**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

**Stated Session Meeting**

**December 15, 2019**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

**Members Present:** Stephanie Sorge, Moderator; Dane Byers; Chris Carlberg; Rick Comstock; Melodie Davis; Teresa Harris; Becca Lowrance; Frances Sale; Abby Streibig; and Bill Wilson.

**Absent/Excused**: Linda Bradley, Paul Klemt, Dawn Ruple, and Michaela Brino-Dean. Approved. A quorum was present.

**Call to Order:** Stephanie called the meeting to order with prayer at 4:01 pm.

**Devotional:** Chris shared a devotional based on the difference between happiness and joy. Immanuel is with us at all times.

**Sharing Joys and Concerns:**

1. Numerous prayer concerns and joys for members and friends of the Trinity congregation were shared and Stephanie led us in prayer.

**Election of Clerk-ProTem**:

1. In the absence of Linda Bradley, Melodie Davis was nominated to serve as Clerk Pro-Tem. Dane moved and Rick seconded. Approved.

**Approval of Docket**: Approved as distributed.

**Approval of Minutes**: The minutes from the Stated Session Meeting on November 17, 2019 were approved as distributed.

**Clerk’s Report:** Melodie Davis

1. Communion was served during worship as approved on Sunday, December 1. Teaching Elder Andy Sale and Ruling Elder Frances Sale served communion as an extension of the table that afternoon to two persons at Sunnyside.
2. Alice Springston passed away on November 21. Her memorial service was held at Trinity on November 30.
3. Thank you notes for various contributions from Trinity were shared.
4. The Sanctuary house church covenant was reviewed by all elders present. Rick moved and Chris seconded to approve the covenant. Approved.

**Pastor’s Report and Concerns:** Stephanie Sorge

For Action:

1) Stephanie requested that Trinity’s Annual Congregational Meeting be scheduled for Sunday, January 26. Chris moved and Frances seconded. Approved. It needs to be announced to the congregation by January 12.

**For Information:**

1. The job description for the Associate for Pastoral Care has been updated, pending approval of the 2020 budget at this meeting.
2. Stephanie has agreed to preach the installation service on behalf of the Presbytery for Gusti Newquist at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church on January12.
3. UKIRK did *not* celebrate communion on December 4 as approved earlier because Stephanie was ill that night.
4. The Georges have decided not to celebrate their wedding at Trinity.
5. The first new elder training is set for Dec. 16, having had great scheduling difficulties. They have not settled on a date for ordination and installation but hope to do so by the time of the session retreat in January.

**Upcoming Dates:**

1. Service to the Church: January 2-5, 2020 (Montreat College Conference) - Jeff Carr on call
2. Session Retreat - Saturday, January 11, 9-4 at Sunnyside (all current and new elders)
3. February 16 - Mark Dewey preaching
4. March 15 - Stephanie will be off that Sunday for a family wedding. The Session meeting has been rescheduled for March 22.

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

**New Business**

**Seasonal Teams:**

1. The new Lent seasonal team needs to meet early in January. At least one session member is needed on each team next year.

**ACE Team**:

No report

**House Churches and Marks Groups**

Reaching Out House Church

1. Marks leaders have been set, with Melodie Davis serving as session liaison. A covenant will be forthcoming.

Sanctuary House Church

1. Sanctuary members and other volunteers are averaging 15 trips a month to northern Virginia to drive those needing to check in with immigration.

Backpack Program

1. The Backpack program is asking for more funding from Trinity budget; the need has increased from 32 to 60 families. The Keister PTO has agreed to contribute support with $500. Dane said they’re seeking matching funds from Harrisonburg Mennonite Church. He also added they are recognizing a need for more coordination of groups helping with various schools and backpack programs, perhaps an umbrella organization. Dane will check with Moffitt grant deadlines and with Amy Lemmons about the Community Foundation.

Clothes Closet

No report

Dinner Church

No report

Earth Day Every Day

No report

Hearts and Hands

No report

Myrtle Collaboration

1. Some members will be going to a meeting in March in Cincinnati as they work on initiatives.

**Standing Teams:**

**Building and Grounds:** Paul Klemt, Dane Byers

Motion for Session Action:

None

For Information:

1. Dane indicated he and the team are working on getting a contractor to fix outside light and noted the Session’s request for an environmentally friendly light. Contractors are very busy right now.
2. Revising building use policies - Wonshé and the building policy team will be sending a communication to church members and building users in the coming week about the changes coming by next July. Stephanie emphasized that, with this change, the goal is to be gracious but firm. We’ve had more than a 300 percent increase in use of building in the last 15 years ago, many times free. There is impact on cleaning staff and Trinity ministry as well. If people approach Session members about the change, direct them to Wonshé to receive comments for implementation. But be clear she is not driving this but is charged with overseeing it. This was a team decision by the session.

**Communication and Outreach** Chris Carlberg, Melodie Davis

No report

**Finance Team** Linda Bradley, Rick Comstock

Motion for Session Action:

1. 2020 Budget: The Finance Team requests approval of the draft 2020 budget that is posted under Session documents for this meeting. Changes from the 2019 budget are highlighted in blue; subtotals and totals for various categories are highlighted in beige. Total anticipated income would be $285,946, against anticipated expenses of $295,831, for a projected deficit of $9,435.

Discussion: The finance team is comfortable the deficit will be more than made up in non-pledged contributions and other income. Bill Wilson noted that with the unexpected buildings and grounds needs this past year, we used reserves. Rick affirmed reserves remain healthy, almost $200,000, and have been growing. Stephanie noted that Building and Grounds has been allocated $1000 more in the coming year’s budget. Dane said the team is considering having a building inspector look at our building for projections of needs over a 10-year period, to be proactive rather than reactive. The Session affirmed this approach.

The biggest increase is in personnel. We had an artificially low salary for Mary because of her status with a Social Security Disability keeping her hours lower. The hourly rate going forward is $15 an hour, and Wonshé is working more hours.

The associate for pastoral care salary will be $6,000 higher, increasing (with Rebecca Nolt’s recommendation) from 12 to 15 hours, given the needs of this congregation. A revised job description for this position has been posted and is attached to these minutes.

Finance team has approved this budget. Bill Wilson asked what the presbytery guidelines for salary are and was assured that salaries are well within guidelines for cost of living increases of 1.6 %. Approved unanimously.

For Information:

1. Treasurer’s Report: The November Treasurer’s Report shows that we have a YTD actual income of $351,369, in comparison with a YTD anticipated income of $219,156 – an additional $132,213. Our YTD actual expenses were $246,194, in comparison with YTD anticipated expenses of $232,327 – $13,867 more than anticipated. This gives us an actual YTD positive difference of $105,175. Note that this surplus includes $70,000 in designated bequests and $30,000 in designated Myrtle Grant funds.

**Personnel Committee**:

Motion for Session Action:

None

For Information:

1. Stephanie covered highlights of the pastoral associate revised job description presented by the committee. Jeff Carr will keep his own hours averaging 15 a week and will manage the flex. He will be allotted a month’s worth of paid vacation time that is spread out in coordination with Stephanie. Teresa suggested that he be asked to log his time at various points so if he leaves, we can be fair and equitable with an estimate of time spent. Jeff also meets with the Pastoral Care team and with Reaching Out house church. Approved. The revised job description attached to these minutes.

**Pastoral Care Team**:

Motion for Session Action:

None

For Information:

1. Frances reported excellent feedback from various members on Jeff’s visits to Sunnyside. We can rely more on retired pastors and inactive elders to help do extended communion, rather than just current Session members. Frances passed around a sign-up list for the coming year to serve extended communion.

**Report from Presbytery Meeting:**

1. The Presbytery Meeting was held on Tuesday, November 19, at Opequon Presbyterian Church in Winchester. Becca Lawrence was the Ruling Elder Commissioner and reminded us that reports and complete minutes from Presbytery are available online. She traveled with Rick and Gloria Comstock. Becca felt she learned a lot; the overture from Trinity on divestment from fossil fuel was distributed and will be voted on at the February Presbytery meeting. Every committee of Presbytery is looking for volunteers from congregations. Two new teaching elders were received.

**Processing the Meeting**:

Appreciation was expressed for this meeting’s brevity, for today’s worship music and caroling, and for the care of members during what can be a difficult Advent season.

**Next Meeting:**

**Saturday, Jan. 11, 9 am-4 pm, Blue Ridge room at Sunnyside.** Frances Sale willhave devotions and is making all arrangements including numbers and food.

**Adjournment:** Dane moved and Becca seconded a motion to adjourn.Approved**.** Closed with prayer by Stephanie at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Melodie Davis, Stephanie Sorge,

Clerk of Session Pro-Tem Moderator

Attachments:

Jeff Carr Contract