

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT

MINUTES OF THE SESSION MEETING: MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015

RULING ELDERS PRESENT: April Betzner, Pat Boyer, Joel Braun, Gordon Core, Jerry Davison, Sue Denmead, Cindy Garlisi, Terri Grantz, Jessica Hickman, Jackie Koman, Jim Little, Steve Marriner, Crystal Miles, Dennis Myers, and Brian Teagarden

RULING ELDERS EXCUSED: Linda Grimm and David Taylor

STAFF PRESENT: Rev. Dr. Stuart Broberg and Stacy Phillips

OPENING PRAYER AND DEVOTIONS

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Session of The Church of the Covenant was convened with prayer and devotions by the Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, on Monday, December 14, 2015 at 7:01 p.m. in the Parlor.

APPROVAL OF THE DOCKET

After a motion was made by Pat Boyer and seconded by Cindy Garlisi, the docket for tonight's meeting was unanimously approved by the Session.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 2015

After a motion was made by Gordon Core and seconded by Sue Denmead, four sets of minutes from November 2015 were unanimously approved by the Session. These approved minutes included minutes from these meetings: the regular Session meeting (minutes approved with minor corrections) on November 2nd, two special Session meetings (November 2nd and November 9th), and the annual congregational meeting for electing church officers held on November 22nd.

APPROVAL OF A TRANSFER

Brady Schreyer and Sharon Johnson requested a letter of transfer to Faith United Presbyterian Church, Washington PA. Brian Teagarden moved and Sue Denmead seconded the motion, and the Session unanimously approved the motion.

APPROVAL OF MOVING TO THE ACTIVE ROLL

Jenice Stout requested moving her membership to the active roll. Sue Denmead moved and Cindy Garlisi seconded the motion, and the Session unanimously approved the motion.

APPROVAL OF BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS

Amanda Kluczynski and William Scott request the baptism of their son Landyn Michael William Scott on Sunday, December 13, 2015 at the 11:00am worship service with the Rev. Dr. Stuart Broberg to officiate.

Mackenzie McDowell (granddaughter of Jean Stout- deceased member) and Craig Gnagy, Jr. request to be married in the sanctuary on Saturday, November 19, 2016 with the Rev. Dr. Stuart Broberg to officiate.

This baptism and this wedding follow the church's baptism and wedding policies, so they do not require separate approval by the Session.

NOTES FROM DR. BROBERG

Dr. Broberg asked the Session members to help "man" the welcome Center for all three of the Christmas Eve worship services. He also noted that 2015 Committee annual reports are due to be provided to Debi Nicolella on January 8th. Finally, Dr. Broberg stated that the January regular monthly Session meeting will be held on Monday, January 11, 2016. The main focus of the meeting will be the 2016 budget. Outgoing and incoming Session member should attend.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CLERK

Baptisms

Giovanni Ethan Capo, born April 27, 2015, infant son of John and Cortney DiGiovanni Capo; Gabriella Jean DiGiovanni, born September 6, 2015, infant daughter of Doug and Courtney DiGiovanni; Caroline Charlotte Kearns, born November 1, 2013, daughter of Adam and Chelsea Carnahan Kearns; and Cole Alexander Saffell, born August 19, 2015, infant son of Eric and Bonnie Simpson Saffell were baptized at the 11:00 AM worship service. The Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiated.

Alexander Louis Di Pietro and Lucas Peter Di Pietro, born on August 24, 2015, infant sons of Joseph Peter and Lauren Barletta Di Pietro were baptized on Sunday, November 29, 2015, at the 11:00am worship service. The Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiated.

Landyn Michael William Scott, born on December 14, 2014, infant son of Amanda Marie Klucznan and William Dean Scott was baptized on Sunday, December 13, 2015, at the 11:00am worship service. The Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiated.

Weddings

On Saturday, December 12, 2015, Vincent Finelli and Brittany Bell were married in the Heinz Chapel at the University of Pittsburgh, with the Rev. Dr. Stuart Broberg officiating.

Funerals

Frank Edward Gordon, Jr. died on September 18, 2015 in Fishers, IN where he had been living for some time with his son who sent a note to the church office requesting he be removed from our mailing list. No other information is available at this time.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

Review of the November 22, 2015 Annual Congregational Meeting.

Dr. Broberg Dr. Broberg initiated a discussion about the November 22, 2015 annual congregational meeting. He noted that he felt everyone who attended and/or spoke was respectful of others. He felt that it represented our Church at its best. The Session then considered various approaches for informing the congregation about such issues including the general nomination process and inclusivity, the old Book of Order vs. the new Book of Order, and consistency issues in our bylaws. It was recommended that we wait until the new Session elders start participating in January to further discuss this topic, and that Session members need to think and pray about how to move forward on these issues.

