**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

**Stated Session Meeting (In-Person and Zoom)**

**September 17, 2023**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

**Members Present:** Stephanie Sorge, Moderator; Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session; Rick Comstock; Mark Dewey; Mark Facknitz; Kandy Grant; Virginia Healy; Nancy Hopkins-Garriss; Mary Lou McMillin; Rick Orem; Susie Phend; and Patti Warner.

**Excused/Absent**: Jason Brown and Dane Byers. Approved. A quorum was present.

**Call to Order:** Stephanie called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

**Opening Devotion**: Mary Lou led a devotion and meditation based on divine love as shared in Psalm 147. She closed with prayer.

**Sharing Joys and Concerns:** Session members shared prayer concerns and joys for members and friends of the Trinity congregation, and Stephanie led a moment of prayer.

**Consent Agenda**: The docket and the minutes from the August 20, 2023 Stated Session Meeting were approved.

**Clerk’s Report:**

1. Communion was observed during online and in-person worship on Sunday, September 3, as previously approved.
2. Karen Leigh and Ann and John Speer reaffirmed their baptism vows and were welcomed by the congregation during worship today.
3. Linda attended an outstanding church safety presentation this afternoon at Massanutten Presbyterian Church. The program identified the importance of conducting a church safety assessment and the many strategies that would increase our safety. This program will be repeated on Tuesday, September 26, at 7pm at Massanutten., and Linda strongly encouraged all Session members to attend at that time. She will share the registration information when it is received.
4. Linda shared recently received thank you notes.

**Pastor’s Report:**

For Action:

1. Ushering/Greeting responsibilities currently fall under House Steward guidelines - with House Stewards either serving as or securing Ushers/Greeters as necessary. After discussion, it was decided to continue this policy, with special attention to monitoring the number of print bulletins available each week.
2. The Harvest Team is planning an ice cream social from 2-4pm at Sunnyside on Sunday, October 15, hosted by Andy and Frances Sale. After discussion, we voted to hold our in-person October Session meeting at Sunnyside, directly after the ice cream social. Linda will check on reserving a room for our meeting.

For Information:

1. It’s been a busy month for personnel issues! We’re really grateful that Kim Shank will be joining us starting tomorrow. As a reminder, her hours are reduced from what Gwen had been working, and there will be a steeper learning curve as she’s brand new coming into the Trinity community. Stephanie will also have a more active supervisory role working with her, so the support of the Pastoral Care Team and all members is especially appreciated in the transition!
2. Stephanie has been invited to participate in a small gathering/consultation of clergy in Fort Worth in October that will bring together Gen X and Millennial-aged clergy identified as “creative leaders who have demonstrated leadership in ministry settings… [including] markers the Lilly Endowment has identified as key to a thriving congregation.” Stephanie will plan to fly out on Tuesday, October 17 and return on Friday, October 20.
3. Stephanie attended most of the Synod sessions from Sunday-Tuesday of this past week, focusing on the current state and future of congregational leadership and ministry. The focus was particularly on Black congregational leaders and congregations, but the statistics shared are really applicable across the board in many ways.
4. Victoria will be on vacation the last week of September, so any announcements for slides, weekly emails, or the Nous need to be submitted to her this week

For Information:

1. Other information items are contained in the Pastor’s Report on the Session website.

Upcoming Dates:

1. 2023 Vacation (subject to change) - March 10-18, June 26-July 2, July 24-30, 1 week TBD
2. 2023 Continuing Education - May 8-14, June 9-16
3. Clergy Consultation - October 17-20

**We Celebrate Both the Present and Our Vision for the Future**

Misconduct Policy Task Force

No report

**Marks Groups and House Churches**

Reaching Out Kim S

No report

Sanctuary Rick Orem

For Action:

1. Sanctuary presented its 2023 house church evaluation for review. Approved, with appreciation for the group’s excellent dedication to its mission this year.

Hearts and Hands Linda

1. The group has completed and shared several shawls and held a shawl blessing during worship on Closing Sunday.

Backpack Virginia.

No report

Centering Space Mary Lou

 No report

Clothes Closet Susie

1. Two Trinity groups have committed to coming to help out on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings. First Baptist and Muhlenberg Lutheran continue to volunteer on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Clothes Closet switchover day is scheduled for September 23rd from 9-12.

Guns to Gardens: Susie

1. An energetic and enthusiastic G2G group continues to meet with the sub-group teams. The following is a summary of current plans for its October 22 event. More detailed information can be found in the G2G report on the Session website.

Worship Team – The event will begin with worship in the Trinity sanctuary led by members of the G2G group from the four involved churches.  The service will not be streamed online, but may be filmed and recorded. It will conclude with a silent walk to the dismantling area behind the church where there will be prayers and later a closing.

Dismantling and Art Team – We now have eight firearms that will have already been inspected by the Harrisonburg Police Department to clear them of any ammunition and to check serial numbers.   The police are very supportive of this event and will have a “silent” presence on the day of the event.

The dismantling area will be in the parking spaces at the end of the paved parking lot next to the kitchen entrance.  Tents have been secured in case of mild inclement weather.

Because it is expected that this work is time consuming, Larry Martin will already have some examples of his prior work to display and may begin work early on one gun that is already dismantled.   The other safely surrendered firearms will be dismantled after the worshippers and participants have come to the dismantling area, and the volunteers and equipment will be blessed in prayer. All of the dismantling may not be finished until after the event.  The fashioning of the metal into tools or art work may involve church members and additional time.

Parking will be available in the usual area of the upper lot but only on the left side near the playground in the lower part of the lot.   If needed, parking will be directed to the front lawn.

