

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Akron, Ohio
Tuesday, July 14, 2020
Minutes of Special Session meeting - FINAL

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

Note: To continue to address any issues or concerns during the current health crisis, Session decided at its regular meeting on March 24, 2020 to meet every Tuesday as needed, either by virtual (Zoom) or e-meeting, as needed for the foreseeable future.

Elders (+ present, * excused, - absent)

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

Also present by videoconferencing: Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator; Alec Works, Clerk of Session.

Opening and Declaration of Quorum

The special meeting of the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church was called to order by the Moderator, the Reverend Jon Hauerwas at 7:00 p.m. on July 14, 2020. The presence of a quorum was confirmed and declared. The meeting was opened with prayer.

New Business

The agenda consisted of one motion from the Outreach Committee and one motion from the Sound System Task Force; these do not require a second. A discussion related to resuming in-person activities was also planned.

The Third Sunday Dinner subcommittee met on Monday, July 7 and decided to resume the Third Sunday Dinner, offering a hot meal available for pick-up. The subcommittee members are working on a plan for cooking, packaging, expediting and traffic control using ten individuals or less. The goal is to start the service as soon as August. Currently they have four volunteers to staff the kitchen. They need four to six more volunteers to adequately provide the ministry (e.g., taking orders, taking meals to table outside, taking meals to cars) and would like to offer the volunteer opportunity to the congregation. They will also purchase a new banner to inform the neighborhood that Third Sunday Dinner is resuming with a new format. Resumption would be contingent upon having sufficient volunteers.

2020-155 MOTION prevailed to approve resuming Third Sunday Dinners, offering a hot meal for pickup beginning in August. Volunteer opportunities for this ministry will be announced in the Sunday Update and Bulletin for July 19 and July 26.

Outreach also reported that they will have 50 bags of food available to pass out on Sunday afternoon, July 19, while supplies last. Besides food collected Sunday afternoon, July 5, some food was purchased to complete the bags. The committee decided to set drive-in/drop-off and distribution times at 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. on designated (first and third) Sundays.

The Sound System Task Force reported that the sanctuary sound system evaluation, rewiring and rehangng of the speakers been completed. It is now appropriate to repair the ear mics and purchase one new transmitter. This will enable the church to comply with new FCC requirements.

The repair and/or replacement of the ear mics and transmitter(s) had been delayed pending the outcome of the Sanctuary Sound System project. To upgrade the Sound System, we have spent \$5,480 to date and have \$330 in reserve for training.

2020-156 MOTION prevailed to approve the expenditure of approximately \$1,200 from Rowley New Church Life Funds for the repair of three ear mics and the purchase of a transmitter that meets current FCC frequency requirements.

With no other actions scheduled, the discussion turned to the resumption of in-person activities. Since several members were excused, it was decided to not take any action at this time but to seek a time and means to have the input of all session members.

Some key points from the discussion are included below. Current plans for worship and other on-site activities have been approved through August 31, 2020. If not extended, Rally Day would be scheduled for Sunday, September 13. Staff need adequate time to plan for whatever format or type of worship, learning and other events that might be scheduled. If on-site activities are expanded, how will physical distancing, masks, cleaning be maintained? Would live-streaming and/or taped services be continued?

Some members are more comfortable resuming activities than others. Public schools appear to be planning resumption of in-person classes in some form this fall. Some members, particularly those with age or health concerns, remain more cautious. People have differing degrees of risk-taking. Yet no one wants to feel responsible for infecting another person. There is also a possibility of liability. The State of Ohio has not yet acted on proposed legislation exempting certain establishments from lawsuits.

A key concern is the feeling of connection of people to the church. Many are feeling more isolated; can the church address these needs? One possibility is encouraging small groups to meet either virtually or in-person. Discipleship might be able to look into this, possibly with the Deacons.

Other factors include how an in-person worship service might be held. Would there be enough adults willing to teach Sunday School classes? Would children (and adults) attend? There are also financial considerations. Offerings are down. There would be additional costs for cleaning; even more if a coronavirus case were reported and sanitizing was needed. Besides planning for the remainder of 2020, a budget for 2021 will be prepared this fall. There may be a need for flexibility. We also need to be fair to staff regarding minimizing redundant or wasted planning efforts.

Pastor Jon offered to see if a virtual Visioning or special Session meeting could be set up for further discussion and planning. Our goal would be to reach some decision within the next 2 or 3 weeks.

There being no other old or new business, a motion was received, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was closed by all joining in the Lord's Prayer at 8:28 pm.

The next regular Session meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28, 2020.

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator