**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

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

**March 17, 2024**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

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

**Excused/Absent**: Dane Byers and Susie Phend. Approved. A quorum was present.

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

**Opening Devotion**: Bob shared a devotion based on words from Isaiah 52, “How beautiful upon the mountain.” He shared a song, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the steps of those who walk in peace.” by folk music writer/singer Tom Paxton 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 February 18, 2024, the 2023 annual statistical report, 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, March 3, as previously approved. Rev. Bill Reinhold and Ginnie Reinhold served communion as an extension of the table to one person at Bridgewater Retirement Community. Vicky and Steve Rinehart and Virginia served communion to one person in her home.
2. Greg Sachs joined Trinity by reaffirmation of faith during worship on Sunday, February 25. Mary Lou was the Session representative.
3. The memorial service for Pat Churchman will be held at Trinity on Saturday, March 23, at 2pm.
4. Session electronically approved a request from our Camino de Santiago participants to observe communion while on their trip. This was then approved by Presbytery, which will allow them to offer communion to others on the trip who wouldn’t otherwise have that opportunity.

**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. She has been focusing on people with greater needs and also is meeting with the Pastoral Care Team.

**Pastor’s Report:**

For Discussion and/or Action:

1. Stephanie facilitated discussion of a question from our January retreat: “What makes you proud as a peacock about Trinity?” Various responses included our inclusiveness, our beautiful music and talented musicians, the family atmosphere, our emphasis on mission and outreach, and our meaningful Celebration of Life services. Next month we will ponder the question “What are our sacred cows?”
2. The Presbytery has given each congregation $200 in celebration of its 200th stated meeting last month. Stephanie asked for suggestions on how to use these funds. Currently it has been added to the Session discretionary line item. Please prayerfully discern some suggestions for the next Session meeting.
3. The bulk of Stephanie’s remaining vacation and continuing education time for 2024 comes this summer, in addition to the two weeks that she’ll be participating in General Assembly. Kim will be here for the summer, as she is also doing Clinical Pastoral Education. Up to half of her clinical hours can be counted from her Trinity pastoral care support, so we will be well-supported for backup while Stephanie is away. The Pentecost team will meet on Thursday to begin planning, and Amy has done a great job of recruiting a full team, so we should be covered all around!

For Information:

1. Kim, Teresa, and Stephanie have been working to plan a gathering on March 30 as a place for the LGBTQIA+ community to come together and grieve all that the community has been facing, including the death of Nex Benedict, and offer support.
2. Stephanie and Bob Schminkey are serving on the Commission on Pastoral Transition, which will merge with the Committee on Relational Ministry to become the Commission on Ministry. Trinity is well-represented in committees at the Presbytery level, including Mark Facknitz on Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Judy LePera on the Committee on Educational Resources, Sara Holben and Mary Colleen Knapp on Mission and Outreach. Ann Held is co-chair of the Nominating Committee.

Calendar Dates:

1. 2024 Vacation (subject to change) - TBD July 22-28, November 22-30
2. 2024 Continuing Education - May 6-12 for a conference in Montreat
3. 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
4. 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 Bob

No report

Grounds for Hope Task Force

For Information:

1. The group’s second meeting was held on March 7.  Present were Larry Brown, Dane Byers, Malcolm Cameron, Mark Facknitz, Stephanie Gardner, Judy LePera, Mary Lou McMillin, Greg Sachs, Stephanie Sorge, and Lisa Wilson.  We decided to call our group “Grounds for Hope”, as suggested by Stephanie Gardner.
2. We reviewed the discussion from our last meeting and listed topics to be considered at our next meeting on Monday, April 22, at 5:30 p.m. at the church to walk the grounds and talk about history and possibilities.  Some topics and suggestions included:
3. providing community garden plots;
4. creating a walking path in the easement to New York Avenue.
5. building a picnic pavilion, as suggested in the past, and
6. offering plots of our land to Habitat for Humanity on which to construct affordable housing.
7. We noted that any projects undertaken would follow a definition of, and dialogue with, our stakeholders, including congregants, neighbors, JMU students, and others who use our facilities.  We discussed how to define neighborhood, perhaps expanding our concept beyond our immediate neighbors to apartments across Route 42, which includes many of our Latino neighbors.

