**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

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

**February 18, 2024**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

**Members Present:** Stephanie Sorge, Moderator; Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session; Jason Brown; Dane Byers; David Carothers; Rick Comstock; Virginia Healy; Amy Lemmons; Mary Lou McMillin; Ginnie Reinhold; Bob Schminkey; and Kim Shank, Associate for Pastoral Care.

**Also Present:** Greg Sachs, who wishes to join Trinity during Order of the Day.

**Excused/Absent**: Mark Dewey; Kandy Grant and Susie Phend. Approved. A quorum was present.

**Call to Order:** Stephanie called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

**Opening Devotion**: David led a musical devotion based on the life of Mary Lou Williams, who did not receive deserved recognition during her musical career. He played a song from Mary Lou’s Mass, “Peace I Leave with You” and closed with prayer.

**Sharing Joys and Concerns:** Stephanie and Session members shared prayer concerns and joys for members and friends of the Trinity congregation. Other pastoral concern items are contained in the Pastor’s Report on the Session website. Stephanie led a moment of prayer.

**Consent Agenda**: Today’s docket, the minutes from the Stated Session Meeting on January 27, 2024 (with minor edits), the Annual Congregation and Corporation Meeting on January 28, 2024, and the excused absences from today’s meeting were approved.

**Order of the Day**

Greg Sachs shared his desire to become a member of Trinity. He was born in Harrisonburg and was initially baptized at Muhlenberg Lutheran Church. He went to Eastern Mennonite University and attended Park View Mennonite Church for 20 years. He was attracted to Trinity because of its commitment to being a Matthew 25 church. He has three children -Isaac, Micah, and Sylvia. Greg worked in instructional technology and building automations at EMU and now works at Daikin in Verona. Session members said that Greg has been a joy to have here at Trinity and already is very active. Dane made, and Amy seconded, a motion to receive Greg into membership. Approved. He will join by reaffirmation of faith during worship on Sunday, February 25. Mary will be the Session representative.

**Clerk’s Report:**

1. Communion was observed during online and in-person worship on Sunday, February 4, as previously approved. Rev. Bill Reinhold and Ginnie Reinhold served communion as an extension of the table to one person at Bridgewater Retirement Community.
2. Long-time member and Ruling Elder Patricia Churchman passed away on Thursday, February 8. There will be a memorial service at Trinity on Saturday, March 23, at 2pm.

**Pastoral Care Associate’s Report**

For Information

1. Kim has continued with pastoral care visits at church and in hospitals, homes, and various retirement communities.
2. Kim noted that a future project will be tackling the updating of church rolls.

**Pastor’s Report:**

For Discussion and/or Action:

1. Jessi and Jason would like to have Galen baptized during worship on April 14. Dane made, and Virginia seconded, a motion to approve Galen’s baptism. Approved. Ginnie will serve as Galen’s sponsor, and there will be a lunch after worship that day.
2. Stephanie thanked everyone for meeting with the Presbyterian Foundation representatives recently. This was in response to a conversation we had back in the fall as we recognized the need to learn more together about planned giving, and continue our learning and discussion around endowments. She asked Session to consider the question: “As we contemplate the establishment of an endowment, what else do you need to know, or what do you need to discuss?” [See Finance Team report below.]
3. At the Session retreat, there were “Animal Farm” questions posted around the room. Stephanie suggested we might pick one question each month and spend some time discussing everyone’s responses to it.
4. Stephanie shared several suggestions to help us make the most of our two-hour Session meetings each month. Our time together should include sharing joys and concerns, devotions, and discerning and discussing the issues facing the Session and the church. She suggested submitting and reviewing written reports in advance – unless “no report” is the report – so that meetings can focus on discussion/action items. Also, adhering to the suggested times on the agenda to help keep us cognizant of time and relative business remaining, and developing an awareness of the balance of voices in the rooms so that all have the opportunity to share comments.

For Information:

1. Kelsea and Victoria continue working together on the new staff responsibilities and office hours. Kelsea has been learning more and adding more to her regular work. She will continue using the office email address, but there is a new address for Victoria - [communications@trinitypresbyterianharrisonburg.org](mailto:communications@trinitypresbyterianharrisonburg.org) (victoria@ will also work). Anything can still be sent to the main office email address, but if you want to email Victoria directly, you can use the other. For the most part, website updates, email announcements, and items for the Nous go to Victoria, and everything else goes to Kelsea. They have recently been going through the website and making updates where needed, but there are many pages; if anyone comes across old information or things that should be changed, please let either of them know.
2. Stephanie has completed two learning webinars - one on supervision from a coaching approach, and the other on storytelling with Christen Kinard.

