

Session – January 2024

The regular meeting of Session was on Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

Rev. Barry Chance, Moderator, started by asking what we heard during the January 6 session with the Lombard Mennonite Group. Noted were needs for better communication, transparency, and a better process to raise concerns to leadership. Participants that day each had a chance to speak as the microphone was passed around the circle; however, there was not an opportunity to further discuss what was said. Barry noted that early last year Session members were getting to know one another better; we need more personal narrative sharing. Our goal should be to have Session speak as one body, even if there are disagreements.

Rev. Meyer began his pastor's report by distributing copies of a document entitled "Seeking to be Faithful Together." He recommended adopting it as an official policy of Westminster Presbyterian Church. It could be communicated by being posted on the church website and bulletin boards. Barry said we could use it as part of our opening discussions at our next meeting.

The Discernment Team had its first meeting on January 9. Jennifer Vicarel reported to the congregation during the January 21 worship service. Rev. Meyer had provided various resources to team members. These suggest that we need to more clearly focus on the needs of the community around and among us, and how we, based on our members and potential, can help meet these needs.

Harriet Chapman has agreed to lead an effort to prepare a heritage report celebrating Westminster's 100 year heritage.

Preliminary unaudited data through December 31, 2023: actual revenues \$507,445; budgeted \$474,285. Actual expenses \$516,032; budget \$603,483. Net (actual revenues less actual expenses) is a deficit of \$8,587. Pledged contributions are \$24,019 above budget, nonpledged contributions are \$45,769 below budget. Interest income is \$39,905 above budget. Personnel expenses are approximately \$72,310 below budget. \$75,000 has been taken from investment accounts to cover payments the past 3 months. Total pledges for 2024 = \$217,198.

Alec Works presented a report from the Endowment Committee. The total market value of the Endowment Fund was \$ 6,113,426.41 at the end of 2023. This amount is up 5.8% from the prior year-end balance of \$5,778,269.44. This amount includes capital gains and losses, dividends, interest and contributions and is net of distributions to WPC. Of this amount, \$5,170,702.00 is held in the general account. This account includes funds established for specific purposes (e.g., building maintenance, special music). Income is distributed to the church on a quarterly basis based on a budget set by the directors. Any earnings remaining at year-end are distributed to the church in early January. \$126,596.27 was distributed to the church in 2023. This fund also includes \$1,326,460.87 of Rowley funds being held and invested on behalf of the church.

Session voted to call for a Congregational Meeting immediately following the morning worship service on February 11, 2024, for the sole purposes of (1) approving changes to the WPC Code of Regulations (Bylaws) to reduce the number of elders from 12 to 9 (Article V, Section 1); (2) to elect new officers after receiving the slate as proposed by the Nominating Committee (and any proper nominations from the floor); and (3) to thank and dismiss members of the current Pastoral Nominating Committee. A new

committee will be elected by the congregation after the Session and congregation approve the recommendations and vision of the discernment team.

Ed Labbe reported for the deacons that they request Session's input on whether the narthex doors should be locked at 10:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings. There are no windows on the center doors, but there are on the side doors. If an usher is in the narthex, they could let in any late arrivers. Doors in the Christian education building are locked. Some expressed security concerns. A police officer is on duty for traffic, but may not be visible. Recommendations of a Safety and Security Task Force were not fully implemented largely due to covid. Session decided to continue to lock the front narthex doors at approximately 10:45 a.m. during Sunday morning services. A sign shall be added to the center front doors directing any late arrivers to the side narthex doors, where they may knock to secure entrance.

Several motions from Outreach primarily for collections and events were approved. Worship plans for Lent, including some joint services with New Covenant Community Church, were approved. Session approved the Annual Statistical Report which Alec Works discussed. Many of our statistics are in line with those of other churches our size. Of the 256 members at year-end, Alec estimated that approximately 150 have had some involvement with the church in 2023, with around 90 active. Finally, Session voted to re-elect the following officers for 2024: Alec Works, Clerk of Session; Jim Cole, Treasurer; and Marcia Holcumb, Assistant Treasurer.

The next Session meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 26, 2024 at 7 pm.