

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Akron, Ohio
Thursday, July 14, 2022
Minutes of Special Session meeting - FINAL

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

The special meeting of the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church was called to order by the Moderator, the Reverend David Aber at 6:00 p.m. on July 14.

Elders (+ present, * excused, - absent)

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
* Rob Gilbert	+ Ellen Daugherty	+ Dan Gorring
+ Sandy Gruneich	* Dottie Erb	- Becky Pool
+ Ginny Molver	+ Brian Rodabaugh	+ Dave Stobbs
* Don Rearick	+ Alec Works, Clerk of Session	+ Rosemary Wright

Also present: Rev. David Aber, Moderator.

New Business

On Sunday afternoon, July 10, 2022, Pastor David reported that he received a written request signed by six Session members asking for a special Session meeting to discuss the information presented by the Holy Cow! program. He noted that the request was proper and is in good order, complying with Section G-3.0203 of the Book of Order 2019-2021. The business to be transacted at the special meetings would be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting. The meeting was scheduled for 6:00 pm, Thursday, July 14, 2022 at the church.

Pastor David opened the meeting with prayer at 6:00 pm. To start, each elder was given three minutes to express their comments on the Holy Cow! report. The floor was then opened up to further discussions.

Some of the key discussions centered around the following points:

- Survey results were depressing, but not necessarily surprising. This could be reflective of how the questions were asked, as well as which members might have been more likely to respond.
- The presentation itself could have been handled differently. Members of the congregation were invited (not just Session members); problems were encountered in recording the program (e.g., linking with Apple laptop); parts of the powerpoint presentation were hard to read; we did not receive a copy of the powerpoint presentation in advance.
- One concern from the survey was a lack of trust in leadership. The survey did not identify anyone in particular as "leader". This could be a pastor, staff, Session members, officers, committee moderators. There have also been several changes in personnel.

The survey also pointed towards a need for better conflict management. Some areas discussed included the role and emphasis on the music program, including choral scholars; a perspective that the same people make the decisions or serve too long; and whether we need to grow membership.

As far as next steps, suggestions included more clearly identifying elders and church leaders and encouraging members to express concerns to them; recognizing our plusses (e.g., Westminster is hosting a joint worship service August 28, finances are in good shape, new staff are in place). Pastor David offered to apply some of his skills and experience to work with small groups to facilitate

people expressing their concerns. An option going forward after Pastor David leaves, if needed, might be to have a "Designated Pastor" (3 year contract, person may or may not stay on after that period). Strategic leadership should be considered as a top requirement for the next pastor.

A motion was considered to have Emily Swanson of Holy Cow come back to meet with Session. Since she has already offered to meet with Session via Zoom, it was decided to accept that offer. It was also noted that Presbytery's Committee on Ministry will soon be working with the Pastoral Nominating Committee to start their process, including developing the Ministry Information Statement.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 pm.

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Pastor David Aber, Moderator