Calendar Dates:

1. 2024 Vacation (subject to change) - TBD July 22-28, November 22-30
2. 2024 Continuing Education - TBD, though currently planning for May 6-12 for a conference in Montreat.
3. General Assembly - June 25-July 5 (including online committee meetings and in-person everything else)

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

Misconduct Policy Task Force Nancy

1. Nancy, Bob, and Dave are now members of this task force.

Grounds Strategic Plan Task Force

1. The task force will meet this Thursday, February 22, at Mary Lou’s home. Members include Larry Brown, Dane Byers, Malcolm Cameron, Rick Comstock, Mark Facknitz, Stephanie Gardner, Kathy Gillette, Judy LePera, Mary Lou McMillin, Greg Sachs, and Stephanie Sorge.

**Marks Groups and House Churches**

Reaching Out Kim

1. Reaching Out has lost a few members but is continuing to meet regularly. They are pleased Joyce Lyon has been able to attend a few times.

Sanctuary Ginnie

1. Sanctuary is studying materials on Celtic Spirituality for nurture. Membrs are providing good support for each other. Hedy Reese continues working with Sanctuary’s Honduran mother and daughter.

Backpack Dane.

1. The backpack programs are participating in an annual fundraiser associated with Martin’s. They are preparing 102 food bags a week. Trinity’s pancake dinner raised $275 for the two programs.

Centering Space Mary Lou

1. Contemplation

* A new nurture study – *Flourishing on the Edge of Faith* (Lord’s Prayer) –will be held on Tuesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 via Zoom, beginning on March 26.
* A Lenten labyrinth walk and a new Good Friday meditation walk have been developed.

1. Action

* Poverty Study – several resources are being developed out of the Denomination-wide study. They plan to use these to provide a study at Trinity…perhaps during Pentecost season.

1. Renewal

* Mark Dewey’s Camino de Santiago trip is currently scheduled for April 2-17, 2024.
* Robin Atwood will continue to offer the yoga class with new 6-week sessions running March 5-April 9 and then April 23-May 28.

1. Expression

* There is a full schedule of Second Saturday Expression programming and a new way to register and pay for these classes. We are offering the opportunity to pay for our yoga classes through [www.givebutter.com](http://www.givebutter.com) too. [See Centering Sace report on Session website for additional details.]

1. Looking Ahead: The possibility of a “gallery walk” to share what we have been doing.

Clothes Closet Susie

1. While Kathy Gillette is continuing with radiation treatment, her sister Martha Kleckner and Janet Slough have been doing a wonderful job filling in as “co-chairs.” Their Wednesday night rotations have been going well.

Hearts and Hands Linda

No report

Turning Tables Kim

No report

Valley Interfaith Action Rick

1. Bob will be the new Session liaison to VIA.

**Seasonal Teams**

ACE: Mark D.

1. The ACE team has concluded a successful season and is grateful for the congregation’s participation and support.

Lent/Easter Rick

1. The Bonhoeffer nurture study led by Mark Facknitz and Rick Comstock began today with 25 participants.
2. The team is planning to commission those going on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage with Mark Dewey during worship on Easter Sunday.

Pentecost Amy

1. The Pentecost Team will hold its first meeting on March 21.

**Standing Teams**

Finance Team Linda

For Information

1. Treasurer’s Report – The Operating Budget Report shows that we had a total general income of $33,088 as of the end of January 2024 – which is 151% of the general income anticipated year-to-date. This figure includes pledges, loose offering, and building use.  We also received $123,777 in other income, which includes bequests and undesignated memorials that are not part of the operating budget.  Our actual expenses were $21,762 – which is 85% of our anticipated year-to-date expense.  We will provide a summarized financial report, including our Edward Jones investments, quarterly in the Nous.

The Fund Activity Report shows January 2024 Receipts of $2,860.83 and no Disbursements. With a carry-over of $48,288.41 from 2023, there is a current balance of $51,149.24. Note that these are designated gifts, and typically any relevant expenditures will be paid out from the operating budget before coming out of the corresponding special fund accounts.

Our December 2023 balance of Edward Jones Investments was $360,909.87 and has remained stable at the end of January 2024.

1. Mark Facknitz will serve as the Finance Team liaison to the 2024 Seasonal Teams. He will provide each team with information about the budget amounts available to them and be available for any questions they might have.
2. Finance Team members attended the planned giving program presented by the Presbyterian Foundation on February 4. The team is continuing to review and revise the draft endowment policy guidelines and should have them available for the March Session meeting.

For Action

1. Eastern Mennonite University is sponsoring a church matching grant program for 2024-2025, which would provide students with up to $1,000 in tuition assistance to match funds provided by their church. Should Kim Shank qualify for this grant and wish to participate, the Finance Team requests permission to provide up to $1,000 from our scholarship funds for this purpose – tentatively $500 from the Parish Nurse Fund and $500 from the Skip Whitmore Fund. The deadline for churches to indicate their commitment is March 1. Mary Lou made, and Amy seconded, a motion to approve this request. Approved.
2. GiveSolar will provide solar panels for non-profit groups. Elly Swecker and Mark Facknitz requested $1,000 from designated funds for environmental causes given in memory of Pat Churchman and Mary Louise Fisher to support this initiative. Since this amount is not included in our regular budget, Dane moved, and Rick seconded, a motion to approve this expense. Approved. It was noted that Trinity has just received an additional $5,000 donation in memory of Mary Louise Fisher that will help offset this expense.
3. Dane made, and Rick seconded, a motion to use $500 from Loaves and Fishes to help with Hamitha’s medical issues. Approved. Bob and Kim indicated interest in exploring grant possibilities for helping Haresh and Hamitha with their work with the orphans they are serving. It was also suggested that Trinity might want to consider a line item for this in next year’s budget.

Nominating Jason

1. Stephanie Gardner, Mary Colleen Knapp, and Lauren Strawderman were elected to the Nominating Committee during the congregational meeting on January 28. They join Jason and David Carothers, who were elected from the Session during its January 27 retreat.

Outreach Mark D.

No report

Personnel Susie

No report

Pastoral Care Mary Lou

1. Persons serving on the Pastoral Care Team this year include: Mary Lou, Kim, Jason Brown, Jessi Brown, Virginia Healy, Ann Radloff, Ginnie Reinhold, Steve Rinehart, Vicky Rinehart, and Janet Slough.

Matthew 25 Nancy

No report

Benevolences Kandy

No report

Building and Grounds Dane

For Information:

1. The kitchen oven takes longer to heat to temperature; users should wait an additional 15 minutes after the unit signals it is fully heated and ready to use.
2. The dishwasher does not seem to be working properly. The cost to replace the timing mechanism is approximately $2,300 ($1,610 for the part, installation and the assessment is another $690). A new commercial unit costs between $7,000-$10,000. Building and Grounds recommends looking into a sanitizer (similar to the one used by Massanutten Presbyterian Church) instead, but also to table any action to see if the dishwasher it is still functioning.
3. Building and Grounds recommends the Session consider the landscaping outside and around church. This landscaping has been there for nearly 20 years. Improving our Memorial Garden may also be timely. The Session may elect to wait for a better time to expend resources for this project, although the availability of labor may be an issue. Dane, Kathy Gillette, Frances Sale, and Stephanie will look at the grounds and the memorial garden for recommendations. The Session may also wish to combine this project with the work of the Grounds Strategic Plan Task Force. [See detailed Building and Grounds report on the Session website.]
4. Painting and maintenance work is again needed around the area of the Commons’ entrance. This was done 4-5 years ago but the area rarely gets sun and work on it deteriorates quickly. Dane will bring estimates to the Session and schedule this work for the spring.
5. Window cleaning occurred this month by Garry Saurett. Despite prior arrangements, he did not return two seasons ago. He then contacted Dane to clean again. During the middle of his work, he called to let us know his rates had gone up to $980 for the cleaning of all the windows inside. This amount was significantly above what he’d charged before. We paid him but the team’s recommendation at this time is to consider other providers as well or, alternatively, to schedule spring and fall workdays and do them ourselves. Dane will get estimates and recommend action next month.
6. Orkin was spraying every month. It has been decided to have them come twice a year instead. This will reduce our costs by over $1000 for the year.

Presbytery Meeting: February 27 on Zoom, 9:30am - Bob Schminkey, commissioner, Ginnie Reinhold, alternate. Note - anyone may attend, but registration is required to get the link (see Stephanie’s previous email).

Processing the Meeting

Much appreciation was expressed for Stephanie’s skillful herding of the cats.!

Next Meeting: Sunday, March 17, 4-6pm, in person. Bob Schminkey will have the devotional.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session Stephanie Sorge, Moderator