**Marks Groups and House Churches**

Reaching Out Kim

No report

Sanctuary Ginnie

No report

Backpack Dane

1. The Backpack Program currently is supporting about 100 families between Keister and Bluestone Elementary Schools.

Centering Space Mary Lou

1. Centering Space met on February 20th.
2. The Bonhoeffer class led by Mark Facknitz and Rick Comstock began on February18 with 25 people present. It has continued with good attendance and meaningful discussion. It will conclude on March 17.
3. The online study of “Flourishing on the Edge of Faith” (an in-depth study of the Lord’s Prayer) will begin Tuesday evening, March 26, at 7:00pm.
4. Our first 2nd Saturday offering for Creative Expression was held March 9 with four persons in attendance. One participant lives in Weyers Cave, and we are always thrilled when our ministry reaches way beyond the walls of Trinity.
5. Our next event, a watercolor workshop with Judi Coleman, is scheduled for April 13. Please help us ‘get the word out.’
6. Mark Dewey’s Camino de Santiago trip is currently scheduled for April 2-16 2024. Pilgrims include: Mark D.; Mark Facknitz, Lisa Wilson, Mary Lou McMillin, Sid McMillin, and Teresa Harris. We covet your prayers as we prepare for this adventure and as we walk the Pilgrim Road.
7. Robin Atwood will continue to offer the yoga class with new six-week sessions running March 5-April 9 and then April 23-May 28.
8. The group’s next meeting is on March 19 at 4:00pm.

Clothes Closet Susie

No report

Hearts and Hands Linda

1. The group continues to meet monthly over Zoom and would like to schedule another blessing of prayer shawls during worship sometime this spring. This was approved by consensus.

Turning Tables Kim

No report

Valley Interfaith Action Bob

1. Nancy reported that the County Board of Supervisors did not approve the letter of support for the transportation grant. Nancy is still working with transportation initiative, and Maureen Gallagher McLeod is working with child care initiative. Trinity’s Core Team is communicating by email.

**Seasonal Teams**

Lent/Easter Rick

1. The team is planning to commission those going on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage during worship on Easter Sunday.

Pentecost Amy

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

**Standing Teams**

Pastoral Care Mary Lou

For Information:

1. The team met on Monday afternoon, March 3 and discussed the congregation’s special pastoral needs.
2. Jessi Brown will contact Linda Bradley to determine the best way to begin a review of the church rolls.
3. Plans for Pat Churchman’s memorial service include a Sign-up Genius that was sent out last week. Child care has been secured for the service.
4. Care packages will be made up to be shared with our four college students prior to their exam weeks.

Individuals have been asked to write a personal letter to each of our students to accompany the package.

For Discussion and Guidance:

1. The team requested guidance on meeting Joanie Hanshaw’s needs during worship and fellowship hour. She has increasingly more involved dietary needs and is now on oxygen. Discussion focused on providing a person to sit with her during worship, publicizing the location and directions for preparing her food during coffee hour, Pleasant View’s responsibility for her transportation and possibly staying with her during worship, the location of Trinity’s AED and training for its use, posting the location of fire extinguishers, and checking on Trinity’s liability for any medical emergencies.
2. Our next meeting is scheduled for April 1, from 1-3:00 in the Yoke Room.

Matthew 25 Kandy

1. The team welcomed Norie Smith to the Matthew 25 Team and received updates on House Churches and Marks Groups.
2. The team continues to working on updating a Google doc describing how House Churches and Marks Groups are supporting the four marks of the church and their visions for the future. After groups update their information, the Matthew 25 team will review it and then post it on the Trinity website.
3. Kandy and Mark Facknitz are summarizing the Session’s discussion about stewardship into a format that can further update the House Church and Marks Groups documents.
4. Keith Phillips at Massanutten Presbyterian has asked if Trinity would support inviting a peacemaker to our Presbytery next fall. The Matthew 25 team is excited and willing to help with this, especially in conjunction with the Harvest team.
5. Some ideas for increasing the awareness about being a Matthew 25 Congregation were discussed and included rotating creative slides in the morning announcements before worship and preparing informative articles for the Nous.
6. The next meeting date will be April 18th.

Benevolences Kandy

No report

Building and Grounds Dane

For Action:

1. There has been a request for Session to consider replacing our heavy wooden tables in the Commons. Dane was asked to provide specifications and price data for lighter-weight tables.

For Information:

1. Frances Sale, Kathy Gillette and Larry Brown are contributing toward developing a plan and estimates for updating landscaping adjacent to the church.
2. Eddie Edward’s Signs is creating additional plaque decals for the Memorial Garden. The cost is $147.23. They should be ready in the next several weeks and will be placed then.
3. Painting estimates will be arranged in April.
4. Please be assessing our dishwasher and whether we need to move forward with repair.
5. Stuart Davis, Greg Sachs, Yogi Gillette, and Larry Brown are helping with mowing this season. Both the John Deere and Snapper Zero Turn mowers have just received yearly maintenance and are ready to cut!

Nominating Jason

No report

Finance Team Linda

For Action:

1. The team requested an increase to $150/ service for our incredible musicians to be consistent with similar local stipends and also to show our great appreciation for their many talents and gifts. This was enthusiastically approved, retroactive to January 1.
2. The team requested approval of updated position descriptions for our Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer and an increase of $1,800 in the Finance Team budget (line item 5.300.115). The Personnel Committee supported the revised responsibilities and the new payment structure, which reflects the increasing responsibilities and complexity of their tasks over recent months. The team also believed it will better reflect the widely accepted remuneration for persons with their skills and experience, as well as our gratitude for their long and faithful service to Trinity. The requested increase will provide a $4,320 stipend for our Treasurer and a $2,100 stipend for our Assistant Treasurer, which would be reviewed annually. Approved with gratitude, retroactive to January 1.

For Information:

1. Treasurer’s Report – The Operating Budget Report shows that we had a total general income of $70,566 as of the end of February 2024 – which is 161% of the general income anticipated year-to-date. This figure includes pledges, loose offering, and building use.  Our actual expenses were $44,801 – which is 87% of our anticipated year-to-date expense. The Fund Activity Report shows a current balance of $180,891.29. Note that this amount includes $124,102.50 in Undesignated Memorial Fund and $56,788.79 in Designated Funds. These funds are being transferred as appropriate to Edward Jones for investment.
2. Our February 2024 Edward Jones Investments balance was $516,100.49. Approximately $269,000 of this amount reflects the current status of the two bequests from Bolling Nalle and Vivian Hevener. Approximately $130,000 is invested in capital reserves accounts. The remainder (approximately $117,100) reflects monies invested in music, parish nurse, music, garden, and Skip Witmore funds. We also note that our new Raymond James brokerage account, which reflects additional funds from Vivian Hevener’s bequest, currently contains $103, 268.80.
3. We have opened a new Truist Business Savings Account, which allows us to transfer funds between it and our Truist Checking Account so that we can be earning interest on savings account funds before any transfer to the checking account to pay bills.
4. The team is continuing to review draft guidelines and policies for receiving gifts and developing a general endowment fund. The draft will be shared with Sandra Moon, PCUSA Planned Development office, and then revised as appropriate prior to bringing to the Session.

Outreach Mark D.

No report

Personnel Susie

No report

Presbytery Meeting

1. Bob Schminkey served as our CRE for the Presbytery meeting on Tuesday, March 27, over Zoom. He noted the many Trinity members serving on the various committees (see Pastor’s Note). In honor of it being the 200th meeting of Presbytery, is sending each congregation $200 to help spark new mission or ministry with our neighbors.
2. Other highlights included:
3. Information about the 35-year partner relationship with a synod in Ethiopia, including our commitment to work with them to fund women in ministry. To this end, eight women are currently receiving financial assistance from a fund created by Shenandoah Presbytery to receive theological training. Exchanges seem to be quite regular, with the next visit here by one of our partners in May.
4. Notice that the Baja Mission trip has 33 people signed up for their journey in July.
5. Dismissal of the Administrative Commission that worked with the Bethel Church to release that congregation to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.
6. Information from the Committee on Educational Resources about their relationship with RISE, the campus ministry here in Harrisonburg. The worship offering was designated for RISE.
7. Installation of Bill North, Ruling Elder from Berkeley Springs as Moderator for the coming year.
8. The worship was “A Service of Psalm Celebration and Creative Reflection,” based on a Psalm service from the island of Iona, Scotland, and included bagpipes!

Processing the Meeting

1. It was suggested that we place the Finance Team report at beginning of each meeting, after the Pastor’s report.
2. It was also suggested that we address our response to the situation in Gaza, and how we might be helpful. Bob will reach out to VIA and some friends at the mosque for more information.

Next Meeting: Sunday, April 21, 4-6pm, in person. Rick Comstock will have the devotional.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session Stephanie Sorge, Moderator

Attachments:

1. 2023 Annual Statistical Report
2. Revised Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer Position Descriptions