

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Akron, Ohio
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
Minutes of Session E-meeting - FINAL

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

The e-meeting of the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church was called to order by the Moderator, the Reverend Jon Hauerwas at 2:05 p.m. on March 10 by email.

Elders (+ present, * excused, - absent)

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

Also present by email: Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator; Alec Works, Clerk of Session; guests Ellen Daugherty and Brian Rodabaugh (nominated as Class of 2023 elders).

Background

Session met for a Visioning Discussion from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. This was a follow-up to the Special Session Meeting of February 27, 2021, when various personnel matters were discussed. Since the Visioning Discussion was not a formal Session meeting, Pastor Hauerwas called an e-meeting on March 10 to formally present the motions.

The Visioning agenda listed four topics related to the future of Westminster:

1. Spiritual education programming and ongoing discipleship of children, youth, and adults.
2. Music ministry, including the choir director, organist, adult bell choir, youth bell choir, children's choir, alternative and special worship services, and concert series.
3. Resuming in-person worship and activities.
4. Use of our building and grounds.

The first two topics were covered during the March 9 meeting.

As noted in the February 27 minutes, the Director of Children and Family Ministry had requested a reduction in hours. A search has been ongoing for a part-time Youth Coordinator. Motion 2020-191, approved on August 25, 2020, approved a job description of 5 to 8 hours per week at a rate of \$15 to \$18 per hour. The position does not require the education and experience levels of an associate pastor or ministry director. Pastor Hauerwas noted the difficulties in finding someone with the energy, enthusiasm, theological / Presbyterian background or training, and availability Sunday mornings and for activities. Pros and cons for keeping the two positions separate or combining them were discussed. Pastor Hauerwas also noted that few churches now have a full time Christian Education director. Ministry Architects had earlier suggested hiring a staff member who would build a supportive team of volunteers to help. However, our pool of potential volunteers is not that large. As far as seeking an associate pastor, Pastor Hauerwas noted that persons hired into such a position to work with youth typically move on to another position, often after 2 years. Such a position would also need to consider the required minimum salary along with benefits.

As also noted in the February 27 minutes, the Music Director / Organist announced her decision to retire effective June 1, 2021. As with the education positions, the hiring of anyone in a full-time capacity would incur significant benefit costs. Valerie Thorson reported that keeping the position

at 20 hours per week, with an additional 5 hours if a concert series were to be added, would still be reasonable. Although the pool of skilled organists is dwindling, posting the position through the American Guild of Organists and choral societies can be effective. The directing of adult and youth handbell choirs and the children's choir would not resume until this fall at the earliest. Any decision on those positions would best be considered later, preferably with the consultation of a new Music Director. With several musical programs / series offered in our area, a new director may have new insights to offer. Moneys previously donated toward the Five at Five series would be held until a suitable outreach program is decided upon.

New Business

Based upon the discussions during the Visioning session, the following motions were made, seconded and approved:

2021-047 MOTION prevailed to approve combining the current part-time positions of Director, Children's and Family Ministry and Youth Coordinator into one position, and beginning the search process to fill this position.

Note: The goal is to hire one person to fill a part-time position of approximately 30 hours per week, with budgeted wages not to exceed \$32,000 per year.

2021-048 MOTION prevailed to approve beginning the search process to hire a new Music Director / Organist (to replace Valerie Thorson, who is retiring effective June 1, 2021). This will include appointing a search committee. The search will focus on hiring one person as Music Director / Organist, but with the option of hiring an Organist and Music Director separately.

Note: For Music Director / Organist, the goal is to not exceed current terms of 20 hours per week at \$30 per hour. If split into 2 positions, the goal is not to exceed the current annual wage budget of \$31,200.

2021-049 MOTION prevailed to suspend the Five at Five concert series program at Westminster.

Note: Temporarily suspending the program would allow the new Music Director / Organist time to get settled and evaluate what type of program, if any, would be best for Westminster and the community.

Eight of the ten active elders responded, all approving the motions as presented.

The e-meeting was adjourned by Pastor Hauerwas at 3:22 p.m. on March 15, 2021.

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator