

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT
MINUTES OF THE SESSION MEETING: MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2016

ATTENDING:

ELDERS PRESENT: Pat Boyer, Gordon Core, Dan Halulko, Jessica Hickman, Jim Little, Steve Marriner, Joan McCrory, Dennis Myers, Kim O'Donnell, David Taylor

ELDERS EXCUSED: Joel Braun, George Camlin, Jerry Davison, Cindy Garlisi, Crystal Miles, Chuck Neff, Katie Wichterman

ELDER RESIGNED: Ashley Bashioum

STAFF PRESENT: Rev. Dr. Stuart Broberg, 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 D. Broberg, on Monday, June 6, 2016 at 7:06 p.m. in the Dining Room. Dr. Broberg led the group in prayer to open the June Session meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE DOCKET AND MINUTES

The docket for this meeting was reviewed next. After a motion was made by Dan Halulko and seconded by Gordon Core, the June 2016 Session docket was unanimously approved with one minor revision. After a motion was made by Dennis Myers and seconded by Jim Little, the minutes from the May 2, 2016 regular Session meeting and the May 25, 2016 Financial Consultation meeting were unanimously approved.

JUNE 6, 2016 CALLED SESSION MEETING

Dr. Broberg asked the Session to approve calling a special Session meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 6, 2016, to receive the 2016 Confirmation Class into the life of The Church of the Covenant. After a motion was made by Katie Wichterman and seconded by Joel Braun, the Session unanimously approved holding this special Session meeting.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF BAPTISMS AND A WEDDING

Approval of Baptisms – Kathryn Anne Jones McCarter requests the baptism of her daughter Hailey Kathleen McCarter, born July 20, 2012, on Sunday June 12, 2016 at the 943 worship service. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg will officiate. Robert and Elizabeth McDaniel Meerdo request the baptism of their infant son, Owen Robert Meerdo, born January 9, 2016, on Sunday, June 9, 2016 at the 8:30 a.m. worship service. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg will officiate. These baptisms comply with the Church's baptism policy, therefore additional Session approval is not needed.

Approval of A Wedding – Brandon Crawford (grandson of church member Cloteel Friesner) and Ellen Scheidemantle request to married in the sanctuary of The Church of the Covenant on Saturday, May 6, 2017 with Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating. This wedding complies with the Church's wedding policy, therefore additional Session approval is not needed.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CLERK

Baptisms

There were no baptisms to report since the May 2016 Session meeting.

Weddings

On Saturday, April 23, 2016 **Kyle Hamilton and Brittany Peters** (members) were married in the Rusch Chapel with the Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating.

On Saturday, May 21, 2016 **Rae Dawn Shipley** (member) and Phillip Gregory Guyton were married in the Sanctuary with the Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating.

Funerals

Ruth Ann Quail (non member) died Wednesday, April 20, 2016. Her funeral service was held on Saturday, April 23, 2016 at Piatt and Barnhill Funeral Home with the Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating. Interment followed in Forest Lawn Cemetery, McMurray, PA.

Gregory John Kumer (non member) died Saturday, April 23, 2016. His funeral service was held on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 at William G. Neal Funeral Home with the Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating. Interment followed at Mt. Prospect Cemetery.

Elizabeth Hood Todd (former member) died on Wednesday, May 18, 2016. Her funeral service was held on Wednesday, May 25, 2016 in the sanctuary of The Church of the Covenant with the Rev. Dr. Stuart D. Broberg officiating. Private interment followed at the Homewood Cemetery, Pittsburgh.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

A. Discussion of Attendance Issues on Sunday Morning

A question had been asked during the May 25th Financial Consultation meeting by Jerry Davison, which Dr. Broberg said he would review during the main part of the Session meeting tonight. Jerry's question related to reduced attendance at the worship services on Sunday mornings. Dr. Broberg said that he feels reduced worship attendance always happens when a congregation goes through difficult and controversial times, such as the nominating issues that occurred from fall 2015 through early 2016. He said it is important for a congregation to work through such times, but there always is a cost in his experience. He feels that we weathered that situation pretty well; i.e., no one has left the church because of those controversies. Even though there was discord we have come through the matter in pretty good shape. At this time, he read from John 15 as our evening's devotion, a passage that addresses the periodic occurrence of "pruning" in a church. The pruning perhaps was how we reacted to these times, we will come out stronger for it, and the Session will lead the way. Many thanked Dr. Broberg for his leadership during those difficult times.

Dr. Broberg said that now we should begin to move ahead, and we have two very positive points to highlight to the congregation: 1) we will soon be hiring two new Christian Education people; and, 2) we will pave the upper parking lot area. Those are very symbolic actions, because they put past matters behind us and focus on new things, about which he said we should be excited.

At this point, the Session engaged in an important discussion about the key role of prayer as we traversed through the difficult times together. Dr. Broberg said that the Session and the congregation were Christ-centered, focused and we stayed together. We have become more willing and committed to Christ.

B. Discussion of the May 25, 2016 Financial Consultation Meeting

Dr. Broberg summarized his views about this meeting. He pointed out that the Light the Fire campaign is still a blessing. A careful and thorough inventory of the income and expenses for that campaign done by Anthony Nicolella showed that there is approximately \$44,000 in undesignated funds. At the Financial Consultation meeting, the Session members present voted to use those funds to repair the upper parking lot now. Dr. Broberg asked for a motion to use those undesignated funds (\$44,083.34) to repair the upper parking lot. Gordon Core made this motion, which was seconded by Pat Boyer:

1. Ask the Mission Committee to use the \$10,500 designated Young Adult Fund in the Light the Fire Campaign as they see fit;
2. Ask the Mission Committee to spend the remaining \$5,769 designated in the Light the Fire Campaign for Adult Education mission programs as originally intended;
3. Advise the Building and Grounds Committee to use the undesignated \$44,083.34 from the Light the Fire Campaign for repairs needed in the upper parking lot; and,
4. Close the Light the Fire Campaign and provide an inclusive report to the congregation about on how the funds raised during that campaign were used. That report will be provided at a congregational meeting at a time to be determined. The Administration Committee will compile that report and deliver it to the Session

There was minimal discussion. The vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Raise the CE Budget by \$7,500

Dr. Broberg noted that the CE budget will need to be raised by \$7,500 to handle the proposed expenses for the two new CE positions approved earlier by the Session. The budget for these two new positions would be \$74,430 for the remainder of 2016 – the current CE budget is short by about \$7,115. Dr. Broberg rounded up that shortfall to \$7,500. The Session had decided that these additional funds need to be raised by the congregation, and should not rely on Light the Fire Campaign funds. Pat Boyer moved and Dennis Myers seconded a motion to approve the two new CE positions at a total budget consideration for 2016 of \$74,430. The motion was unanimously approved by the Session.

D. Review of the Process for Hiring A New CE Program Director

Pat Boyer described the process for selecting the new CE Program Director. The new position was advertised and the selection group met four times with four different people. From that four person group, the selection group recommended that Jessica Hickman be hired. She will start in mid-June 2016. Pat moved from the Personnel Committee that Jessica Hickman be hired at CE Program Director effective June 15, 2016, at an annual salary of \$8,000.

During the following discussion, Dr. Broberg noted that this hiring will be publicized to the congregation. He also said that Jessica will have to resign from the Session since no one can be on the Session and be an employee of the Church. The motion was then voted on, and it passed unanimously. Dr. Broberg then offered a prayer for Jessica and for our CE program.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Steve Marriner referred all to his Committee's report. He noted that we are in the middle of difficult financial times. The main issue is that unpledged income is way down, as is the loose offering. Our pledged income is lagging a bit. He asked Dr. Broberg to send a note to the congregation to see if that helps increase giving. Steve also asked the Committees to spend only what is absolutely necessary. He pointed out two exceptions to that rule: 1) the upper parking lot repairs; and, 2) replacing the roof on one of our apartment buildings.

