

## **Westminster Presbyterian Church**

### **Summaries from 2022 Session Meetings**

#### **Regular – 12/20/22**

Guest Marta Morrison, chair of the 2022 Stewardship Campaign, reported that, as of December 20, 2022, 72 pledges had been received, for \$225,193. Of these pledges, 38 were increases over the previous year. There are 13 members who have previously pledged but have not returned pledge cards. She also shared some personal observations from the campaign. She encouraged leadership to be more involved (including leading by example) and addressing concerns expressed by some congregants.

At the December 6 meeting of Eastminster Presbytery, Rev. Barry Chance was elected to serve as the new Stated Clerk and General Presbyter, starting February 1, 2023. Rev. Cathy Ulrich's last day before retiring is January 31.

Session approved scheduling a congregational meeting on January 8, 2023, immediately following the 10:30 a.m. service. The purpose is to change the bylaws for the Board of Deacons and to elect new officers.

A memorial service for Jo Anne Barnes was led by Pastor Aber on December 16, 2022. Ethan Emerson Walston, son of Marnie and Steve Walston, was baptized on December 11, 2022.

#### **Regular – 11/29/22**

Discussions were resumed from the November 14, 2022 Special Session meeting. The essence of the discussion was that, as part of discovering our new congregational identity, pastor and future, Session needs to be supportive of the pastor. It was noted that Session can meet informally ("meeting of committee as a whole" instead of a formal called meeting) to discuss situations which might arise. Session adopted the following policy statement: In the event of communications deemed not to be "decent and in order", as well as not helping to "excel in building up the church", the person(s) making such comments should be offered the opportunity to air such concerns in person with Session. If the person(s) is/are uncomfortable with this, a smaller group could be considered.

The clerk reported that our MIF (Mission Information Form) has been posted on the PCUSA site and is ready to start accepting views and responses. Sharon Easterling, PNC (Pastoral Nominating Committee) Chair, reported that they are scheduled to meet next week.

Session approved having the carillon be replaced by Chime Master at a cost of \$19,650 using funds from the gift given by Orlene Makinson Trust. The current carillon, originally installed in 1966, no longer works. Another motion approved using \$15,000 from the gift to reinstitute a musical series, as supported by the family.

After discussion, which noted that deacon's terms used to be 3 years, a motion prevailed to reduce the number of deacons from 12 to 9, and to change the term from 2 to 3 years. This change still needs to be approved by the congregation. The change would start with newly elected deacons, starting in 2023.

New limestone steps to the narthex were installed this week. Scaffolding for the steeple work is expected to be removed by mid-December.

Rosemary Wright reported on her recent participation in Presbytery's Akron Cohort for Adaptive and Innovative Ministry. She and Ginny Melver encouraged other church members to become involved since having a group involved is more effective. Meetings are one Thursday a month, with dinner included.

### **Special meeting - 11/14/22**

Pastor David presented two items for discussion. First is a discussion related to two of the Five Developmental Tasks of Interim Ministry - #2) Discovering a new congregational identity, and #3) Preparing for new pastoral leadership and a new future. The second is a review of the revised MIF as submitted by the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC).

Pastor David started by quoting from I Corinthians 14:40, "But all things should be done decently and in order." In a handout to Session members, he noted that Paul wrote to that congregation regarding outbursts and utterances that were disruptive to the church. Today, technology has enabled newer and more easily spread methods of communication. Recently there have been communications that could be described as not decent and in order, as well as not helping to "excel in building up the church" (I Cor. 14:12). Session discussed how ruling elders should respond, especially in their roles of supporting and encouraging the pastor and the congregation, and creating a positive and energetic community.

The Clerk had earlier forwarded an updated MIF as presented by the PNC to Session members. After discussion, Session approved the Mission information Form (MIF) as presented by the Pastoral Nominating Committee and agreed to have the clerk forward it the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry for their review and approval. [The Committee on Ministry meets 11/17.]

### **Regular - 10/25/22**

Pastor David began by opening the floor for comments and questions regarding the Holy Cow Report and Mission Vision Study Team (MVST) report, with guest Rev. Richard Lapehn, Eastminster Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM) liaison with Westminster, invited to respond. Despite the Holy Cow presentation and results not going as expected or hoped, a report was produced. The MVST is meant to be a response to that report. Despite the concerns raised in the reports, Rev. Lapehn noted that we can move on if we note we are working to address those concerns. It is important that the Mission Information Form (MIF) be honest, and honestly reveal who we are as a congregation. Following this discussion, a motion prevailed to approve the Mission Vision Study Team report as submitted by the task force and to forward it to the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC). The discussion proceeded to review the MIF as presented by the PNC. Rev. Lapehn noted that the MIF has limits to how much information may be included, but links can be added to documents such as a job description. He also noted that the narrative responses tend to carry more weight than the other information. Session members agreed to submit specific suggestions for improvements to the clerk, who will forward them to the PNC.

The Office Administrator job description was discussed. Responsibilities include more attention on our records system and seeking opportunities to expand our social media presence. Any additional work must first be approved by the pastor / head of staff. A motion prevailed to approve the job description as presented. Also, Session approved the contract for Gwynne Rearick, Director of Youth and Family Ministries, as presented and modified.

The Stewardship Campaign is underway. Pledge cards for the Stewardship Campaign will be distributed and turned in on November 13. Cards will be mailed to those not in attendance.

### **Regular – 09/27/22**

An internment service for Mary Jane Emerson, former member, was held in the Memorial Garden on September 15, 2022, with Pastor David Aber officiating.

Session approved hiring Gwynne Rearick as Director of Youth and Family Ministries, effective September 11, 2022. The report from the Mission Statement Task Force was received and discussed. Various fall activities were also discussed.

### **Regular – 08/30/22**

Charlotte Elizabeth Walker died on August 3, 2022. A private family graveside service was planned.

A joint worship service for 12 area Presbyterian churches was hosted by Westminster on Sunday morning, August 28, 2022. Reported in person attendance was 287. The service was led by several area ministers and liturgists, a joint choir and several soloists. As of Tuesday, Westminster had over 180 YouTube viewings; other churches offered videos as well. Feedback was that the service went smoothly and was appreciated. \$2,597.56 was collected for RAHAB Ministries. A large number stayed for fellowship after the service.

WYDACA plans to start using their new nursery area on September 6, 2022.

Rev. Cathy Ulrich, General Presbyter, and Rev. Richard Lapehn, our COM liaison, met with the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) on August 24 for their orientation. They provided a checklist for churches in transition to PNC members. The checklist states that Session is to develop a Mission Visions Study; the Holy Cow Summary may be used. Discussions indicated more work was desired to prepare a Mission Visions Study. A motion prevailed to appoint a Mission Visions Study Team (MVST) consisting of 2 elders, 2 deacons and 2 members of the congregation.

### **E-meeting – 08/09/22**

Motions presented by the Discipleship Committee included approving funding for the PorchRokr Event and Rally Day and creating a Marketing Task Force. Session approved masking guidelines for the August 28 joint worship service.

### **Regular – 07/26/22**

Discussions included open staff positions; the PorchRokr Festival (near the church on 8/20/22); follow-up from the Holy Cow presentation; and the 8/28 joint worship service (several Presbyterian churches meeting at Westminster). The General Presbyter is working to schedule an initial meeting and training session with the Pastoral Nominating Committee. Pastor David noted that July 11, 2023 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ground breaking for the current Westminster sanctuary.

### **Special – 07/14/22**

Session met to discuss the July 6 “Holy Cow” survey results presentation. Suggestions for next steps included more clearly identifying elders and church leaders and encouraging members to express concerns to them; and recognizing our plusses (e.g., Westminster is hosting a joint worship service August 28, finances are in good shape, new staff are in place).

### **E-meeting – 07/08/22**

The purpose of the meeting was to approve Pastor David’s time-off for July 17 – 24, and to approve pulpit supply for July 24.