

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Akron, Ohio

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

Minutes of the Session Meeting – FINAL

Be adaptive, engaging, generous, inclusive and relevant. Be faithful. Be Westminster!

The regular meeting of the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church was called to order by Moderator and Pastor Jon Hauerwas at 7:02 p.m.

Elders (+ present, * excused, - absent)

Class of 2019	Class of 2020	Class of 2021
+ Marcia Holcomb	- Michael Dunbar	+ Phil Fry
+ James Gray	+ Brad Hall	- Nancy Keogh
+ Ed Labbe	+ Shelley Koutnik, Treasurer	* Becky Pool
+ Alec Works, Clerk of Session	+ Todd Willis	* Don Rearick

Also present: Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator; Greg Grafinger, Assistant Clerk of Session; guest John Childs, Moderator, Personnel Committee.

Opening, Declaration of Quorum and Extension of Floor

Pastor Jon opened the meeting with prayer at 7:02 pm. The presence of a quorum was confirmed and declared. A motion was made, seconded and approved to extend the privilege of the floor to the guests.

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Agenda

A **motion prevailed** to adopt and approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda.

Regarding the June 2 worship service, Pastor Jon explained that the Rev. Dr. Sandy Selby would let the Rev. Dr. Lisa Withrow know in advance if she (Sandy) would not be back in time to preside over the services. Dr. Withrow has acknowledged her availability. The following motion was then made, seconded and approved:

2019-089 MOTION prevailed to approve having the Rev. Dr. Lisa Withrow preside over the 2 Sunday morning worship services on June 2, 2019 if the Rev. Dr. Sandy Selby is unable to do so. [See also Motion 2019-099 below.]

Personnel Discussion

Pastor Hauerwas

The Clerk distributed 2 documents to attendees. The first was a letter addressed to the members of Session and the Personnel Committee dated May 27, 2019 from Alcee Chriss III, Music Director and Organist. The letter explained that he has accepted a professorship at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, and thus was stepping down from his positions at Westminster. He noted that such a professorship has been his primary career aspiration. He expressed his deep regrets and also his confidence that the music program at Westminster could maintain its high caliber. His last day as Music Director / Organist will be August 4, 2019. Alcee noted that he had considered, but determined that it would not be reasonable for him to continue to work at both Westminster and Wesleyan University. After discussion, the following motion was made, seconded, and approved: **2019-090 MOTION prevailed** to accept the resignation of Alcee Chriss III as Music Director / Organist, effective August 5, 2019.

The second document was from Pastor Jon and addressed some points to consider for the transition plan. The immediate concerns related to communication of this news, with consideration given to the upcoming start of the summer worship schedule and Pastor Jon's vacation. Absent Session and Personnel Committee members and Westminster staff will be notified before Pastor Jon's vacation. Alcee will notify choir members and members of the Search Committee that recommended his

hiring. A letter will then be sent to members of the congregation. The Rev. Cathy Ulrich, who will be preaching June 9, will also be made aware of this development.

Discussions also focused on work related to the music program to be done this summer and the selection of a new Search Committee. Alcee will continue to be actively involved through August 4, with projects including the organ refurbishment and other recommendations. Consensus was that future director(s) should be responsible for selecting choral scholars. A Search Committee will be selected and serve similar to last time. This committee will initially be responsible for finding an interim Music Director and Organist, as needed (one or two individuals). Committee members may continue to seek a regular Music Director / Organist. A motion may be made later regarding providing funding for the Search Committee. Also, the following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2019-091 MOTION prevailed to have a farewell reception for Alcee Chriss III on August 4, 2019 after each worship service, led by the Deacons.

Clerk's Report

The Consent Agenda as approved included the following motions:

2019-092 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the regular Session meeting of April 23, 2019.

2019-093 MOTION prevailed to receive the following report of all weddings, funerals, baptisms, and Communion that have taken place since Session's April 23, 2019 meeting:

1. Weddings: none
2. Funerals: Memorial service on April 27 for Claude Wilton, (died April 18), husband of member Anna Marie Wilton; Chrysanthe "Chris" Economou Taylor (died May 13) on May 20; Justin T. Rogers (non-member) on May 25; Pastor Hauerwas officiated at all three services.
3. Baptisms: none
4. Communion: May 12, 2019, attendance 194.

2019-094 MOTION prevailed to receive the report of the average worship attendance for April: 190 (10:30 a.m. plus an 8:00 a.m. service Easter Sunday); attendance for the April 6 Maundy Thursday service: 52. [Clerk's note: attendance on Easter Sunday was 43 (8 a.m.) and 286 (10:30 a.m.).]

