

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Akron, Ohio

Tuesday, July 28, 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 7:04 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 7:04 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:

2020-158 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the regular Session meeting of June 23, 2020.

2020-159 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the Session e-meeting of July 1, 2020.

2020-160 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the Session e-meeting of July 3, 2020.

2020-161 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the Special Session meeting of July 14, 2020.

2020-162 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the Special Session meeting of July 22, 2020.

2020-163 MOTION prevailed to receive the following report of all weddings, funerals, baptisms, and Communion that have taken place since Session's June 23, 2020 meeting

1. Weddings: Sarah Laferty and Nick Gronwoski on July 25, 2020 in Marblehead, Ohio, Pastor Hauerwas officiating. [Sarah and her parents Sam and Debbie are members.]
2. Funerals: Mary Ann Strassburg, 7/11/2020
3. Baptisms: none
4. Communion: virtual communion 7/12/20; estimated participation 209

2020-164 MOTION prevailed to receive the report of the average worship attendance for June (4 services): 225 Reaches; 145 Engagements, based on “video only” Facebook live viewings; average of 31 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.]

Westminster’s open rate percentages (persons opening emails) for the month of June are: Intercessory Prayers (requested email) 66.75 %; Evotional (unsolicited email) 44.5 %; Sunday Update (unsolicited email) 49.25%. Per Constant Contact, the Industry Average is a 24% open rate. [Other standards with similar values are listed in the agenda.]

2020-165 MOTION prevailed to approve the membership statistical report for the month of June 2020:

Total Membership as of 6/1/20	366
Additions: none	0
Deletions: Alex Darkow (#7251), Natalie Cothren (#7182), Idamae Picheko (#5936) and Michael Mihalik (#7149)	4
Deaths: Ruth DeKalb Verbulecz (#7179), Julia A. Falor (#4196), Charles J. Pearson (#6831)	3
Total Membership as of 6/30/20	359

2020-166 MOTION prevailed to remove Mary Jo Stasell (#4560) from the membership roll; she died 6/25/2020 in Arroyo Grande, CA (per obituary in Akron Beacon Journal).

Letters were sent by the church office to several inactive members in June and early July.

2020-167 MOTION prevailed to remove the following from active membership: Sarah Shaughnessy Klopp (#7313), Bethany (Kauffman) Kungle (#7189), Walter (Judd) Limbach (#7279), Sandra Padgett (#6271), Scott (#7357) and Abby Anne (#7358) Schie, Rebecca Houk Shookman (#6680), Anne Trahey (#7259), Michael Trahey (#7191), Dr. Harold White (#6779), and Sue Ann Wiseman (#7306). No activity for at least 2 years; letter sent 6/12/20, no response. [Two letters returned as undeliverable.]

2020-168 MOTION prevailed to remove the following from active membership: Henry (#7321) and Lisa (#7322) Braumbaugh, Jake Braumbaugh (#7416), Carolyn Breaux (#7323), Claire Riew Choi (#7392), Dana (#6998) and Kristy (#6999) Easterling, Keith (#6992) and Natalie (Christian) (#7153) Easterling, Sharon Easterling (#6969), Michael Eickoff (#7217), Mary Jane Emerson (#7331), Robert (#7039) and Elizabeth (#7040) Engels, Joanna Engels (#7227), Todd Feemster (#7406), Joseph Gray (#7032), Jeffrey (#7129) and Erin (Shackelford) (#6366) Grosenbaugh, Taylor Grosenbaugh (#7451), Wendy (Laria) Harris (#7109), Bevan (#7462) and Tia (#7463) Haynes, Ron Hazelett (#7135), Anthony Holcomb (#7387), Elizabeth Hyde (#6244), J. David (#6036) and Cheryl (#5472) Kalal, Michael Kauffman (#6981), Heather (Keane) Bhalla (#7491), Manohar (#6443) and Constance (Connie) (#5362) Lal, Rajiv Lal (#6363), Orlene Makinson (#7377), Sarah Marie (Traw) Mays (#7325), Elizabeth (Betsy) Melick (#7460), Timothy Mesecar (#7295), Jami Mesecar-Hope (#7296), Robert D. (#5958) and Janet (#5959) Metzger, Fallon Elizabeth Miller (#7430), Dallas (#7318) and Jessica (Traw) (#7320) Moyer, Robert (#7091) and Gail (#7092) Pierson, Susan (Haidle) Reef (#3835), Bruce (#4983) and Sandra (#4984) Shackelford, Daniel (#6330) Shaughnessy, Mark Soucek (#7161), Wendy (DeYoung) Susi (#7025), Douglas Charles Porter (Charlie) Wagner (#7260), Susan Wallin (#7134), Douglas (#7115) and Barrie (#7116) Whittington, Frederick M. (Trey) Worrell III (#7194), David (#7221) and Nancy (#7222) Zeiger, and Lindsay Zeiger (#7224). No activity for at least 2 years; letter sent 6/29/20 or 6/30/20, no response. [One letter returned as undeliverable.]

