

**First Presbyterian Church Tallahassee**  
**Stated Meeting of Session September 15, 2024**  
**Calvin Room, 12:30pm**

The Session met in person and via Zoom at 12:30pm. In attendance were elders: Peggy Wright-Cleveland, Chris Corzine, clerk, John Hightower, Martha Kutter, Peggy West, Donna Barber, Carolyn Bradley, Debbie Gibson, Patrick Kennedy, Sue Safford, Jane Atkinson, Dan Bruno, Janet Fixel, Greg Riccardi, and Norma Meier. Also present was Designated Pastor and Moderator, Glenn Hodges, Don Winstead, Treasurer, Emily Bruno, inquirer in ministry, and Ann Westall on behalf of the healing racism task force, and the Heritage Committee.

The moderator called the meeting to order with prayer at 12:33pm.

The agenda was presented by the Clerk. A motion to amend the agenda was made, asking that a report from the personnel team be moved to follow the Inquiry in Ministry agenda item. Additionally, a report from the Stewardship Team was added to follow the Budget and Finance Report. The motion was seconded and approved without objection. A motion to approve the minutes of the September stated session and congregation meetings was heard, seconded, and approved without objection.

**Update from Healing Racism Task Force**

Ann Westall, on behalf of the Healing Racism Task Force, reported on the work of the task force. She reported that the task force felt that the church had acknowledged the church's historical role in racism but now needed to shift towards finding ways to provide reparation. A motion was heard confirming that the work of the Healing Racism Task Force remained a priority of the Session, and that the Session desired to further empower the task force to build an outline/syllabus that would provide a framework for the Session to learn about reparation. The hope of this framework would be to further educate the Session and put them into a position to provide reparation recommendations to the congregation. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.

**Request from Heritage Committee**

Ann Westall, on behalf of the Heritage Committee asked the Session to allow church historical records to be digitized by the Sunshine State Digital Network/Florida State University Library project. Allowing this digitization, which is provided at no cost, requires signing a release form allowing the digital images to be added to public library collections. A motion was heard to allow the digitization and to empower the Clerk to sign the required form on behalf of the session. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.

**Candidate for Ministry**

Peggy Wright-Cleveland reported that inquirer in ministry, and church member, Emily Bruno, desired to seek to apply as a candidate for ministry. This process occurs within the presbytery with the support of the sponsoring congregation. A motion was made to endorse Emily Bruno's desire to apply as a Candidate for Ministry, the motion was seconded and approved without objection.

**Personnel Team Report**

Donna Barber, on the behalf of the personnel team shared with the Session an update on the Transitional Ministry Plan and the dissolution of the work relationship with the part-time spiritual formation director. A discussion regarding issues that arose during the first months of the implementation of the Transitional Ministry Plan was heard. The personnel team submitted a request for approval of compensation disbursements for a former employee, the Session approved the request without objection.

## **Budget and Finance Report**

A motion was made that the treasurer's written report be approved as submitted, this motion was seconded and approved without objection.

The written report follows:

In September, receipts were slightly below August receipts but significantly higher than receipts in September 2023. Cumulative income exceeds the total income for the first nine months of last year by over \$150 thousand. Cumulative expenditures remain below last year, and September income exceeded monthly expenditures.

Our ending cash balance was \$237,371, which is up from the July balance of \$204,554. Pledges and other income were \$71,631 which includes an annual contribution from the Spear Estate of \$16,414. Cumulative income for the year has been \$491,799 not including project funds and funds withdrawn from the endowment for Compassion and Social Justice grants. Based on information from the Breeze Church Management System, pledged income through October 13 represents about 93% of total pledges!

Expenditures in September were \$37,880. Cumulative expenditures for the year have been \$335,736, not including project-related expenditures.

Overall, cumulative net income minus operating expenditures results in a net operating surplus of \$153,257. We remain in a good financial position at this point in the year. Details are shown in the Balance Sheet and Statement of Financial Income and Expenses which accompany this summary report. The attached information also includes balances of endowment accounts. These remain strong with balances totaling \$4.08 million not counting the Vaughn Loan Fund balance of \$282,669.

The Treasurer noted that there was a request from the property team to utilize \$14,470 from the facilities reserve fund of the Endowment for the purpose of hiring a contractor to do an assessment of the church's steeple to determine current state and needed repairs. The Endowment Management Committee had confirmed that this request was consistent with Legacy and Gifts plan. The request was approved without objection.

## **Stewardship Report**

Norma Meier shared an update on behalf of the stewardship committee. The annual campaign's theme centers around the ideas of "Creating and Finding Joy." She requested a representative from each ministry team deliver a Minute for Mission in worship on consecutive Sundays highlighting the work of their respective teams.

## **Pastoral Nominating Committee**

A written report was received from Barbara Busharis on behalf of the PNC. The written report follows:

The PNC has been meeting regularly since our Ministry Discernment Form was published in the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) system. We have advertised and reached out to various PCUSA and seminary contacts. The current CLC system matches churches and call seekers without providing identifying information, and we do not see the identifying information until we have made a preliminary determination that a candidate is of sufficient interest to invite that person to apply and that candidate has responded favorably to the invitation. To give a very rough estimate, so far approximately 10% of the potential candidates presented through the system have (a) been of interest and (b) responded favorably to an invitation to apply. We are still at the stage of reviewing potential matches. We are heartened by the qualities of the candidates that have been presented so far.

## **Designated Pastor's Report**

The moderator reported on several items.

- Ministry Team Meeting: It was decided to postpone planning of a "Ministry Night" in-person meeting of all the ministry teams. This will be revisited in 2025.
- Advent Celebration: It was reported that both the Spiritual Formation Team and Music and Worship Team were preparing to plan for Advent. An Advent workshop to be held on either November 24, or December 1st, was discussed.
- An Advent event in coordination with Trinity United Methodist, and the Grace Mission ministry, was being planned for December 8.
- Presbytery Commissioner: Donna Barber agreed to attend the next Presbytery meeting.
- UKirk, Dogwood Acres, Financial Needs – the moderator reported that after meeting with the Budget and Finance Team that the church was unable to make additional contributions to UKirk or Dogwood Acres at this time.
- The moderator addressed concerns about the placement of a "No Trespassing" sign on the front porch of the church. Elders and congregants have expressed concerns about the unwelcoming message the sign presents. A motion was heard that the sign be removed, the motion was seconded and approved without objection.

## **Spiritual Formation Team**

Greg Riccardi reported that planning for Advent and Inquirers Class was ongoing. He reiterated the need for additional team members to assist with spiritual formation matters.

## **Care and Outreach Team**

Peggy West reported on the activities of the team. Plans are underway for a potluck dinner in November and Advent Chili and Caroling in December. Appreciation was expressed to the team for the reception provided following the memorial service for Jodie Kim Geradine. A concern was raised about staffing requirement for childcare provided on Sunday mornings. This concern was referred to the personnel team for follow-up.

## **Presbyterian Women**

Janet Fixel reported that all circles were meeting regularly and that PW was doing well.

## **Preschool Report**

Elder, John Hightower reported that signing of an operating agreement between the preschool and the church was imminent and that ongoing work on securing independent insurance for the preschool continued.

## **Next Session Meeting**

The next stated session meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2024 at 12:30pm.

## **Prayer Concerns, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment**

The meeting was closed in prayer by Norma Meier at 3:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Corzine, Clerk of the Session