

First Presbyterian Church Tallahassee
Stated Meeting of Session November 17, 2024
Calvin Room, 12:30pm

The Session met in person and via Zoom at 12:30pm. In attendance were elders: Peggy Wright-Cleveland, Chris Corzine, clerk, John Hightower, Peggy West, Donna Barber, Carolyn Bradley, Debbie Gibson, Patrick Kennedy, Sue Safford, Jane Atkinson, Dan Bruno, Janet Fixel, Greg Riccardi, and Norma Meier. Absent with notice was Martha Kutter. Also present was Designated Pastor and Moderator, Glenn Hodges, Don Winstead, Treasurer. Representatives from the Presbytery's ministry on congregational health, Rev. Raymond Guterman, Rev. Linda Pitts, and Rev. Sheldon Steen, arrived at 1:30pm.

The moderator called the meeting to order with prayer at 12:26pm.

The agenda was presented by the Clerk. A motion to adopt the agenda and approve the minutes of the October stated session was heard, seconded, and approved without objection.

Designated Pastor's Report

The moderator reported on several items.

- An Advent event in coordination with Trinity United Methodist, and the Grace Mission ministry, was being planned for December 8.
- The moderator revisited concerns about unhoused individuals residing overnight on the church porch. Elders reported that a verbally abusive unhoused individual had assailed individuals on the way into Sunday school that morning and in the courtyard. A discussion of how to faithfully respond to our unhoused neighbors followed. Objection to posted trespassing signs on church property remained. A motion was heard and later rescinded, that the front porch be fitted with physical barriers and signage. Ultimately, a motion was heard that staff be directed to contact appropriate law enforcement if unsafe, threatening, or dangerous encounters with individuals occurred on church property. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.
- A motion was heard and seconded, that a Candlelight concert date for February be approved. The motion passed without objection.
- A motion was heard that a request from an Alcoholics Anonymous group to use the Westminster on February 8th be approved. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.

Budget and Finance Report

The Treasurer provided an update on the Church's financial standing. A written report was provided. A motion to receive the written report was seconded and approved without objection. The written report follows:

In October, receipts were below September receipts but slightly higher than receipts in October 2023 (not counting Spear Estate income). Cumulative income exceeds the total income for the first ten months of last year by over \$155 thousand. Cumulative expenditures remain below last year, and October income was slightly less than monthly expenditures. Our ending cash balance was \$244,211, which is up from the July balance of \$237,371. Pledges and other income were \$30,942. Cumulative income for the year has been \$522,740 not including project funds and funds withdrawn from the endowment for Compassion and Social Justice grants. Based on information from the Breeze Church Management System, pledged income through November 14 represents about 96% of total pledges! Expenditures in October were \$31,242. Cumulative expenditures for the year have been \$366,978, not including project-related expenditures.

Overall, cumulative net income minus operating expenditures results in a net operating surplus of \$155,762. We remain in a good financial position at this point in the year. Details are shown in the Balance Sheet and Statement of Financial Income and Expenses which accompany this summary report. Please note that the endowment account information on the balance sheet reflects September 30 amounts. These will be updated and a revised balance sheet will be finalized next week. The attached endowment account summary shows October 31, 2024 balances. These remain strong with balances totaling \$4.02 million not counting the Vaughn Loan Fund balance of \$283,533.

The Treasurer presented an Endowment Outreach Fund request from the Compassion and Social Justice Team. Each of the following requests had been previously approved by the Endowment Management Committee as 1) Being consistent with the legacy and gifts plan 2) The fund requested were presently available. The request had two components:

1. Compassion and Social Justice requests \$10,000 from the Outreach Fund of the Endowment be disbursed the Montreat Conference Center for financial assistance in their recovery efforts from the widespread flooding they experience.

A motion to approve the request was heard and the motion was approved without objection.

2. Compassion and Social Justice request \$5000 from the Outreach Fund of the Endowment be disbursed to cover one month of housing expenses for three refugee families (comprising 24 people.)

Discussion about this use of the fund was heard, with some expressing concern as to how long-term the assistance that approval of this request would fund since it only provided one-month of housing expenses. It was argued that there was reason to believe that approval of this request could help provide the short-term assistance these families needed while setting the stage for their long term success. The motion heard and was approved without objection.

Ministry on Congregation Health Listening Group

The Session held a discussion with Rev. Raymond Guterman, Rev. Linda Pitts, and Rev. Sheldon Steen.

Written Curriculum – Healing Racism Task Force

A written curriculum was received from the Healing Racism Task Force. A motion was heard that Session members review the curriculum and be prepared to discuss next steps at the December meeting. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.

Worship Team

The worship moved that session approve January 5, 2025, as a communion date. The motion was approved without objection. The Team will bring a full 2025 communion schedule to the next meeting for approval. The team is actively planning advent worship. A Lessons and Carols service will be held on Sunday, December 8, 2024.

Personnel Team

A leadership action plan was circulated to the Session for review. Discussion of the departure of Office Administrator was heard. The team is advertising the position and hopes to review applicants with the designated pastor in the coming week. The Personnel Team proposed the session approve scheduling of a congregational meeting for the purpose of updating the designated pastors' terms of call to better reflect the hours being worked. Terms of call must be approved by the congregation. The motion was approved without objection.

Care and Outreach Team

Care and Outreach reminded the Session of the upcoming potluck supper scheduled for that evening. Planning is underway for Chili and Caroling to follow worship on December 15.

Compassion and Social Justice

This team reported that they had been notified that the annual CAJM dues (\$1000) would soon be due. The team sought guidance on where in the budget such expenditures be paid from. A motion was heard that got budget year 2025 both CAJM dues and the annual carbon offset payment would be added as line items to the Session's portion of the church budget. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.

Presbyterian Women

Janet Fixel reported that all circles were meeting regularly, and that PW was doing well. PW was undertaking their elder elf to provide needed items for a senior in the community.

Preschool Report

Elder, John Hightower reported Jane Atkinson had joined the preschool board and that signing of an operating agreement between the preschool and the church was imminent and that ongoing work on securing independent insurance for the preschool continued.

Next Session Meeting

The next stated session meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2024 at 3pm. A later meeting time was chosen to avoid conflict with the Chili and Caroling event to be held that day after worship.

Prayer Concerns, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment

The meeting was closed in prayer by Rev. Glenn Hodges at 3:51pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Corzine, Clerk of the Session