

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Akron, Ohio

Tuesday, June 23, 2020

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 7:00 p.m.

Elders (+ present, \* excused, - absent)

Class of 2020	Class of 2021	Class of 2022
+ Michael Dunbar	* Nancy Keogh	+ Rob Gilbert
+ Brad Hall	+ Phil Fry	+ James Gray
+ Shelley Koutnik, Treasurer	- Rebecca Pool	+ Sandy Gruneich
+ Todd Willis	+ Don Rearick	+ Ginny Melver

Also present: Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator; guest Alec Works, Clerk of Session

**Note:** Due to restrictions on gatherings ordered by the Governor of Ohio to slow the spread of the coronavirus, a virtual meeting was held.

**Opening, Declaration of Quorum and Extension of Floor**

Pastor Jon called the meeting to order, welcomed the guest, and opened the Session meeting with prayer at 7:00 pm. The presence of a quorum was confirmed and declared.

**Adoption of Agenda and Consent Agenda**

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

**Clerk's Report**

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

The Consent Agenda as approved included the following motions:

**2020-136 MOTION prevailed** to approve the minutes of the regular Session meeting of May 26, 2020.

**2020-137 MOTION prevailed** to approve the minutes of the Session e-meeting of June 9, 2020.

**2020-138 MOTION prevailed** to receive the following report of all weddings, funerals, baptisms, and Communion that have taken place since Session's May 26, 2020 meeting

1. Weddings: none
2. Funerals: graveside service for Charles J. Pearson, 6/22/2020
3. Baptisms: none
4. Communion: none

**2020-139 MOTION prevailed** to receive the report of the average worship attendance for May (5 services): 395 Reaches; 233 Engagements, based on "video only" Facebook live viewings; average of 26 viewings of post later on church web page.

[Notes: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last in person worship service at Westminster was on March 15, 2020. Westminster began holding virtual (access live service using Facebook Live or recorded using YouTube) as of Sunday, March 22, 2020. While the number of persons participating in a virtual service cannot be accurately measured, the figures above provide some measure of the outreach.

Facebook “views”, “Reach” and “Engagements” are measures of how many views, clicks, comments, “likes” and shares have been recorded by the service provider. Some people may sign off and back on, enter several comments, even view or check in later in the day, increasing the number of “engagements”. However, we also do not know how many people are viewing each screen. These figures do provide some measure of the involvement of not only members of the congregation, but also non-members; it also includes some who live out of state.]

**2020-140 MOTION prevailed** to approve the membership statistical report for the month of May 2020:

Total Membership as of 5/1/20	372
Additions: none	0
Deletions: Cyrus (#7484) and Barbara (#7483) Blackfan, Ryan Adams (#7373), Kelly Pozza-Adams (#7374), Todd Brown (#7404), Nathaniel Zito (#7263)	6
Deaths: none	0
Total Membership as of 5/31/20	366

**2020-141 MOTION prevailed** to remove Alex Darkow (#7251), Natalie Cothren (#7182), Idamae Picheko (#5936) and Michael Mihalik (#7149). [Note: The parents of both Alex and Natalie were removed in 2013; neither has had any activity since then. Idamae and Michael are assumed to be living in Florida, no activity for several years.]

**2020-142 MOTION prevailed** to remove Ruth DeKalb Verbulecz (#7179), died 2/17/2007 (per obituary in Akron Beacon Journal); Julia A. Falor (#4196), died 2/11/05 in Connecticut (per obituary); and Charles J. Pearson (#6831), died May 16, 2020 in Cincinnati, OH.

**2020-143 MOTION prevailed** to note the correction of records to reflect that the deletion on 11/23/16 of Jennifer Baron should have been for Jennifer Padgett Boron (# 6887).

**2020-144 MOTION prevailed** to approve Pastor Hauerwas’ participating in a graveside service for Charles Pearson on June 22 [Note: Charles died May 16 in Cincinnati, Pastor Jon also officiated at the memorial service of Debby Gilman’s mother Ila Pearson four years ago]; and to lead a memorial service for Mary Ann Strassburg on July 11 (originally scheduled for April 4 per Motion 2020-062).