SESSION COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee – Brian Teagarden, Chairperson – Brian Teagarden noted that the Finance Committee is still closely watching our budget, and will meet later this month to determine how to proceed and stay within our budget requirements. They are especially watching Unpledged Income, which has lagged considerably behind expectations (approx. \$45,000). Giving (especially Unpledged Income) needs to improve in December to make sure our budget objectives are met. Brian outlined the steps that his Committee will take to pay bills if budget expectations are not met, focusing on prioritizing to first pay personnel and other fixed expenses (such as but not limited to gas, phone and electricity), followed by unified giving and per capita, and then Mission giving. Finance will meet with various committees (especially Mission) to discuss this matter as needed.

Brian also advised all of the Committees that they need to turn in their 2016 budget estimates soon. The 2016 Budget will be detailed at the regular January 2016 Session meeting.

Personnel Committee – Sue Denmead, Chairperson – Sue passed around the proposed job description for Dr. Broberg's position. She noted that her Committee has proposed to give the staff a 1% increase in the 2016 budget. Cindy Barney got a merit increase above that. Also included in the Committee's 2016 budget proposal is money for a part-time IT position and money for an associate pastor. Sue noted (and this generated much discussion) that, if we have an approved open position for an associate pastor in the 2016 Budget, we must pay \$5609 to the Board of Pensions whether we fill the position or not. Dr. Broberg outlined the steps we would need to take to hire an associate pastor as well as the steps we would need to follow if that position is eliminated. He noted that we could always reinstate the position at a later date if we choose to do so. It was agreed that at the January 2016 Session meeting, we need to work to determine whether or not we can afford the associate pastor position, and if not, how we can provide the same ministry that is needed by the congregation.

OAR Committee – Linda Grimm, Chairperson – Jim Little spoke for the Committee. He discussed the process that the Committee followed in the annual review of the active roll. Fourteen people agreed to have their names removed from that list, and the OAR Committee was moving to remove those named people. No second was needed since the motion came from

Committee. The motion was discussed and the Session agreed with the Committee's motion to remove the named people. The motion was unanimously approved by the Session.

Jim pointed out that additional duties, especially with visitation, have been given to the Ministry Team as they help out Dr. Broberg. Jim also said that our Prayer Summit begins on January 17, 2016, and he asked the Session to help as spiritual leaders by agreeing to pray twice a month for an hour each time until May 2016.

Stewardship Committee – Terri Grantz, Chairperson - Terri noted that Consecration Sunday was held on November 15, 2015. To date, \$530,653 had been pledged by 201 people. In 2014 at this time, \$580,095 had been pledged by 229 people. The Committee will be calling people and sending letters soon to members of the congregation to try to increase the pledge totals. There was much discussion at this time about the potentially adverse effect of the issues that we have dealt with in 2015 on giving, worship attendance, and program participation.

Mission Committee – David Taylor, Chairperson – Dr. Broberg gave the Mission Committee report. He mentioned the recent article in the Observer-Reporter about the rebirth of the Family Promise program. Dr. Broberg stated that this rebirth is going all right in his view. Some issues still need to be resolved and they will be addressed at the next Family Promise Board meeting.

Worship and Music Committee – Jackie Koman, Chairperson – Jackie reviewed the plans for three Christmas Eve services; one at 6:00 p.m. (a children-focused service), one at 8:00 p.m. (a choir-focused service), and one at 11:00 p.m. (a traditional candlelight service).

Christian Education Committee – Jessica Hickman, Chairperson – Jessica reviewed upcoming CE events with the Session.

Nominating Committee – Joel Braun, Chairperson – Joel referred all to his Committee's minutes.

Building and Grounds Committee – Jerry Davison, Chairperson – Jerry said that the boiler in our 420 property was fixed and is in service. He also pointed out that Crystal Miles had purchased a beautiful new Christmas tree for the Covenant Center using Memorial Committee funds.

Administration Committee and Endowment Committee - no reports.

PASTORAL CARE

Dr. Broberg thanked those who helped with in-home communion to 32 people in November. He noted that the deacons and the Club 56 youth will be taking poinsettias, candy, cards and cookies to homebound folks. Sue Denmead thanked Dr. Broberg for involving Betty Donaldson and John McCreight, both unable to attend Sunday worship, in his Advent sermons.

DATES OF NOTE

The next communion will be held on Sunday, January 3, 2016. The next Stated Session meeting will be held on January 11, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. The next Stated Presbytery Meeting will be held on January 23, 2016 at Fourth Presbyterian Church, Washington. Patricia Boyer and Charles Bowers are scheduled to attend.

ADJOURNING AND CLOSING PRAYER

Dr. Broberg thanked the Session for all of their hard work and support in 2015. After a motion by consensus of the entire Session, the Session unanimously approved the motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned with a prayer by Dr. Broberg at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan M. Pachter

Jonathan M. Pachter, Clerk of Session