**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

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

**June 16, 2024**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

**Members Present:** Stephanie Sorge, Moderator; Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session; Jason Brown; David Carothers; Mark Dewey; Kandy Grant; Virginia Healy; Amy Lemmons; Mary Lou McMillin; Susie Phend; Bob Schminkey; and Ginnie Reinhold.

**Excused/Absent**: Dane Byers; Rick Comstock; and Kim Shank, Associate for Pastoral Care. Approved. A quorum was present.

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

**Opening Devotion**: Mark shared a devotion based on “whose song is it to sing”? He referred to verse 2 of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” and how it relates to I/We. He described being one foot in the “already” and one foot in the “not yet”. He 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 on the Session website. Stephanie led a moment of prayer.

**Consent Agenda**: Today’s docket, the minutes from the Stated Session Meeting on May 19, 2024, and the excused absences from today’s meeting were approved.

**Clerk’s Report:**

1. Communion was observed during online and in-person worship on Sunday, June 2, 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. A service celebrating Joyce Lyon’s life was held at Trinity on Saturday, May 25, at 4pm.
3. Linda shared a thank you note from Mark Dewey expressing gratitude for supporting him in his journey toward ordination through the Skip Whitmore Scholarship.

**Finance Team:**  Linda

For Information and Discussion

1. The Operating Budget Report shows that we had a total general income of $152,792.32 as of the end of May 2024 – which is 139% of the general income anticipated year-to-date. This figure includes pledges, loose offering, and building use.  Our actual expenses were $130,111 – which is 101% of our anticipated year-to-date expense. The Fund Activity Report shows a current balance of $54,448.
2. Our May 2024 Edward Jones Investments balance was $534,614.91. Approximately $422,292.70 of this amount reflects our capital reserves and the current status of two bequests from Bolling Nalle and Vivian Hevener. A total of $112,327.21 reflects monies invested in the music, parish nurse, garden, and Skip Whitmore funds.

In addition, the account with Raymond James as part of the bequest from Vivian Hevener has a balance of $105,379.09 as of May 31.

1. Balance Sheet – Nancy, Rick, Jeannie, and Linda met with Janet Morris on Saturday, June 15, to review her recommendations for the next steps in developing a balance sheet. The work continues, with hopes of providing a revised reporting system by the July Session meeting.
2. Vanco Online – Linda and Kelsea are continuing to attend Vanco seminars, work on updating the online program and explore the use of QR codes to provide direct access to specific giving opportunities. A new option for undesignated gifts has been added. Please continue to review the website and give any suggestions to Linda.
3. Gift and Endowment Policy – After extended discussion, we identified three components for our ongoing consideration – financial, theological, and procedural, leading to deep congregational discernment and eventual action. We agreed that we need some external guidance, especially on the role of the Finance Team, in the path forward. We will check with Stephanie re possible contacts for this next step.
4. Quarterly Giving Statement – We agreed to distribute the quarterly giving statement early in July, once June reports are posted.

For Action:

1. Trinity Scholarships – We anticipate a possible seven scholarship applications this year, in addition to the $1,000 that Session has already approved for Kim’s scholarship match at EMU. After discussion, we voted to recommend that Session approve an increase in the scholarship amount from $800 to $1,000 for the coming year. Individual scholarships would be approved electronically by the Finance Team after the June 30 application deadline. Approved.

We will talk with Kathy Sutphin before next year’s scholarship awards to see if she will support revising the Skip Whitmore financial guidelines to be consistent with our new endowment policy guidelines. It has also been suggested that we might want to change the application deadline to June 15 next year to be more in line with college financial aid deadlines.

1. Habitat Donation Request – The team requested that Trinity commit to three tables at the Habitat annual banquet in September at the increased price of $500/table. There is $500 in our budget. We would ask each person registering for the banquet to contribute $50 to Trinity with a notation of Habitat in the memo line of their check, and we also would add that option in Vanco Online on our website through September. Approved.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, July 11, 6:30 over Zoom.

**Pastoral Care Associate’s Report**

For Information

Kim expressed gratitude for Trinity’s support as she finished her semester and left for Spain in May. In June, her hours increased to 20-25 hours a week. For the summer, her week breaks down as follows:

Attending Sunday worship most weeks, back-up for Joanie whenever Nancy isn't available, non-emergency visits Sunday afternoons and all day on Mondays. Tuesdays off. Wednesday afternoons 1-6 Pastoral Counseling or Spiritual Direction for Trinity members at the church house. Kim is also available to Trinity members by phone or email the rest of the week, and does urgent visits as they arise. She hopes to visit several of the house churches and marks groups that meet in the evening over the summer.

**Pastor’s Report:**

For Discussion and/or Action:

1. Animal Farm question from the Session retreat in January: What is the elephant in the room that needs to be acknowledged and discussed? Responses during the retreat included:
   * are we ready to change?
   * younger people making in-depth commitment of time
   * our future? our money?
   * use of the property suggestion
   * many of our volunteers have aged out of being able to do what they used to
   * how do we attract families with young children or young adults?
   * financing solutions
   * aging congregation
   * less involvement in missions
   * few children
   * declining % of budget that goes to mission
   * how do we attract younger families?

Today’s discussion focused on children. Topics included the activities and the need for more volunteers (including training/background checks) for the young children during Sunday worship; families not being able to stay after church for nurture; questions about curriculum for children; Teresa’s inventory sent out to all Session members for a General Assembly grant application; how to use our results even if don’t get grant. It was noted that children who come to church feel welcomed, loved, supported, part of a family.

Next month’s Animal Farm Question: Dinosaurs: what is extinct or needs to die in order to move forward?

1. From the Presbytery Meeting: Currently, there is only one ordained woman pastor serving a church in our partner Illubabor Bethel Synod. This academic year, Shenandoah Presbytery has partnered with IBS to sponsor six women in the first year of programs in Terfa Jarso Seminary that will train them as pastors. Upon completion (three or four years), each may be ordained as a pastor. For the 2024-2025 school year, the full cost of tuition, room, and board at Terfa Jarso in Mettu is $1,000 per student. IBS has agreed to pay $500, and is asking Shenandoah to pay $500. The sending/calling congregation will cover any necessary travel and family support. In the fall of 2024, IBS plans to have an additional five candidates enter the seminary first-year class and is asking us to help support them also. This would make a total of eleven first- and second-year students at a cost to Shenandoah of $5,500 this year. Trinity’s church, group, or individual contributions should be sent to the Presbytery office, clearly marked for “Women’s Scholarships at IBS”. Any excess funds will be held for future years as Presbytery assumes it will be asked to support five new candidates next year.

Stephanie requested that we return the $200 Presbytery donation back to the Presbytery for female candidates in its Ethiopian ministry. This request was amended to increase the amount to $500, with $300 coming from the Skip Whitmore Fund. Amended request approved.

For Information:

1. Trinity will host a gathering with Keenan Rodgers from the Board of Pensions on Wednesday, June 19th, at 4:30pm.This will be open to the presbytery and will provide an opportunity to learn more about the changes in coverage proposed for 2025. Snacks will be provided, and it won’t conflict with Clothes Closet that evening.
2. Trinity was recognized as a “4 for 4” congregation, participating in all of the Special Offerings of the PC (USA).
3. Mark Facknitz will be serving on the Harvest Team. Mary Lou volunteered to be the new convener for the Lent Seasonal Team.
4. A three-hour Boundary Training is now available online or in person. All teaching and ruling elders must complete this training every three years. The Zoom option is 6:30-9:30pm on July 9. There was discussion about holding a Trinity training in the fall on a Sunday afternoon after church or at the next elder retreat to include both current and incoming elders. A decision on this will be made later.
5. Kelsea and Victoria will have some days out of the office this month. Thanks to volunteers – Mary Lou, Teresa, and Judy LePera – who will be staffing the office on June 21, 24, and 25.

Calendar Dates:

1. 2024 Vacation (subject to change) - June 7-15, July 22-Aug. 4, November 22-30
2. 2024 Continuing Education - May 6-12 for a conference in Montreat and August 5-11 - Youth Mental Health First Aid training, watching videos from the Festival of Homiletics, and gathering with clergy friends for a short retreat
3. General Assembly - June 25-July 5 (including online committee meetings and in-person everything else)

**Present Ministries and Future Dreams**

**Task Forces**

Misconduct Policy Task Force Bob

1. Bob reported that he will be circulating some documents approved by COM to the task force for possible consideration by the Session.

Grounds for Hope Task Force Mary Lou

1. Norie Smith has joined the group to offer her expertise on pavement issues and help us discern how to address our concerns with the parking lot. She met with several of the group on June 9. A full report will be given to the whole group when we meet on July 8. Mark Facknitz has done research on a pavilion 20’ x36’ with electricity. The cost would be just under $50,000, excluding foundation. Full details will be available at our July meeting at 6:00pm at Mark Facknitz’ home.

**Marks Groups and House Churches**

Reaching Out Kim

No report

Sanctuary Ginnie

1. The group is working on a worship service for August.

Backpack Dane

1. Trinity has concluded another academic year of food distribution through Keister and Bluestone Elementary Schools. Tamara Grant and Lorie Lucas ordered food from Hope Distributing weekly. Delivery to the schools occurs on Wednesdays, and packing large paper bags of food is done on Wednesday (Bluestone) and Thursday (Keister). Bags are designed to provide nutritious and culturally helpful food stuffs for needy “ALICE” families. The estimation is that Trinity helped provide over 4,000 bags to these families this year. The program solicits financial support not only through our church, but also private donations from concerned people in our community. Job well done, church!

Centering Space Mary Lou

1. The second Saturday expression class with Liz Forney had five participants. We made Soul Collages. Ashley Isernhagen will lead the July event.
2. The Sunday morning Bible Study led by Mark Dewey will begin reading Paul on June 16 at 7:30am. The Epistle is yet to be decided.
3. We are supporting the David LaMotte event on June 24.
4. We have purchased art from David Krieder, with the proceeds going to support a peacemaking group going to Israel/Gaza. It is stunningly beautiful and is hanging in Centering Space. Take time to go see it!
5. We are planning a couple of dinner events to hear stories from those with first-hand experience in Israel/Gaza and/or have studied the area extensively.  Look for these dates!!
6. A new Yoga class will run from July 9-August 20, led by Robin Atwood,
7. A Sacred Threads Quilt Event will be held at the newly moved Quilt Museum on July 24.
8. Our next meeting is June 18 at 4:00pm.

Clothes Closet Susie

1. Groups are still consistently covering the Wednesday evenings, so we don’t have to ask for help often. Wednesday mornings are busy. We will be closed on July 3. We will need volunteers for the 5th Wednesday in July.
2. Kathy and Susie talked over some concerns recently and have decided to forgo the opening greeting. It is long, and most people have heard it before. It doesn’t feel very welcoming. Kathy is going to work on writing up something new.

Hearts and Hands Linda

1. The group will meet in person tomorrow evening at Trinity. We continue to share shawls and lap robes and appreciate that several persons have requested shawls for themselves or loved ones.

Turning Tables Kim

No report

Valley Interfaith Action Bob

1. VIA is having difficulty meeting with Board of Supervisors on the transportation project. A group calling itself "ACTION" is working on some other approaches.  On June 13, we gathered some leaders from the districts to work on plans to get the supervisors to hear from us.
2. VIA announced the launch of Valley Early Education Rei (VEER), VIA’s initiative to transform early childhood education and childcare in the Valley.  VEER brings together families, educators, and employers to help start and operate new, high quality childcare sites beginning here in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

**Seasonal Teams**

Pentecost Amy

1. The team is working on a hymn sing for an August worship service.

Harvest Virginia

No report

**Other Teams**

Benevolences Kandy

No report

Building and Grounds Dane

For Action:



1. Painting: There are two estimates for painting on the upper story to the back where the AC units are and towards the church office entrance. Dane has also asked for power washing the sidewalks in this area and on the northside of the Commons entrance outside the nursery.

* Galindez Painting’s estimate is $8700.
* Black Brothers Painting is $3880.

Motion: Accept Black Brothers offer. Painting may not occur till late summer, early fall. Approved.

For Information:

1. Landscaping adjacent to the Church: We’re still waiting on an estimate from Fine Earth. The committee chose to solicit an offer by Shreckhise of Weyers Cave; we’re still waiting for that.
2. Our Mower: Two summers ago, our mower’s left wheel motor went out. It was replaced, but the mower was not used a great deal last summer due to dry conditions. That part has failed again and may not be fixable. Replacing the mower would cost approximately $8,000. Alternatively, the church could elect to have the grass mowed professionally at a rate of approximately $3-4,000 per year. Our mowing volunteers are healthy, but aging 😊. Once Dane has more information, we should be prepared to make a decision. Dane expressed gratitude for Stuart’s gifts.
3. Parking lot: The Grounds’ Committee is looking into several options regarding the parking lot. Last month Larry Barber suggested filling cracks and resealing as an option. Please let Dave know if you’d want estimates from Superior Sealing and Golden Rule Services for comparison.
4. Deep Cleaning: Several congregants have noticed mildewy/moldy conditions in the Commons bathrooms. There also are a number of areas in the church, including the kitchen and nursery, that could use a thorough cleaning. This is above and beyond the scope of regular, weekly cleaning that Shannon does. Please consider whether you want Dane to have a cleaning company come in and do such a deep cleaning, which may cost upwards of $1,000. Susie mentioned four Ukrainian women from Village to Village, and she will share their information with Dane.

Matthew 25 Kandy

1. Mark and Kandy are working on a theology of stewardship.

Nominating Jason

No report

Outreach Mark D.

1. Susie Phend and Mark Dewey met on May 24 to talk about why people come to Trinity and why people turn away. They agreed that it might be useful to gather information from people who have started coming relatively recently and also from people who have stopped coming, if we can reach them. Questions we might ask, by email or otherwise, include:

* What first brought you to Trinity?
* What made you feel at home?
* What has made you feel included or not included?
* Were you looking for something you didn’t find?  Bible Study?  Choir?  Fellowship groups?
* Can you pinpoint something you heard or felt that turned you away?

As we consider reaching out to other people, we thought it best to look at the people already here. A cursory survey of people who often participate shows:

* 17 individuals or families under the age of 60
* 44 individuals or families aged 60 to 80
* 20 individuals or families aged over 80.

We also found that perhaps 30 people regularly participate in House Churches or Marks Groups, roughly one third of active members.

After discussion, it was suggested that the focus should be on individuals and families in their 50s and 60s, especially in our immediate community. Additional comments may be found in the Outreach report on the Session website.

Pastoral Care Mary Lou

1. Extending the table

* Bill and Ginnie Reinhold continue to bring Communion to several persons at the Bridgewater Retirement Community.
* The team is working on arranging extending the table to go to Sunnyside, as the Speers and the Painters have been less able to attend service.
* Kim would also like to arrange for a team to bring Communion to Bill Sanders and Susan Estep, as volunteers have availability.

1. General Pastoral Care

* The Pastoral Care Team organized the reception for Joyce’s funeral.
* Ginnie and Mary Lou will work with Linda on reviewing the church rolls.
* The team reviewed the Prayer List. Kim will check with several persons to see if they want to remain on the list.
* The team arranged to have cards signed for Mubarak and for Zack Striebig. A $25 Amazon gift card was included for each graduate.
* The team arranged a card shower for Bill Sanders. The cards were delivered, with balloons, on Bill’s 98th birthday. Bill was thrilled!

The team’s next meeting is July 1.

Personnel Susie

No report

Processing the Meeting

Members noted that good written reports were helpful in keeping meetings on time.

Next Meeting: Sunday, July 21, 4-6pm, in person. Jason. 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