

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, Peggy West, Donna Barber, Carolyn Bradley, Debbie Gibson, Patrick Kennedy, Sue Safford, Jane Atkinson, Dan Bruno, Janet Fixel, Greg Riccardi, Absent with notice was Martha Kutter and Norma Meier. Also present was Designated Pastor and Moderator, Glenn Hodges, and treasurer, Don Winstead.

The moderator called the meeting to order with prayer at 12:30pm.

The agenda as presented by the Clerk and was adopted without objection. A motion was heard and seconded that the minutes of the August meeting be approved, they were approved without objection.

Designated Pastor's Report

The moderator informed the Session that the stewardship season was upon us and that planning of stewardship committee needed to begin. Elder, Norma Meier had previously indicated that she intends to serve as stewardship committee chair. It was determined that additional volunteers were needed, and that a theme needed to be adopted. The moderator indicated that he would organize a meeting of the stewardship committee and return to the session with an update on progress.

The moderator gave an update on Lee Earl Daniels. The moderator indicated that following the August meeting, Pierce Withers approached Mr. Daniels and informed him he could no longer reside on the front porch of the church, a discussion about providing assistance ensued and arrangements for a bus ticket were discussed. Several days later it became clear that Mr. Daniels and others were still residing on the front porch. A group was gathered which included Therea Heiker, Pierce Withers and active elder, Debbie Gibson. During this meeting it was reiterated that residing on the porch could no longer be allowed and that, if needed, law enforcement would be contacted. Upon hearing this, Mr. Daniels quickly vacated the porch and further discussion became impossible with him.

Mr. Withers contact the Tallahassee Police Department, and a trespass notice for the church porch was enacted. The police advised that a trespass sign should be placed on the porch. The moderator and some elders expressed concern about the placement of the trespassing in a location that is meant to be welcoming. Further discussion ensued regarding placing additional security measures or structures in place on the front porch. A motion was heard that a feasibility study be requested from the property team for additional barriers to be placed on the front porch. The motion was seconded and passed with 5 elders opposing the motion.

The moderator provided an update regarding the need for a preschool board member. He announced that Jane Atkinson had agreed to serve on the preschool board when John Hightower rolls of the session in December.

An update on liability insurance for the preschool along with an operating agreement between the preschool and the church, was given by Mr. Hightower. The longer term goal is for the preschool to acquire independent liability insurance. The shorter term goal is for the church and preschool to sign a mutually agreed upon operating agreement. Mr. Hightower indicated that completion of this agreement was imminent.

The moderator indicated the need to form a church nominating committee that meets the requirements of the Book of Order. These requirements indicate that the committee must include at least three individuals and must have a majority of members not on the current Session. Acting session members Peggy West, Peggy Cleveland, and Chris Corzine (if needed) agreed to serve on a nominating committee, and additional members would be sought from the congregation.

The moderator brought up concerns that he had heard about the use of the sanctuary for the Candlelight concert events. Elders discussed the concerns concluding that hosting the Candlelight Series was consistent with the values and mission of the church and that funds received for those concerts were consistent with the Session's intention to explore options to monetize the church's facilities to bolster the church budget.

A motion was heard that an additional Candlelight concert be approved for mid-December 2024. The motion was seconded and was approved without objection.

Financial Reports

The Treasurer provided the following written report:

In August, receipts were significantly higher than in July and were also significantly higher than receipts in August 2023. Cumulative income exceeds the total income for the first eight months of last year by over \$100 thousand. Cumulative expenditures remain slightly below last year, and for the first time since April, August income exceeded expenditures.

Our ending cash balance was \$204,554, which is up from the July balance of \$182,356. Pledges and other income were \$57,813. Cumulative income for the year has been \$420,168 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 September 9 represents about 87% of total pledges!

Expenditures in July were \$35,628. Cumulative expenditures for the year have been \$298,856 not including project-related expenditures. Overall, cumulative net income minus operating expenditures results in a net operating surplus of \$122,312. 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 \$4.02 million not counting the Vaughn Loan Fund balance of \$282,669.

Recommendation for Session Action: There is a designated giving account for "Refugee" with a balance of \$661.56. This appears to be a residual balance from a prior activity and has been shown on the Balance Sheet since January 2023 or earlier.

It is recommended that this balance be made available to the Compassion and Social Justice Team for support of needs in the refugee community as they determine appropriate.

A motion to receive the financial report was heard and approved without objection. The moderator, and the session expressed gratitude to both the treasurer and the financial administrator for the clarity and helpfulness of the financial reporting they provide.

The session approved the recommended session action without objection. Designating \$661.56 previously noted "Refugee" be made available to the Compassion and Social Justice Ministry Team for support of the needs in the refugee community as appropriate.

Additional discussion was heard about the ways in which the endowment fund can be used was heard. A discussion about requests received from U-Kirk and Dogwood Acres resulted in the Session deciding to refer those two requests to the Budget and Finance Team for consideration.

Ministry Team Report

The worship team reported no issues for discussion.

Personnel Team Report

Donna Barber of the personnel team indicated that they would likely have items for the next meeting, but had no items at this time.

Spiritual Formation Team

It was reported that adult classes had begun that morning and were going well. Additional volunteers and program ideas are needed specifically for the inquirers class.

Care and Outreach Team

Peggy West, reported that picnic plans are well underway for the church picnic set to occur the following Sunday.

Compassion and Social Justice Team

Debbie Gibson, reported that the church now has an association with Goodwill of the Big Bend wherein donations given (designated as being on behalf of FPC Tallahassee) would be used to accrue Goodwill vouchers that the pastor could give out to those in need. It was also reported that CAJM volunteers from FPC are still needed.

Property Team

Donna Barber, of the property team reported that it continued to work on a number of issues including planning for replacement of some flooring and carpeting, ongoing assessment of the steeple, and ongoing assessment of the needs of the aging sanctuary air conditioning systems.

Presbyterian Women

Janet Fixel reported that the PW fall gathering had been a great success with 55-60 attendees including new members who are excited about the upcoming program year of the Presbyterian Women.

Preschool Report

Elder, John Hightower reported on ongoing work to improve legal separation between the church and the preschool as separate entities. This work involved drafting of an operating agreement between the two entities, which would be signed soon.

Ukirk

Patrick Kennedy reported on the successful launch of fall activities at U-kirk. He said the kick-off events were well attended, that the coffee shop has become profitable, and that overall things are going well at U-kirk. Mr. Kennedy did note that the church held two slots on the U-kirk board, and one was still vacant. It was proposed that a newsletter article be placed seeking volunteers for this position.

Next Session Meeting

The next stated session meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2024 at 12:30pm.

Prayer Concerns, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment

The meeting was closed in prayer by Peggy West at 2:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Corzine, Clerk of the Session