He still hopes we can have a balanced budget at the end of 2016. He said that we need assess where we are at the end of the summer in September and see where we need to go.

A question was asked about the adequacy of cash on hand. Steve said we all right with that item, and said that we have not yet drawn on the funds in transferrable Trust Fund areas. He also recommended that we delay paying more Per Capita , and that we delay paying our bills until the last possible second.

Personnel Committee

Pat Boyer had nothing additional to say beyond her earlier input to this meeting, except to point out that staff reviews will be held on June 26th and July 12th.

OAR Committee

Jim Little said that the Church Directory is almost completed. He is well-pleased, and praised God for the results and everyone's efforts..

Stewardship Committee

Gordon Core provided the Session with an outline of the fall stewardship campaign. The campaign will have a definite money goal, will focus on the fruits of giving, and will target a number of people who will give commitments. He thinks we will need to raise \$580,000 to make our budget, and suggested we try to raise \$600,000. He wants to increase our giving units

who pledge, and said that if we do that we will be fine. The total number of pledges is to be determined.

Regarding our current stewardship situation, Gordon said that:

- Now is the ideal time to go to the congregation to raise the \$7,500 needed for the two new CE positions. He feels that is very do-able and we need to ask current givers to give just a little more.
- It is important that we ask all 2016 pledgers to give the full amount of whatever they pledged. We usually have a gap of about 8% when comparing pledges to actual given amounts. Gordon said that when you ask people to give and to fulfill their pledges they do it.
- All church leaders will be asked to give, so the congregation sees their leaders also as givers. Young people will be asked to give as well – we value all pledges.

Mission Committee

David Taylor asked for more volunteers to help with Family Promise. He said that the Mission Committee is planning to develop a youth-focused program that will help both members and non-members. Funds raised as part of this new program will be used for youth mission trips.

Worship and Music Committee

No report.

Christian Education Committee

Jessica Hickman thanked everyone for their help with the end-of-year picnic on May 22. She said that Stacy Phillips really enjoyed her farewell picnic. She also noted that the youth's Washington Mission effort will be starting on June 20; Don Nixon expected more participation this year. Jessica said that Vacation Bible School will be held during mornings on June 20-22.

Nominating Committee

Pat Boyer said that her Committee is making progress on the slate.

Building and Grounds Committee

Dennis Myers read from his Committee's report. Dr. Broberg thanked the Committee for their good work to keep the Beau Street side of the campus looking good.

Administration Committee

No report.

Endowment Committee

Steve Marriner said that the Endowment lunch held on May 15 was a success. He will present fall endowment projects to the Session at the next Session meeting.

Memorial Committee
No report.

PASTORAL CARE REPORT

Dr. Broberg told the Session that 13 people were served in-home communion on June 5th. He said that he is delighted with what our parish nurse, Linda Grimm, has been accomplishing. She has made many home and hospitals visitations. He noted that Don Nixon has been helping with visitations and follow-up visits. The Deacons are also helping with visitations. Dr. Broberg asked the Session to hold several people and their families in prayer, including Cindy Garlisi, Rachel Phillips, and Harry and Johnnie Broberg. He thanked the Session and everyone who helped him out when his parents had some recent health (and ongoing) issues.

DATES OF NOTE

The next communion will be held on Sunday, July 3, 2016. The next Stated Session meeting will be held on Monday, July 11, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. The next Stated Presbytery Meeting will take place on September 13, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. Charles Bowers and Gordon Core are scheduled to attend.

ADJOURNING AND CLOSING PRAYER

Pat Boyer moved to adjourn and David Taylor seconded that motion. Session approved the motion unanimously. Dr. Broberg closed the meeting with a prayer at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan M. Pachter

Jonathan M. Pachter, Clerk of Session