Highlights of the June 2 meeting of Eastminster Presbytery were forwarded to Session members. Meetings of the 224<sup>th</sup> General Assembly are being held virtually. Anyone can view on June 25 and 26. Details are available at [www.eastminsterpresbytery.org](http://www.eastminsterpresbytery.org). A commissioner is needed for the September 1 Presbytery meeting. Westminster has had no commissioners so far this year.

Alec asked each committee to consider how best to maintain and make available their minutes and other records. If this can be done using the designated GoogleDocs page, paper files at the church, and/or other means, there may not be a need to post committee minutes on the church web page.

### **Old Business – Restricting Activities**

On March 31, 2020, Session passed Motion 2020-090 restricting activities at the church through May 1, 2020. On April 21, Session passed Motion 2020-100 restricting activities at the church through June 1, 2020. On May 12, Session passed Motion 2020-118 suspending activities at the church through August 31, 2020. Since then, the State of Ohio has loosened restrictions on public gatherings. A motion was made, seconded and discussed. Regarding locations where a group may want to meet, Wright-Herberich Hall could accommodate distancing but not privacy. Room 106 could properly accommodate up to 5 or 6 people.

**2020-145 MOTION prevailed** to approve resuming in-person on site activities, indoors or outside for groups of up to ten individuals. Individuals are asked to wear a mask when in the church building. In-person worship services will continue to be suspended through August 31. Bible studies, committee, staff and Session meetings will continue via Zoom. Small groups may meet if everyone in the group agrees to an in-person meeting and proper social distancing is maintained.

### **Committee Reports and Actions**

**Personnel Committee** (Summary report was attached; see motion below)

Shelley Koutnik for John Childs

Staff were notified on Sunday, June 14 that they were expected to resume normal on-site work hours effective the week of June 22. Some had already started to work at the church more often.

Shelley Koutnik proposed the following motion as a follow-up to Personnel's decision for staff to resume normal on-site work hours. This would supersede Motion 2020-064, which stated that, effective Monday, March 23, the church office would be open from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Also, Motion 2020-095 permitted Mallory Gray, Val Thorson, Claudine Schooley and Sheila Svoboda to work primarily from home, with each covering office hours for one day each week.

**2020-146 MOTION prevailed** to resume normal church office hours of 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, effective July 7, 2020.

**Discipleship Committee** (June minutes were attached; see discussion item and motion below)

Sandy Gruneich for Kara Hauerwas

The biennial Eberts Lecture Series was originally planned for early June of this year, then postponed until September. The speaker, Will Willimon, has health and travel concerns. A Zoom conference / presentation is being considered as an alternative. Considerations include cost and anticipated attendance / participation.

Discipleship has proposed a collection box for puzzles to be exchanged; Properties agrees with the proposal.

**2020-147 MOTION prevailed** to approve creating a 'sharing cabinet' at the back of the church for puzzles. Participants would drop off their used puzzles and choose others (with the understanding that puzzles donated will not be returned to the original owner). The cabinet will be monitored by Cathy Melver, who will work with Properties concerning location and installation. [Note: An appropriate metal cabinet may be available in storage. If not, they will discuss purchase (or options such as a plastic bin) at next month's meeting.]

As a follow-up to Discipleship's May minutes, Ginny Melver noted that the paper collection dumpster has been removed from the church parking lot.

[Note: James Gray excused himself for the Personnel and Discipleship discussions.]

**Finance Committee** (May financial reports were attached; no motions)

Todd Willis

Todd reported that finances are in surprisingly good shape overall, considering the situation we are in. Lower expenses are helping to offset lower contributions. Low non-pledged contributions remain a concern.

**Properties Committee** (No minutes; see motion below)

Ginny Melver

Ginny reported that WYDACA resumed offering childcare on June 1 and everything is going well. We had been providing after hours cleaning 5 times a week with the cost close to \$1,000. WYDACA is now paying a cleaning service \$550 a month. Since they are now providing their own cleaning and sanitizing, the following motion was presented.