2019-095 MOTION prevailed to approve the membership statistical report for the month of April 2019:

Total Membership as of 4/1/19	403
Additions: none	0
Deletions: none	0
Deaths: James Barnett (died 4/4/19); Iris Kuehls (died 4/15/19)	2
Total Membership as of 4/30/19	401

2019-096 MOTION prevailed to remove Chrysanthe ("Chris") Economou Taylor (member #3143, died May 13) from our membership roll.

From Personnel:

2019-097 MOTION prevailed to approve a \$0.50 per hour wage increase to Claudine Schooley, Office Administrator, based on the input received for her annual evaluation, effective the first payroll in June.

2019-098 MOTION prevailed to approve a \$1.00 per hour wage increase to Debby Evrard, Staff Accountant, based on the input for her 90 day evaluation, effective the first payroll in June.

From Pastor Hauerwas:

2019-099 MOTION prevailed to approve Pastor Hauerwas' vacation request for the following dates: June 2 (Sunday), June 3, June 4, June 6, June 7, and June 9 (Sunday). [June 1, 5 and 8 are normal days off.] The Rev. Dr. Sandy Selby has agreed to preach on June 2. The Rev. Cathy Ulrich has agreed to preach on June 9.

The Rev. Dr. Sandy Selby has agreed to preach at both the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services on June 2. Due to a family emergency, she may not return in time for the services. She suggested the following replacement for this Sunday, if needed. The Rev. Dr. Lisa Withrow, Professor of Christian Leadership at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, said she can fill in for Sandy, if necessary. The Rev. Cathy Ulrich has agreed to preach at both the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services on June 9. Communion will be administered at both services on June 9. Cathy's ordination is in the PC(USA).

2019-100 MOTION prevailed to approve Pastor Hauerwas' study leave for July 7 – 19; this includes Sundays July 7 and 14. The Rev. Steven Savides has agreed to preach on July 7. The Rev. Cathy Ulrich has agreed to preach on July 14.

The Rev. Steven Savides has agreed to preach at both the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services on July 7. The Reverend Cathy Ulrich has agreed to preach at both the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services on July 14. Communion will be administered at both services on July 14.

2019-101 MOTION prevailed to approve Pastor Hauerwas' vacation request for Tuesday, October 1, 2019.

The Clerk had no correspondence to report. Marcia Holcomb was elected to serve as commissioner to the June 4 Presbytery meeting last month.

Committee Reports and Actions

Personnel Committee (No minutes; see consent agenda for motions) Shelley Koutnik for John Childs
Shelley Koutnik noted that their next meeting is scheduled for June 23.

Discipleship Committee (May minutes were attached; see motions below) Ed Labbe
Moderator Ed Labbe presented the two motions listed below.

2019-102 MOTION prevailed to approve an update to the Youth Coordinator's Office, using funds from the very generous donation by Martha Wilson's family to the youth of \$2,500.

The update would include a new counter top and smaller sink and would also require some carpentry work to make the cabinets flush to the wall. For the floor, there are enough leftover carpet squares from the youth room. A protective mat would also be purchased to protect the carpet area in front of the sink. In addition to serving as the Youth Coordinator's Office, the space would provide a welcoming café/lounge area for the youth to use during their time of fellowship.

The next motion relates to the Youth curriculum. *Our Whole Lives: Sexuality and Our Faith* (OWL) is a comprehensive sexuality curriculum for K-Adult participants. Because it can be particularly

pertinent to discuss sexuality/faith with youth, Discipleship proposes that Westminster add the Grades 7-9 curriculum to our offerings for families with students this age during the 2020-2021 school year. The curriculum was written and is supported by the United Church of Christ and Unitarian Universalists of America. The Presbyterian Church does not have a sexuality curriculum designed by themselves, but recommends OWL. The committee proposes that Mallory Gray (as Youth Coordinator) and 2 more adult volunteers be recruited and trained to lead this program. The cost of the training is not known at this time.

In Akron the UUA church has taught this curriculum for many years and runs it every other year. Ideal numbers are 8-12 participants. The youth who have been part of this at the UUA have repeatedly said that it was one of the most important experiences of their church life. Westminster's Parenting group has already discussed this, with positive reactions. Pastor Jon expressed his willingness to review the curriculum, editing it if deemed appropriate. Based on questions about training costs and pastoral review, the following action was taken:

2019-103 MOTION was tabled to approve adding *Our Whole Lives: Sexuality and Our Faith* (OWL) to the Youth curriculum. It would also be available to families with children in this age group. To present this curriculum, the teachers/facilitators must first be trained.