Ginny Melver offered to participate in the September 1 virtual Presbytery meeting, which starts at 6 p.m. The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2020-169 MOTION prevailed to elect Ginny Melver to serve as commissioner to the September 1, 2020 virtual meeting of Eastminster Presbytery.

Committee Reports and Actions

Personnel Committee (Meeting summary and other details were attached; see motions below)

Shelley Koutnik for John Childs

Staff resumed resume normal on-site work hours effective the week of June 22.

2020-170 MOTION prevailed to accept the resignation of Mallory Gray from her positions as Youth Coordinator and Media Specialist. [Note: She has accepted a full-time position and submitted her notice on Monday, July 27.]

2020-171 MOTION prevailed to approve the 2021 Benefit Groups and Offerings as proposed. [See attachment.]

The Discipleship Committee recommended several changes in job descriptions and compensation which are included in the motions below, as approved by the committee.

2020-172 MOTION prevailed to approve the Child Care Provider Job Description dated July 26, 2020.

2020-173 MOTION prevailed to hire Traci Range for the position of Child Care Provider at the hourly rate of \$15.00 per hour effective with the pay period beginning August 11, 2020.

2020-174 MOTION prevailed to approve the Child Care Assistant Job Description dated July 26, 2020.

2020-175 MOTION prevailed to hire Patrice Richards and Chelsea Moses as Child Care Assistants effective with the reopening of the nursery and playroom during in-person Sunday school and Worship Services.

On March 14, 2020, Session approved the following motion: **2020-054 Motion prevailed:** *To close the nursery effective March 22 until all Sunday School and worship activities resume with Nursery Workers receiving ½ of regular weekly compensation (to be determined by average of compensation received in January and February).*

The recommendation from the Discipleship Committee is to eliminate the “goodwill” payments as soon as it is reasonable based on Session’s decision to resume or continue suspension of in-person worship services. When approved in March, the thought was that these payments would only occur for a short period of time.

2020-176 MOTION prevailed to discontinue the “goodwill” payments to the Child Care Director, Providers, Assistants and Aides, effective when regular nursery services resume or at the end of the pay period following the decision by Session to continue the suspension of in-person services beyond August 31, whichever occurs first. [Note: Session approved continuing the suspension of in-person services beyond August 31 at their special meeting on July 22, 2020.]

Hours and compensation related to the children’s choir, youth handbell and adult handbell choirs for the period of September 11, 2019 through January 25, 2020 were reviewed by the Music Director. It is recommended that the compensation be based on “per service” rather than per hour. A “service” is defined as either a stand-alone rehearsal or a performance in church (preceded by a run-through). This would eliminate the need to track hours involved in preparing for a service, in line with industry standards. The original motion was first tabled, then removed and amended to include the definition of “service”.

2020-177 MOTION prevailed to set the rate of compensation at \$40 “per service” for the Children’s Choir Director, Youth Handbell Director and Adult Handbell Director. A “service” is defined as either a stand-alone rehearsal or a performance in church (preceded by a run-through).

The next motion details Coronavirus Quarantine Guidelines for staff and volunteers. This policy is intended to apply to those who have traveled or received a visitor from elsewhere. The intent is to help protect staff members and persons who may be at higher risk. travel applies to all staff and volunteers, includes all means of public transportation, and that it includes anyone living at or visiting you at your home. It is intended to apply to long-distance travel rather than travel within the greater Akron area. This not intended to be punitive, but is an effort to love and care for one another. We care about everyone on our staff team. Some have pre-existing conditions. We are protecting not only ourselves, but also our colleagues, church members, and friends whom we value greatly. The original motion was amended to clarify that item 4 refers to State of Ohio mandates. The motion may need to be amended if state guidelines change.