**2020-148 MOTION prevailed** to approve reducing the compensation from WYDACA from \$1,000 to \$450 per month to reflect changes in the cleaning of the area, effective June 1, 2020.

ReWorks will start recycling next week. As part of the boiler repair, a large crane will be used to remove the old boiler, tentatively July 1. Ginny also mentioned that the large arborvitae alongside the church are to be removed, using budgeted funds.

**Worship Committee** (No minutes nor motions)

Phil Fry

Worship meets June 24.

**Outreach Committee** (June minutes were attached; see motion below)

Shelley Koutnik and Rob Gilbert for Becky Pool

The Outreach Committee is requesting a "Drive-in/Drop-off" First Sunday Food Collection with a designated list of items being collected. If the collection is successful, it will be packed into grocery bags and distributed to our neighborhood on Third Sunday or another selected day. If there is not enough collected, the items will be donated to Good Neighbors or the Christ Woodland Food Pantry. Hours are yet to be determined. An announcement from the pulpit is requested for June 28; the first Drive-in/Drop-off will be held on July 5.

**2020-149 MOTION prevailed** to approve a "Drive-in/Drop-off First Sunday Food Collection" receiving the following non-perishable items: spaghetti, canned spaghetti sauce, boxed macaroni and cheese, canned tuna and chicken, peanut butter (plastic jar), vegetable and chicken noodle soup, canned beef stew, beans and franks, etc. and canned fruits and vegetables. [Note: No glass containers please.]

**Nominating Committee; Safety and Security Task Force; Deacons** (No reports)

**Pastor's Report and Remarks**

Pastor Hauerwas

Shelley and James reported for the Sound System Task Force. A thorough examination of the current system and equipment in the sanctuary by outside consultants indicated that the equipment itself is in good condition. The vendor listed below therefore proposed reconfiguring the existing equipment at least a tenth of the cost for a full replacement. This work will complete the Sanctuary sound system upgrade project.

**2020-150 MOTION prevailed** to approve contracting with RNR Systems, Inc. to rehang and reposition the speakers in the rear of the Sanctuary and provide training to the Volunteer Sound Board Operators at a cost not to exceed \$4,400 from Rowley New Church Life Funds.

James also noted that they will next look at Wright-Herberich Hall, where a similar solution may be feasible.

Session was reminded of the pastor's previously approved time off June 22-28 and July 1-5. George Murphy will preach on June 28, Sandy Selby will preach on July 5.

**Old Business**

Besides persons who expressed interest in joining Westminster earlier this year, another person has expressed a desire to transfer his membership. Pastor Jon has reached to these persons regarding a possible New Members Class via Zoom. Another option would be for some or all to meet with the pastor for the class, then with Session via Zoom. Pastor Jon will keep Session updated.

The unveiling of former pastors' portraits will be rescheduled after more normal activities resume.

**New / Other Business**

Motion 2020-060 suspended printing of the April / May Script. After discussion, the following motion was made, seconded and passed.

**2020-151 MOTION prevailed** to approve preparation, printing and mailing of a summer Script, also to be made available electronically. Any articles should be submitted to the church office by July 8. The target mailing date is July 15.

Michael Dunbar noted that Membership had been inadvertently omitted from the agenda.

**Membership Committee** (No minutes nor motions) Michael Dunbar  
Michael said that the Office Administrator told him she has received comments that too many weekly emails are being sent to members of the congregation (3 - 4 per week). She proposed reducing this number. It is not known how many have mentioned this. It was noted that only those so requesting get the Tuesday prayer requests. Also, a new mailing list will be in place in August. Michael agreed to follow up to get more information.

The next Tuesday virtual meeting is scheduled for July 14 at 7:00 p.m. if needed. The next regular Session meeting (virtual) is scheduled for Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at 7 p.m.

There was no other new business. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved. The meeting was then closed with the Lord's Prayer at 8:14 p.m.

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Alec Works, Clerk of Session

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Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator