

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT
MINUTES OF THE SESSION MEETING: MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2014

ATTENDING:

CURRENT RULING ELDERS PRESENT: April Betzner, Joel Braun, Donna Carlisle, Jerry Davison, Sue Denmead, Linda Grimm, Elsie Hall, Jessica Hickman, Sue Key, Jackie Koman, Crystal Miles, Dennis Myers, and Gary Recktenwald

CURRENT RULING ELDERS EXCUSED: Terri Grantz, Steve Johnson, David Taylor, and Brian Teagarden

STAFF PRESENT: Rev. Dr. Stuart Broberg, Rev. Emily Miller, and Don Nixon

OPENING PRAYER AND DEVOTIONS

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Session of The Church of the Covenant was convened by the Rev. Dr. Stuart Broberg, on Monday, August 4, 2014 at 7:08 p.m. in the Dining Room. Dr. Broberg opened the meeting with devotions and a prayer.

APPROVAL OF THE DOCKET

The docket for this meeting was reviewed next. After a motion was made by Sue Denmead and seconded by Jackie Koman, the August 2014 Session docket was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

After a motion was made by Elsie Hall and seconded by Crystal Miles, the minutes from the regular monthly Session meeting of June 2014 and two sets of special Session meeting minutes (one for the confirmands meeting and the other for a new members meeting) were unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF BAPTISMS

The request from Matthew and Rebecca Dolanch to have their son Brantley baptized complied with the church's wedding policy and did not need the Session's separate approval.

APPROVAL OF FUTURE WEDDINGS

Three weddings were presented to the Session by Dr. Broberg. Devon Wyatt, daughter of **Dick and Susie Wyatt** (members), requested that Dr. Broberg officiate at an offsite wedding at their home in Upper St. Clair on Saturday, September 6, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. (approved by W&M).

Patrick Trapuzzano and Chaleese McCracken have requested to be married on June 20, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. with Rev. Emily Miller officiating (approved by W&M).

These two weddings are exceptions from the church's Wedding Policy and needed to be approved by the Session. April Betzner moved and Elsie Hall seconded a motion to approve these two weddings. The motion was unanimously approved by the Session.

Keaton Hamberger and **Mackenzie Poland** requested to be married in the sanctuary on June 20, 2015 with Dr. Broberg to officiate. This wedding compiles with the church's Wedding Policy and did not need separate approval from the Session.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CLERK

Baptisms

On June 15, 2014, the following were baptized at the 11:00 a.m. service: Maxim Daniel Piatt, son of Craig and Rachel Piatt, born February 5, 2014, and Olivia Rose Sleek, daughter of Broc and **Brooke Sleek**, born March 13, 2014. Rev. Emily Miller officiated.

Weddings:

On Saturday, June 7, 2014, **Keri A Simmons** and Luke Ohlinger were married in the sanctuary of The Church of the Covenant with Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating.

On Saturday, June 14, 2014, **Michael Digon** and **Brittany Dobbin** were married in the sanctuary of The Church of the Covenant with The Rev. Emily Miller officiating.

On Saturday, July 5, 2014, **Ryan Densmore** and Alicia Schneider were married in the sanctuary of The Church of the Covenant with Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating.

On Saturday July 12, 2014, **Austin Matthew Burk and Haley Conner** were married off-site with Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating.

Funerals

Shirley W. Presto died on Saturday, June 7, 2014. Her funeral service was held on Wednesday, June 11th at the William G. Neal Funeral Home, with Rev. Emily Miller officiating.

Request to Be Removed from the Active Roll

Bill and Sally Northrup, who now live in Florida, requested to be removed from the Active Roll. Crystal Miles moved to approve that request, April Betzner seconded the motion, and the Session approved the motion.

Restore Members to the Active Roll

Rebecca Dolanch, John Pankopf, and Jennifer Ralston requested to be restored to the Active Roll. Joel Braun moved to approve that action, Jackie Koman seconded the motion, and the Session approved the motion.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

Endowment Committee Statement

Sue Key reported that the Endowment Committee has decided that it does not want to follow the recommendation from the 2014 General Assembly to divest any investments with selected companies doing business in Israel. Dr. Broberg noted that no church is required to follow the GA in where it directs its investments. Sue also reported that most of our investments are in mutual funds, and are not in the Presbyterian Foundation. Sue presented the statement to the Session and asked for approval of the statement. Dr. Broberg said that since the motion came from Committee, no second was needed. At this point, the Session voted unanimously to approve the motion approving the Endowment Committee's position statement.

Discussion of the Church's Wedding Policy

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Jackie Koman advised the Session that the Wedding Policy had been reviewed by the Worship and Music Committee, as requested by the Session. This review was conducted to do a check to compare the Policy with language approved by the 2014 General Assembly regarding same-sex marriages. Dr. Broberg reviewed how the GA conducted itself in regard to making these changes. Dr. Broberg and Mrs. Koman also noted that the W&M Committee made only grammatical changes in our existing Wedding Policy, deleting some parentheses and removing a reference to an outdated version of the Book of Order. They noted that our Policy does not include references to same-sex marriages, and describes marriage as between man and a woman. That description has not changed. There was much discussion on this matter.

At this time, it was felt that vote could be taken. Dr. Broberg said that since the motion came from Committee, no second was needed. At this point the Session voted on the Committee's recommendation, and the vote was 10 Yes, 2 No, and 1 Abstention. Dr. Broberg stated that he felt that the Session was not of one mind on this issue, so he, as Moderator, referred the issue back to the W&M Committee, who he suggested need to meet in late August to consider this issue again.

Letters to the Congregation, Local Rabbis and to the Community

It was agreed that the Session is not in a position to send out letters to these entities to explain our views on the 2014 GA's actions. It was agreed to defer these communications until the Session further reviews the matter. Dr. Broberg noted that the Session had promised to get back to the congregation on the status of these discussions, and suggested that the Clerk prepare a letter advising the congregation about these discussions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee – Brian Teagarden, Chairperson – Brian was absent, so April Betzner referred the Session to the Committee's written report. Dr. Broberg said that we are close to our budget projections and that giving has held up well this summer. We need to watch to see if giving tails off towards the end of the year like it did in 2013. The Finance Committee will monitor this carefully and report to Session on giving at the September 2014 Session meeting.

Personnel Committee – Gary Recktenwald, Chairperson – Gary said that staff reviews were held during the first half of July. He noted that the Committee had received a letter of resignation from Peg Flynn, who resigned as Administrative Assistant, effective August 15, 2014. Dona Hamilton was recommended by the Committee to replace Peg effective August 15, 2014, pending receipt of her approved clearances. Dr. Broberg said that since the motion came from Committee, no second was needed. The Session voted unanimously to approve the motion.

OAR Committee – Donna Carlisle, Chairperson – Donna reported that 15 new members were added to the church's roll in June. She also said that the Church Retreat, "A Walk through the New Testament", will be held on August 8 and 9. The Church has reserved two buses for travel to the Franklin Graham Crusade in Pittsburgh during mid-August 2014.

Stewardship Committee – Terri Grantz, Chairperson – Joel Braun reported that the College of Elders event will be held on Sunday, September 14, 2014. He said that the fall stewardship campaign theme will be, "Learning to Love God", taken from Luke 10:27. Finally, Joel said that the Every Member Canvass will be held on Sunday, October 19, 2014.

Mission Committee – Steve Johnson, Chairperson – Pastor Emily reported that the Committee had not met in June or July. The Celebrate Mission weekend will be held the first weekend in October.

Worship and Music Committee – Jackie Koman, Chairperson – Jackie noted that the Wedding Policy had been discussed earlier in the meeting. She also said that the Committee has had in-depth discussions about regularly including the Apostles' Creed in all three Sunday morning worship services.

Christian Education Committee – Jessica Hickman, Chairperson – Jessica referred all to her Committee's minutes, and reviewed items in those minutes with the Session. She noted that the Committee had met in June. Vacation Bible School was held from July 14 – 18 in the morning, and 201 children participated. Sue Denmead moved and April Betzner seconded a motion to commend Stacy Phillips for her wonderful job in coordinating VBS and making it an excellent experience for all participants. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Broberg then said that he hopes that the church will be able to fund Stacy as the CE Director for a full-time position in 2015, but worries that side-effects of prolonged discussions on the Wedding Policy could adversely affect the fall stewardship campaign.

Jessica pointed out that the CE Committee is gearing up for the fall programs.

Nominating Committee – Elsie Hall, Chairperson – Elsie reported that the Committee has met in June and July, and that everything was moving along well for this Committee. She hopes to report back to the Session in September with a full slate of nominees.

Building and Grounds Committee – Jerry Davison, Chairperson – Jerry told the Session that the Committee is still waiting for a real plan from the Family Promise group for using the building. He feels that Family Promise is going through a very tough time. They want to paint the building themselves. But the Committee feels many repairs (e.g., repair the leaking gutters) need to be made before we let them paint. Jerry posed this question: Do we want to invest in the building to support a group that won't do what it needs to do keep operating? The Committee was asked to prepare a budget for repair and maintenance of the building to be used as a guide for the Session in consideration of that question. The Mission Committee will need to be involved. Jerry also noted that a tenant had to be evicted from the 418 Chestnut Street property.

Administration Committee and Memorial Committee – no reports.

Endowment Committee - Sue Key, Chairperson – nothing beyond the information discussed earlier.

Ministry Team – Pastor Emily said that five teams had helped recently with in-home communion. The next time for in-home communion will be in November 2014.

DATES OF NOTE

The next Communion will be held on Sunday, September 7, 2014 (Rally Day). The next regular Session meeting will be held on Monday, September 8, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. The next Stated

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Presbytery Meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. at the Robinson Presbyterian Church; Charles Bowers and Jackie Koman are scheduled to attend.

ADJOURNING AND CLOSING PRAYER

After a motion by Jerry Davison and a second from April Betzner, Session unanimously approved a motion to adjourn. The meeting was closed with a prayer by Pastor Emily at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan

Jonathan M. Pachter, Clerk of Session