**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

**Stated Session Meeting**

**March 19, 2023**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

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

**Absent/Excused**; Jason Brown, Approved. A quorum was present.

**Guests Present**: Rev. Ann Pettit and Rev. David Witt, to make presentation about Massanetta Springs’ *Building a Place for All* Campaign.

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

**Opening Devotion**: Rick C. led a devotion based on Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s essay on Meditation and then shared a prayer/poem from Bonhoeffer’s *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

**Sharing Joys and Concerns:**

Gwen and Stephanie shared prayer concerns and joys for members and friends of the Trinity congregation, and Stephanie led a moment of prayer.

**Massanetta Springs Presentation** Rev. Ann Pettit and Rev. David Witt made a presentation and shared a video describing Massanetta Springs’ 2022-2025 campaign, *Building a Place for All,* designed to improve lodging and other facilities. Ground-breaking is anticipated in 2024 and won’t interrupt ongoing programming. Half of the funds have already been raised. The campaign plan also includes a Challenge Goal. Ann and David described a variety of donor giving opportunities available for this project and answered questions from the group.

**Consent Agenda**: Approval of the docket and approval of the minutes from the February 19 Stated Session Meeting. Approved.

**Clerk’s Report:**

1. Communion was observed during online and in-person worship on Sunday, March 5, as previously approved. The Rev. Bill Reinhold and Ginny Reinhold also served communion as an extension of the table to one person at Bridgewater Retirement Community.
2. Linda noted that the 2022 Session minutes will be submitted for Presbytery review at a meeting on March 25 at Massanutten Presbyterian Church.
3. Linda also shared several thank you notes and communications that have been received since the last Session meeting.

**Pastoral Care Associate’s Report**:

1. Gwen made numerous pastoral care contacts using technology, as well as 18 in-person visits. She attended meetings of Our Community Place, Presbytery, the Pastoral Care Team, Session, Reaching Out House Church, Matthew 25, and Centering Space. She led the Ash Wednesday Service with Stephanie and Rick Comstock, as well as completing regular weekly planning activities. Gwen will be attending a retreat in WV from March 25-31.

**Pastor’s Report:**

For Discussion and Action:

1. As we continue to think about engaging with families - Staunton has an annual summer “camp” called “Helping Hands” that is sponsored by four congregations, including Covenant Presbyterian, <https://www.facebook.com/helpinghands.staunton/> . Stephanie has heard great things about it, and it seems to be a kind of VBS model that focuses on resources and helpers in the local community. It seems like something that could scale well here, and a colleague suggested that Stephanie participate in it this year to see if there are any ideas we might want to consider in the future here in Harrisonburg. The camp is the week of July 31, and her hope would be to use that week of work to be out of the office, volunteering and attending the camp each day, along with her boys. She might also be part of planning conversations before and/or after to get a deeper look behind the scenes. She would be working, but out of the office that week, This will follow her one-week vacation. One week of pulpit supply would be needed. Approved.
2. Stephanie has been meeting with some local pastors to plan a shared worship service for Sunday, April 23, with a Creation Care theme. The plan is for this service to take the place of our regularly scheduled morning worship at the church house. Plans are pending to reserve Turner Pavilion. They are hoping to provide live-streaming, as well, but that might be hindered by internet access.

For Information:

1. Stephanie was summoned for jury duty March 21 -April 14. She requested a deferment based on the timing of the liturgical calendar, which was approved. Her jury duty will be rescheduled for the summer.

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 (coming back in time for the rehearsal for Caroline Kempfer)

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

Misconduct Policy Task Force

No report

**Marks Groups and House Churches**

Reaching Out Gwen Carr

1. Reaching Out has selected its nurture study and will observe communion once every quarter. Its covenant will be submitted at the next Session meeting.

Sanctuary Rick Orem

1. Sanctuary is continuing its planning for the April 30 worship service.

Hearts and Hands Linda

1. Hearts and Hands continues to share prayer shawls and held a yarn swap among its members before and after church this morning.

Backpack Virginia.

1. The program needs extra help, especially on Wednesdays from 11 am-1 pm to help pick up groceries at Hope Distributed and then take them to Bluestone and Keister Elementary Schools. It was suggested a JMU student might help with this. Dane will serve as the new Session communicator for the backpack programs.

Centering Space Mary Lou

1. There are 12 people in the yoga class. The playground clean-up with the community is scheduled on March 25 from 9-noon. There will be a labyrinth meditation for Holy Week. Centering Space is leading four sessions on anti-racism for adults and for young disciples and an art (pour painting) session for this season. A contemplative book study will begin in April, a prayerful art retreat at end of April, and an enneagram class during the summer.

Clothes Closet Susie

1. They have a good number of clothes right now. Switch-over day is Saturday, April 1. A group is still needed to help on the 5th Wednesdays.

Guns to Gardens: Mark

1. The second meeting as a Marks group was held Sunday, March 2, at 12:30 at Trinity. There were 20 people in attendance (5 Trinity folk unable to be present) representing 4 churches: Trinity, Community Mennonite, Parkview Mennonite, and Shalom Mennonite.
2. Susie Phend reported on the visit she, Roxana and Stephanie had with the Harrisonburg mayor, Deanna Reed. Susie said Mayor Reed was excited about the possibility of a Guns to Garden event and very supportive.
3. Mary Lou reported on her visit with Larry Martin, a local blacksmith who has worked with RAWTools for a couple of years. Larry and his wife Erma were in attendance at the meeting so Mary Lou turned the ‘floor’ over to Larry and he provided a ‘Show and Tell’ of the tools, toys, and flowers that he has made from gun parts. He also told of his various experiences at RAWTools events, including one at the National Cathedral. We are excited to have Larry with us in this endeavor.
4. The next gathering is set for Sunday April 23 at 12:30 at Trinity.

Valley Interfaith Action Rick O.

1. Rick O. reported on the Refounding Meeting that will be held on March 21 at the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren. This meeting will affirm organization’s new name and the two emphases identified for 2023 – child care and transportation. Trinity has pledged to have 25 persons attend this meeting. Please let Rick or Nancy know if you are able to attend.

**Seasonal Teams**

Lent/Easter Rick O.

1. Planning continues to go well. Nurture to date has included discussions based on the Season of Repentance and a presentation by New Bridges.

Pentecost

1. The Pentecost Team has begun its planning and will meet again next week.

**Standing Teams**

Benevolences Kandy

No report

Building and Grounds Dane

1. Senger Roofing has completed most, if not all, of the new roof on our sanctuary. Wood underlayment was solid and not damaged, so did not have to be replaced or repaired.
2. Centering Space will sponsor a Playground Clean-Up Day on March, 25th. All interested congregants and neighborhood folks are invited.
3. Anyone interested in helping with grass cutting this spring and summer are asked to contact Dane. He’s trying to set up a schedule at this time.
4. A trash can is placed at the Playground. This can is NOT one that can be picked up on trash collection day. It’s only for the playground. The larger one that’s adjacent to our storage shed is the right can to use for all trash, including kitchen trash. Thanks.

Finance Team Linda

For Information:

1. The February 2023 Treasurer’s Report shows that the budget has been updated to include carry-over figures for the two backpack programs and Centering Space. The report also shows that we had a YTD income of $30,193 as of the end of February– which is 63% of the income anticipated for the year. These figures include $27,266 in general income (pledges, loose offering, building use) and $2,927 in other income.

Our actual YTD expenses were $57,410 – which is 96% of our anticipated YTD expense. Since the sanctuary roof repair has now begun, we will have that invoice coming soon after repairs are completed. We might need to temporarily transfer funds from our Edward Jones account to pay that invoice.

1. We will be updating congregational emails and mail addresses in Church Windows before the periodic giving statements are distributed.
2. We have added in a new line item for the Guns to Gardens Marks Group in the budget. We will check with the group on any potential needs for a small expense amount in the budget.
3. We continue to work on developing an updated timeline of annual Finance Team activities. Our discussion has included the need for a comprehensive understanding of stewardship for Trinity. There was general consensus that stewardship should be a year-round activity emphasizing how Trinity uses God’s gifts to further God’s kingdom – and also that this includes more than just financial resources. (See a similar discussion and recommendation under the Matthew 25 Team report.)
4. Next meeting is Thursday, April 13, at 6:30pm (Zoom)

Matthew 25 Nancy

For Session Approval:

The team requested that the Session support and approve development of a comprehensive theology of stewardship for Trinity. Rationale: At its last meeting, the team reviewed and updated the following documents related to ministries at Trinity:

1. Ministry Opportunities at Trinity
2. Guidelines for the Formation of House Churches
3. Guidelines for the Formation of Marks Groups

These were last approved by the Session in September 2018 to be reviewed again in five years. They need to be updated and approved by the Session by September 2023. The team believes the ministries documents would then become part of an overall theology of stewardship to guide Trinity’s vision and outreach. After discussion, this request was approved.

For Information:

1. The Season of Repentance remains an important focus of our work. The Lent/Easter team’s nurture classes are helping to keep it before us. Now that we have looked at the past, we need to plan how it changes us and shows us how we go forward.
2. The team wants to keep the congregation up-to-date about our commitment to being a Matthew 25 Congregation. Mark Facknitz is working with Centering Space on an article about the playground clean-up day. We will work with the other teams to see how we can have an article about one of our ministries each month. The team has developed a Google Doc outlining Trinity’s various commitments to the four marks of the church and groups vision for the future. It continues to review and update information from house churches and marks groups on this document and is working on a plan for this information to become more usable by the congregation.
3. Future activities for our team are to develop a Matthew 25 Team job description for Session approval and also to prepare a timeline of team activities that will include specific ways we work with the House Churches and Marks Groups, especially to make sure those wanting to make calls have the current information and forms they need.

Next meeting date will be April 10, 2023 at 7pm by Zoom.

Nominating Jason

No report

Outreach Mark D.

No report

Personnel Ellie

No report

Pastoral Care Patti

1. The ice maker for the kitchen has been purchased from the Fellowship budget.
2. A subcommittee continues working on guidelines for formation of a Funeral Committee with responsibilities for coordinating food, parking, purchasing name plates recognizing members, as well as other responsibilities that span across several existing teams, especially Fellowship, Building and Grounds, and Pastoral Care.
3. Virginia reported that a group has begun an inventory of plates, cups, new dessert plates, and mugs. They boxed up stray plates and cups for donation. They discarded all expired foods, and organized paper products. There are ample supplies for quite a while, and we can donate some to Open Doors. The group will continue to work on the kitchen in small chunks to reduce items not in use and see what we may need more of.

Presbytery Meetings:

1. Rick O. reported on the Presbytery meeting held on Tuesday, Feb. 28 over Zoom. He noted that Trinity had strong representation at the meeting: UKirk led the worship, sharing a video of its recent service at Trinity; Mark F. introduced Mark D. as a candidate for the ministry, and Teresa Harris was elected to fill an unexpired one-year appointment as a representative to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.

1. Those present considered an omnibus motion containing proposed amendments to the Book of Order. There were several objections to some of the wording related to gender; the designation as “honorably” retired, a requirement for 12 weeks of paid parental leave in the terms of call for all paid staff, and anti-racism policies. After discussion, five of the proposed amendments were removed from the omnibus motion and will be considered again at the May Presbytery meeting. The omnibus bill then passed. Rick’s full report has been posted on the Session website.
2. Future meeting dates are: May 20 (in person), August 22 (Zoom), and November 4 (in person). Kandy volunteered to serve as Ruling Elder Commissioner and Rick C. will serve as alternate for the May 20 meeting.

Processing the Meeting:

1. Elders should consider initial thoughts on how Trinity might respond to the Massanetta Springs campaign. The Finance Team is asked to come to the next Session meeting with a proposal on how Trinity could proceed with this and also on how reach out to individuals.
2. A major discussion at the next Session meeting will also focus on Trinity’s theology of stewardship.

Next Meeting: Sunday, April 16, 4pm (in-person, with Zoom as an option). Kandy will have the devotional.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session Stephanie Sorge, Moderator