2020-178 MOTION prevailed to approve the following guidelines for employees and volunteers:

- 1) If you have personally traveled using public transportation outside the greater Akron area (e.g. an airplane, a charter bus, a city bus, a taxi or ride sharing service, a train or an underground railroad system), or you have traveled to a state with positive testing rates of 15% or higher for COVID-19, then we are asking you to quarantine at home for two weeks.
- 2) If you have a friend or family member living in your home who has traveled via public transportation or have received a visitor in your home who has traveled via public transportation outside the greater Akron area, or has traveled from a state with positive testing rates of 15% or higher for COVID-19, then you are asked to quarantine for two weeks.
- 3) Those who are quarantined will be paid for hours worked from home, but are asked to recognize that not all responsibilities can be accomplished from home. For this reason, you need to keep a log of your hours from home, knowing that it will most likely be less than you work in the office.
- 4) It is a State of Ohio Health Department mandate that all staff members wear masks while in the church building. The only exception is if one is working by oneself. The most common example of this is when a staff member is working in their own, private office. If you are walking through the halls in public spaces, going to the restroom, the kitchen, the water cooler, or intending to have a conversation with anyone else in the building, then you MUST wear a mask.

- 5) For the Custodian, the whole building is his work station, and he most often works alone. The custodian is not required to mask if he is by himself. However, if he is within 10 feet of another person on church grounds, then a mask is required for him.
- 6) All staff members must continue to abide by social distancing regulations. Six feet of space between individuals is requested.
- 7) Each staff member must certify that his / her daily temperature reading is less than 100.4F on days they are scheduled to come to the church.

Discipleship Committee (July minutes were attached; see motions below)

Sandy Gruneich for Kara Hauerwas

Virtual Vacation Bible School was held July 6-9.

The biennial Eberts Lecture Series was originally planned for early June of this year, then postponed until September, per Motion 2020-048. The intended speaker, Will Willimon, has health and travel concerns. A Zoom conference / presentation was considered as an alternative. Considerations included cost and anticipated attendance / participation.

2020-179 MOTION prevailed to approve postponing the Eberts Lecture scheduled for 2020. It will be reconsidered for 2021.

With more people using cell phones to schedule and remind themselves of events, Discipleship proposed investigating whether an appropriate application would be useful to those interested in using it. As an example, people could receive a text message reminding them that the food collection was about to begin in the church parking lot. Responsibility / responsibilities for maintaining the app will need to be determined, including consulting Personnel if staff would be involved.

2020-180 MOTION prevailed to permit Discipleship to investigate using Remind or a similar text communication app to send reminders of particular events that are about to begin in the life of the church. These messages would only be sent to those who wish to opt in.

It was noted that Motion 2020-047 originally scheduled Our Whole Lives (OWL) training for adult leaders to teach 4-6th graders at Westminster Presbyterian Church for Thursday, August 20, Friday, August 21, and Saturday, August 22, 2020. Per current restrictions on activities, this training has been postponed.

Finance Committee (June financial reports were attached; no motions)

Todd Willis

Todd reported that total revenues at June 30, 2020 are below budget by \$10,100. Overall contributions are \$8,200 below budget, unpledged contributions are under budget by \$16,000 and loose offerings are under by \$2,400. This is offset by overall expenses being below budget by \$62,700. Personnel, committee and ministry expenses were greatly reduced or eliminated beginning March 16. The average monthly deficit in the second quarter was \$3,800 per month. Rowley Funds have not been expended on operations so far this year. There is still considerable uncertainty as to the rest of this year, especially if contributions remain lower and program expenses resume.

Committees are being asked to prepare their budgets for 2021. A 10% reduction in budget will be used as a recommendation, with the clear understanding that exceptions, if necessary, will be addressed. Ralph Davis has agreed to lead the Stewardship Campaign this fall.

Conversion from ACS software to Realm Inform was scheduled for the week of August 10, but has been delayed due to extensive changes needed in the Chart of Accounts and membership updates.

Properties Committee (No minutes nor motions)

Ginny Melder

The arborvitae near the church, including stumps, have been removed. Reseeding is planned for this fall.

Outreach Committee (July minutes were attached; no motions)

Shelley Koutnik and Rob Gilbert for Becky Pool

The First Sunday Food Collection resumed in July with a “Drive-in/Drop-off” process and a designated list of items being collected. The Third Sunday Dinner is expected to resume in August with boxed meals available for pick-up.

Worship, Membership and Nominating Committees; Safety and Security Task Force; Kitchen Task Force; Deacons (No reports)

Pastor’s Report and Remarks

Pastor Hauerwas

For the Sound System Task Force, Shelley reported that parts to repair the microphones have been ordered.

Old Business

Persons who have expressed interest in joining Westminster earlier this year have been contacted 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

The next Tuesday virtual meeting is scheduled for August 11 at 7:00 p.m. if needed. The next regular Session meeting (virtual) is scheduled for Tuesday, August 25, 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 8:00 p.m.

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator