

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Akron, Ohio

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

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 Rev. Dr. Richard Lapehn at 7:02 p.m.

Elders (+ present, * excused, - absent)

Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023
+ Nancy Keogh	+ Rob Gilbert	+ Ellen Daugherty
+ Phil Fry	* James Gray	+ Shelley Koutnik, Treasurer
+ Rebecca Pool	* Sandy Gruneich	+ Brian Rodabaugh
+ Don Rearick	+ Ginny Melder	+ Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Also present: Rev. Dr. Richard Lapehn, Moderator [appointed by Eastminster Presbytery's Committee on Ministry].

Opening and Declaration of Quorum

Rev. Lapehn called the meeting to order and opened the Session meeting with prayer at 7:02 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 as amended (two motions were pulled; a correction was made to the January 16 Session minutes).

Exit Interview for Rev. Jonathan Hauerwas

Rev. Lapehn, Moderator

Rev. Lapehn explained that, as part of the transition process, the Committee on Ministry leads Session in a discussion focusing on current and future ministries of the church. Current ministries mentioned included a traditional and inspiring worship service, various outreach programs and discipleship programs. Needs to right-size some programs and be a more welcoming congregation were acknowledged.

Election of Officers for 2022

Rev. Lapehn, Moderator

The officers from 2021 agreed to serve another term. The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2022-002 MOTION prevailed to elect the following officers for 2022 and to approve the Corporate Resolution noting their election: Alec Works, Clerk of Session; Shelley Koutnik, Treasurer; and Marcia Holcomb, Assistant Treasurer.

Note: The Corporate Resolution is identified as **Motion 2022-003** and is signed by the Moderator and Clerk of Session.

Motions Pulled From Consent Agenda

Rev. Lapehn, Moderator

The 2 motions pulled from the consent agenda were discussed. The first was from the Discipleship Committee: To explore options for a laptop for the youth room, which would be purchased with funds designated for youth programs. Shelley Koutnik presented the following substitute motion: To approve the purchase of a laptop computer for the Youth Center at a cost not to exceed \$750 using funds from the Young Endowment Fund for Youth. The laptop is to remain in a secure locked location when not in use for Youth Group activities inside the church building. The following motions were then made, seconded and approved:

2022-004 MOTION prevailed to substitute the motion presented for the motion presented by the Discipleship Committee.

2022-005 MOTION prevailed to approve the purchase of a laptop computer for the Youth Center at a cost not to exceed \$750 using funds from the Young Endowment Fund for Youth. The laptop is to remain in a secure locked location when not in use for Youth Group activities inside the church building.

The second pulled motion was from the Worship Committee: To offer to assist Abby Haake with expenses for her visit by paying for one night of lodging at the O'Neil House or place of her choice at a comparable rate. The motion was amended to offer to pay for lodging for Abby Haake and her family not to exceed \$200 from the budget for "Miscellaneous Worship Expenses" for her visit on February 20, 2022.

2022-006 MOTION prevailed to offer to pay for lodging for Abby Haake and her family not to exceed \$200 from the budget for "Miscellaneous Worship Expenses" for her visit on February 20, 2022.

Report From December 2021 Meeting of Eastminster Presbytery

Ginny Melver

Ginny participated by Zoom in the December 7 meeting. A summary from Presbytery was distributed. Ginny noted that Rev. Laura Kelly, our COM Moderator in late 2021, delivered the sermon.

Clerk's Report

Alec Works, Clerk

Alec reported that Letters were sent to the two other candidates interviewed for the interim pastor position thanking them for considering Westminster. Baptismal records for her children, Griffin Douglas, Zachary Grant, Audrey Ann and Madeleine Marie Briggs were sent as requested to their mother, Valerie Briggs, on December 16, 2021. A letter was sent to members and friends of Westminster on December 2, 2021 informing them of the status of the transition and the general process. Thank you letters were sent to Rev. Jon Hauerwas for his donation of the rug and desk that were in his study, and to Raphael Peoples for his donation of the lunch to volunteers on November 28, 2021, as well as bakery goods during Advent. Alec noted that he participated in Presbytery's Clerk's Training Session on January 15, 2022.

Church directory updates and the annual Necrology report were provided to Presbytery.

Commissioners to the March 1 meeting of Eastminster Presbytery (10 a.m. via Zoom) will be elected in February.

The Consent Agenda as approved included the following motions:

2022-007 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the regular Session meeting of November 23, 2021.

2022-008 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the Session E-meeting of December 9, 2021.

2022-009 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the special Session meeting of January 16, 2022.

2022-010 MOTION prevailed to receive the following report of all weddings, funerals, baptisms, and Communion that have taken place since Session's November 23, 2021 meeting

1. Weddings: none
2. Funerals: Barbara Ann Gehring, January 15, 2022 (Billows Funeral Home, led by Rev. Tom Ulrich of New Covenant Community Church)
3. Baptisms: none
4. Communion: 12/12/21 = 168; there were also 82 viewings of the service on YouTube. 01/09/22 = 70; there were also 15 viewings of the service on YouTube. Also, Rev. Lapehn reported that he served communion on January 2, 2022 to Julia Bain at her home.

Reports of average worship attendance for November (4 in person worship services) = 104. Average viewings on YouTube for November = 73. Average worship attendance for December (5 in person worship services, including Christmas Eve and 12/26) = 130. In person attendance on Christmas Eve was 165. Average viewings on YouTube for December = 84. Attendance at the 12/19 afternoon Jazz Vesper Service was 112 (+53 on YouTube). Members of New Covenant Community Church joined Westminster for services from November 16 through December 26. [Note: In person worship resumed on June 6, 2021. Live broadcast and recorded services are available through YouTube.]

2022-011 MOTION prevailed to approve the membership statistical report for the month of November 2021:

Total Membership as of 11/1/21	285
Additions: none	0
Deletions: Anna Marie Wilton (#5961)	1
Deaths: David G. Gehring, Jr. (#6142)	1
Total Membership as of 11/30/21	283

2022-012 MOTION prevailed to approve the membership statistical report for the month of December 2021:

Total Membership as of 12/1/21	283
Additions: none	0
Deletions: none	0
Deaths: none	0
Total Membership as of 12/31/21	283

2022-013 MOTION prevailed to remove Barbara Ann Gates Gehring (#6143) and Eleanor Humphrey (#7241) from active membership. Barbara died on January 8, 2022. Eleanor died on January 12; services to be held later. [Note: Eleanor was a charter member. She rejoined after moving back to this area.]

2022-014 MOTION prevailed to approve the WPC 2021 Annual Statistical Report to Presbytery [see attachment].

From Finance:

2022-015 MOTION prevailed to approve renewing the current copier lease and service agreement with Graphic Enterprises for a 24-month period.

From Worship:

2022-016 MOTION prevailed to pay Abby Haake \$200 for her services as a guest organist on February 20, 2022.

2022-017 MOTION prevailed to return the bulletin to its pre-pandemic format and to expand the calendar to cover Sunday through Sunday activities.

2022-018 MOTION prevailed to change the listing of staff in the bulletin to only list their name, position and email. An additional line would advise calling ahead to confirm someone is in the office if a visit is planned.

From Properties:

2022-019 MOTION prevailed to confirm Properties' approval of granting usage of the kitchen and WHH by the West Akron Kiwanis on April 30, 2022 for a pancake breakfast in conjunction with the WPC plant sale.

From Outreach:

2022-020 MOTION prevailed to approve the following events and Moments for Ministry (MFM):

- One Great Hour of Sharing: MFM on April 3, 2022; pew envelopes available April 3 through April 17; offering collected on Palm Sunday, April 10.
- Pentecost Offering: MFM on May 29, 2022; pew envelopes available May 15 through June 12; offering collected on June 5. Discipleship will provide the speaker and determine the local project as the recipient of local monies.
- Peacemaking Offering: MFM on September 25, 2022; pew envelopes available September 18 through October 9; offering collected on October 2.
- Christmas Basket delivery: MFM on November 27, 2022; pew envelopes available November 20 through December 12; basket deliveries December 10, 2022.

2022-021 MOTION prevailed to approve the collection of non-perishable food on the First Sunday of each month with the food going to Good Neighbors and Christ Methodist Church on alternate months.

2022-022 MOTION prevailed to approve the making of sandwiches for the Food for Life Program on the first and third Saturday of each month with the food going to Haven of Rest or St. Bernard's Catholic Church.

2022-023 MOTION prevailed to approve the collection of towels, washcloths and pajamas in any size for Haven of Rest. [Clerk's note: Items have been collected in the big wooden boxes in the coat room.]

2022-024 MOTION prevailed to approve continued support of Missionaries Sharon Kandel in Juba, South Africa and Jeff and Chris Boyd in Congo of South Africa in the year 2022.

2022-025 MOTION prevailed to approve the continued support of the More Light program in the amount of \$200 with funds coming from the Pride Festival funds.

From Personnel:

2022-026 MOTION prevailed to approve hiring Nick Modney as a Choral Scholar at \$60 per Service (Sunday) effective with the pay period beginning January 26, 2022.

Interim Pastor Church Committee

Ginny Melver

John Childs, Moderator of the Personnel Committee, prepared a contract for the interim pastor, Rev. David Aber. Rev. Aber reviewed the contract and accepted the terms as described. He and the clerk will sign the contract on his first day, February 1, 2022. A copy will then be sent to Presbytery.

Rev. Lapehn then provided the clerk with a copy of a document describing the “Holy Cow” congregation assessment tool and a sample mission study. He noted that Presbytery will pay 50% of the cost of the Holy Cow congregational assessment if we choose to use it. He also commented on other steps in the transitional process.

The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2022-027 MOTION prevailed to disband the interim pastor nominating committee.

[Note: Members were Ginny Melver, Phil Fry and Alec Works.]

Welcome Interim Pastor

Rev. Lapehn, Moderator

Rev. David Aber, recently selected and confirmed as Interim Pastor beginning February 1, 2022, joined us briefly by Zoom at approximately 8 p.m. to introduce himself.

Committee Reports and Actions

[Alec was excused for the Personnel and Discipleship Committee portions of the meeting.]

Personnel Committee (January report was attached; see consent agenda for motion)

Shelley Koutnik for John Childs

Personnel reported that anyone traveling internationally is asked to work from home upon their return until that have received a negative Covid test conducted by an authorized testing site. The CDC recommends a test 3 to 5 days after the return flight.

Discipleship Committee (January minutes were attached; see “Motions Pulled” for motion)

Discipleship renamed their line item accounts to make is easier for everyone to classify expenses for the different age groups. It was requested that the person recording the Discipleship minutes would affix their name to the minutes as well. Activities are being planned for Lent.

Finance Committee (December reports, January minutes and proposed budget were attached; see consent agenda and below for motions)

Shelley Koutnik for Todd Willis

Please see the Finance Committee Minutes and Reports for details, including stewardship update and budget.

2021 Actual Revenues and Expenses:

Revenues	\$556,949.48
Expenses	<u>\$481,052.48</u>
Surplus	<u>\$ 75,897.00</u>

Stewardship:

Goal	\$300,339.00
Pledges (81 households)	<u>\$253,508.00</u>
Short of Goal	<u>(\$ 46,831.00)</u>

2022 Operating Budget:	
Anticipated Revenues	\$489,908.00
Estimated Expenses	<u>\$553,486.00</u>
Operating Budget Deficit	<u>(\$63,578.00)</u>

Note – Deficit to be funded from Reserve Fund

2022-028 MOTION prevailed to approve the 2022 budget as presented.

2022-029 MOTION prevailed to schedule the Annual Congregation for immediately following the worship service on April 3, 2022. [Clerk’s note: Meeting is required by bylaws to be held by April 6.]

Worship Committee (January minutes were attached; see consent agenda “Pulled Motions” for motions) Nancy Keogh for Stacy Franzmann
 A motion to schedule pulpit supply for March was withdrawn with the hiring of Rev. David Aber as interim pastor. Supply pastors scheduled from February 6 on, as approved in Motion 2021-187, have been so informed.

Shelley presented 3 options for Abby Haake to meet with Session in February. She will be serving as guest organist February 20. Abby also wants to become more familiar with us and our building before she starts serving as Music Director and Organist in June. The option to have a Zoom meeting with Session after her visit was preferred.

Properties Committee (December and January minutes were attached; see consent agenda and below for motions) Ginny Melver
 Work has been completed for the water damage in the WYDACA area. See minutes for other projects.
2022-030 MOTION prevailed to confirm Properties’ approval of granting usage of the sanctuary, WHH and the chapel to the University of Akron choir for a concert on March 11, 2022 for a reduced fee of \$400. They will need to practice Wednesday and Thursday with the concert on Friday. Custodial coverage will be worked out. Capacity of the sanctuary when adhering to social distancing is approximately 120. They will be requiring guests to wear a mask.

Outreach Committee (December and January minutes were attached; see consent agenda for motions) Ellen Daugherty
 Christmas food baskets or gift cards were delivered to 200 families in December. See minutes for other programs being considered.

Safety / Security Task Force Don Rearick
 The task force met recently to review the worship attendance policy in view of the current circumstances. The concern of worshipers is evident in the increasing numbers wearing masks for services. Conditions will continue to be monitored.
2022-031 MOTION prevailed to require worshipers to wear masks now through the end of February.

Nominating Committee Becky Pool
 Becky provided an update of confirmed candidates to date. Ginny, Shelley and Phil offered to serve as adjunct members of the committee.

Membership Committee (No minutes nor motions)

Deacons (No minutes nor motions)
 Shelley and Phil attended the December Deacons’ meeting. Options for Officer Training after new elections were discussed.

Transition Planning

Rev. Lapehn

Rev. Lapehn reported that after Rev. Aber becomes better acquainted with us, he and Rev. Cathy Ulrich, General Presbyter, will be available to assist us in the search for a regular pastor. Key steps include performing a congregation assessment, a mission study, and selecting a Pastoral Nominating Committee that represents the congregation.

New / Other Business

Shelley suggested that the Tweens bake cookies (mix from Sam's Club) instead of holding Sunday School on February 6 for a reception for Rev. Aber after the worship service.

Ginny reported that the Akron Area Collaboration of Eastminster Presbytery is considering having a joint worship service, tentatively late summer or early fall. Session acknowledged interest in supporting and participating in this project.

The next regular Session meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 7 p.m.

There was no other new business. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved. The meeting was then closed in prayer at 8:56 p.m.

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Rev. Richard Lapehn, Moderator