Publicity and Allies Team -   a general press release will be provided to the media on October 21 on the condition it not be used until after the event.    The Team will work to engage the media one-on-one with an invitation to come to the event and to agree that news in the media will not be published/shown until after the event.  Stephanie Sorge will be listed as the primary contact person for the media.

Valley Interfaith Action Nancy / Rick

1. Three Trinity persons have signed up so far for a VIA Assembly on Thursday; we hope to have five attend this meeting. There will be a candidates’ forum at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren on October 26th.

**Seasonal Teams**

Harvest Virginia

1. A number of activities are scheduled during the Harvest Season:

September 16 - Hospitality Tent at Shenandoah Valley Pride

September 24 - Potluck after Calling Sunday worship

October 1 - Peace and Global Witness Offering

October 4 - Blessing of the Animals service with other local congregations

October 15 - Sunnyside Ice Cream Gathering from 2-4 pm in the Highlands conference room

October 21 - Artists for Ukraine art show and fundraiser

October 22 - Guns to Gardens event

October 27 - Family movie night

October 29 - Church retreat at Massanetta Springs.

ACE: Mark D.

For Action:

1. The team requested approval of Open Doors as the recipient for gifts in lieu of poinsettias, as well as receiving donations of needed items under the Christmas tree. Approved.

**Standing Teams**

Benevolences Kandy

No report

Building and Grounds

For Information:

1. The team has hired Shannon Combs to clean weekly through November. Her rate is $150 per week. Hopefully, Carroll Shifflett will be able to resume cleaning in December.

Finance Team Linda

For Action:

1. Endowment Fund Policy – The Finance Team requested approval of the draft Endowment Funds Policy, dated 9-13-23, which outlines the scriptural foundation; purpose; and guidelines for establishing, managing, and disbursing both general endowment and designated endowment funds for Trinity Presbyterian Church. This policy is intended to ensure that the church will be a good steward and invest and use its resources, consistent with PCUSA ethical guidelines, to support future missions, not the operations, of the church. This policy does not address capital reserve funds for meeting major ongoing or emergency expenses, such as equipment maintenance/replacement or other unexpected exigencies, that are not included in the annual budget. The team plans to meet with Edward Jones, our financial management company, to address the management of endowment funds, with the possibility of higher risk investments that could provide 6-8% in annual income. After discussion, the vote was tabled until the November Session meeting.

For Information:

1. The Operating Budget Report shows that we had a YTD income of $353,553 as of the end of August – which is 109% of the income anticipated for this time of the year. These figures include $189,228 in general income (pledges, loose offering, building use). We have also received $164,325 in other income (which includes bequest from Bolling Nalle). Our actual YTD expenses were $ 251,567 – which is 122% of our anticipated YTD expense.
2. The Fund Activity Report shows Receipts of YTD $36,647, Transfer in of previous carry-over monies of $48,917, and Disbursements of $42,901. Please check your specific accounts for any extra funds you have received or spent this year!
3. Fund raising for rain gear for Haresh’s Kids has raised a total of $1,000. We will wire the funds to Haresh as soon as possible.
4. We met with Larry Barber to review the draft updated position description and time/salary recommendations for Victoria. See the Personnel Committee report above for details.
5. We will have an article on the stewardship campaign for the October Nous. Stewardship materials will be distributed to those attending the congregational retreat on October 29 and mailed to others by November 5. Dedication Sunday will be November 12. We are also checking on the possibility of adding Venmo and PayPal as options for online giving.
6. Please contact the Finance Team with preliminary 2024 budget requests by November 1. Also review any remaining budget amounts for 2023 and process any expenditures as appropriate before the end of December.

Matthew 25 Nancy

 No report

Nominating Jason

1. Contacting of potential elders for the Class of 2026 is continuing.

Outreach Mark D.

 No report

Personnel Susie

For Action:

1. The Personnel Team met on September 6th at 5:30 pm to interview Kimberly Shank for the Pastoral Care Associate position at Trinity. They shared the revised job description and the nature of the job at Trinity. The Personnel Team unanimously decided to put forth the following motion electronically:

“The Personnel Team would like to recommend to the Session that the position of Pastoral Care Associate (Part-Time) be offered to Kimberly Shank. The start date would be determined by Stephanie in consultation with Kimberly. The terms of the contract are attached to the job description presented to the Session.” The Session voted electronically and approved this motion.

Kim will begin on September 18th. She will start by meeting with house church and marks groups to get to know people in those settings and will be meeting with Stephanie and the Pastoral Care Team to discern visitation needs and schedule.

1. Victoria has been looking for additional part-time work that she could add to her hours at Trinity to help make up the difference in salary and benefits needed by her family, and a church in Richmond has recently made her an offer for a mostly remote job, requiring her to come in one day a week. While Victoria would love to continue working with us in some capacity, that would have to change the way her job is currently structured. Personnel will have to discuss next steps, but Victoria is willing to continue working with us four days a week as of October 2, until we figure out those next steps. She’ll continue to keep things running smoothly in the transition.

Pastoral Care Patti

No report

Presbytery Meetings: Kandy

1. The Presbytery meeting was held on Tuesday, August 22, over Zoom. Nancy served as our Commissioned Ruling Elder and provided a summary of the meeting.
2. The next Presbytery meeting will be held in person at Opequon Presbyterian Church in Winchester on November 4. Mary Lou was elected to be our Commissioned Ruling Elder, and Mark F. will be the alternate.

Next Meeting: Sunday, October 15, 4pm. Nancy will have the devotional.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 6:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session Stephanie Sorge, Moderator

Attachments:

Pastoral Care Associate (Part-Time) Position Description

Pastoral Care Associate (Part-Time) Contract