey Whitely (Son of Associate Pastor Trinity and her husband Thomas Whitley) which was approved by acclamation.**

Communion was observed with a closing prayer to conclude the meeting at 1:27 p.m.

**Summary of Motions Approved by the Session**

* **Approval of that church COVID-19 policy approves to preschool except for children under two years of age.**
* **Approval of the minutes from Stated Meeting on August 22, 2021.**
* **Approval of Leon Corbett and Karen Linville as commissioners to Presbytery meeting on October 23rd and Roy Youngblood and Wayne McDaniel as alternates.**
* **Approval to hold movie nights in the pumpkin patch.**
* **Approval of the membership report.**
* **Approval of COVID-19 quarantine protocols for church nursery staff and volunteers.**
* **Approval to transfer $50,000 from the Undesignated Funds Account to the Tree of Life Endowment once established.**
* **Approval of request for baptism for Grey Whitley (son of Thomas and Trinity Whitley).**

**Actions of Session Approved by Email between August 22, 2021 & September 26, 2021**

No actions were conducted by email during this time frame.

Respectfully submitted by

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Barney Ray, Clerk of Session

Approved by Moderator

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Dr. Brad Clayton, Senior Pastor