Ed then reported that member Claudine Schooley spoke to the committee about offering a disability training program. Adopting this program might also involve Outreach. Pastor Jon agreed to approach Claudine about making a brief presentation to Session.

Finance Committee (April financial reports and May minutes were attached; no motions) Todd Willis
As of April 30, 2019, overall income is over budget by \$2,454 due primarily to prepayment of pledges. Ohio Living will be vacating and no longer paying rent as of the end of May. Overall expenses are below budget by \$21,888; approved raises will soon be hitting expenses. Planning is underway for the fall Stewardship campaign.

Worship Committee (No minutes; see motions below) Pastor Hauerwas
Pastor Jon reported that the casters on the organ have already been replaced and the report on the organ voicing is expected next week. Schantz will then be able to begin the refurbishment.

Outreach Committee (May committee and Pride subcommittee minutes were attached; no motions) Pastor Hauerwas

Pastor Jon reported that the committee recommends pursuing "More Light Presbyterian" status. This would involve a \$200 annual cost. Current funds are available through the Pride festival budget. Pastor Jon said the designation would help demonstrate that the church is committed to becoming involved in a deeper way. "More Light Presbyterian" is a group within and affirmed by the PCUSA. Before approving, the consensus was that Session members learn more about the group (link from subcommittee minutes: <https://mlp.org/>). The suggestion was also made that Pastor Jon introduce the concept to the congregation, probably through a note or letter. A motion was made, seconded, and voted on as follows:

2019-104 MOTION was tabled to approve Westminster Presbyterian Church becoming a MORE LIGHT PRESBYTERIAN supporting congregation. The dues payment of \$200 per year would come from the Outreach budget.

Properties Committee (May minutes were distributed electronically; no motions) Brad Hall for Ginny Melver

Brad Hall noted that the church now has its property insurance from a new company. They are starting to replace fluorescent light bulbs with LEDs.

Membership Committee (No minutes nor motions)

James Gray

Moderator James Gray reported that work continues on updating the church history for 1997 – 2017. They have also found some old manuscripts. They do not yet know if they are originals. The idea was raised as to whether to hold a second Christmas Eve worship service.

Nominating Committee (No minutes; see motions below)

Phil Fry

Moderator Phil Fry reported that the committee is scheduled to meet on August 25.

Safety and Security Task Force (May minutes were attached; see motion below)

Pastor Hauerwas

Pastor Jon presented a motion from the task force. A formal motion was made, seconded and approved as follows:

2019-105 MOTION prevailed to approve the purchase of 6 Motorola SL300 two-way radios and necessary accessories from B&C Communications. The assignment and maintenance of these will be developed by the Safety and Security Task Force. Funding has been obtained from an anonymous donor.

Deacons (No minutes; see motion below)

Pastor Hauerwas

Through an e-meeting, the Deacon's voted to present the following motion to Session: To bring back "Lemonade on the Lawn" for the summer.

The initial proposal is to have this the first Sundays of the month in summer, i.e., June 2, and also to July 7, and August 4 (if the June 2 trial is a success). Cake and lemonade would be set up on the Johnston patio between the two services of the summer schedule. This way, those who attend the 10:30 service could come early and socialize with the folks who attend the early service.

Preliminary details, subject to change if necessary, are to set up 2 tables on the Johnston patio after the first service, one for birthday cake, one for lemonade and cups. Chairs would also be brought out, with some placed outside the patio (to encourage folks to gather where they would be visible from the street). Coffee would still be available inside. The event would remain inside if there is inclement weather. Margo and Alec Works have offered to purchase the lemonade for the 3 Sundays listed. The refreshments would be outside from approximately 9:45 to 10:15. Cake and beverages would also be available after the 10:30 service for those who choose not to come early.

Regarding potential damage to plantings in the Memorial Garden, a small portable fence was purchased. Other venues were also considered. The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2019-106 MOTION prevailed to approve providing "Lemonade on the Lawn" for the summer. This would involve lemonade and the monthly birthday cake being served on or near Johnstone Patio (indoors if inclement weather). If the initial trial on June 2 goes favorably, it will be continued on July 7 and August 4. A couple has volunteered to provide the lemonade.

Pastor's Report and Remarks

Pastor Hauerwas

Session members will be contacted to schedule the next Visioning discussion. Summer Session meetings will continue as planned, scheduled for June 25, July 23 and August 27.

New / Other Business

There was no other new business. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved. The meeting was then closed with prayer at 9:18 p.m.

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator