

## **First Presbyterian Church Tallahassee**

### **Minutes of the Stated Meeting of Session – January 19, 2025**

#### **Calvin Room, 3pm**

The Session met in person and via Zoom at 12:30 pm. In attendance were Rev. Glenn Hodges and Session members Donna Barber, Carolyn Bradley, Debbie Gibson, Patrick Kennedy, Sue Safford, Jane Atkinson, Dan Bruno, Janet Fixel, Greg Riccardi, Eleanor Cleveland, Kay Crowell, Jon Dodrill, Mary Kutter, and Deborah Whisnant. Also in attendance was the Treasurer Don Winstead. Absent with notice Caitlin James. The moderator called the meeting to order with prayer at 12:30 pm.

The agenda was presented by the Clerk. A motion was heard and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion passed. A motion was heard and seconded that the minutes of the December stated session meeting be approved. The motion was approved.

#### **Introduction of new members**

Mary Kutter, Kay Crowel, Deborah Whisnant, Jon Dodril and Eleanor Cleveland gave brief presentations about their faith journeys. Caitlin James, absent with notice, will make her presentation at the February meeting.

Training for new members will start soon.

#### **Items from the Clerk**

The Clerk advised the Session that a Revised session manual is available to be reviewed by members for adoption in February.

The Clerk demonstrated how “tags” in Breeze are used to keep track of memberships in the teams and committees of the Session. Team leaders are asked to review the team memberships in Breeze. He also showed the Google folder that holds the 2025 Session documents.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved without objection to adopt this schedule of Session meetings for 2025: January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, and December 14.

The Clerk reported that the 2024 Nominating Committee has been asked to prepare a slate of nominees for the 2025 Nominating Committee.

#### **Designated Pastor’s Report**

The moderator reported on several items.

Rev. Hodges is planning to attend the DART Clergy Conference in Orlando February 4-6, 2025. The Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART) is conducting a training conference for clergy.

The Presbytery Per Capita Assessment for 2025 will be \$78 per member for 232 members for a total of \$18,096. This is a reduction in the per member cost and in the number of members.

The moderator led a discussion of the newsletter and its distribution. Without permanent office staff, the newsletter is produced by volunteers, led by Barbara Busharis and Kelby Yoder. The distribution of the newsletter notice is sent every week. Sometimes it is sent using the Breeze email tool and sometimes not. It

seems likely that in some cases the newsletter notice is classified as spam. We don't know why some people receive it sometimes but not other times.

The moderator emphasized the need for Session members to participate in team leadership.

### **Finance Report**

The Treasurer, Don Winstead, presented a detailed statement of the state of the Church finances, as included in the meeting packet. He explained the various accounts and funds and described the financial state of the Church. The 2024 year ended with income of \$575,856 and expenses of \$422,596. This resulted in a retained income of \$171,412, from the 2024 surplus of \$153,260 and the 2023 surplus of \$18,152. A lively discussion ensued. The budget surplus is largely a result of the decrease in Personnel expenditures.

Thanks and congratulations are in order for the Treasurer and Financial Secretary for careful management and reporting of Church finances. Additional thanks go to the congregation for their financial support.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the treasurer's report.

The Treasurer suggested that a committee be formed to review the Legacy and Gifts plan. The plan was created when the endowment was very small, with little income, and might not be appropriate for a large endowment. The Session agreed with that idea and encouraged him to move forward.

### **Budget Report**

The chair of the Budget and Finance Team, Don Winstead, presented the 2025 budget for discussion and approval. The budget anticipates income of \$513,360 and retained income (surplus from 2024) of \$171,412. A detailed estimate of income is included in the Session packet.

Mr. Winstead reminded us that a budget is a plan for spending and will be subject to adjustment during the year as necessary to account for changes in expenditures and anticipated income.

The proposed budget includes the use of retained earnings from previous years to pay for carpet cleaning in December 2024 (\$5200) and for a previously budgeted \$3000 to replace 3 aging laptops. An additional \$56,750 of retained earnings is proposed to be transferred to the Operating Reserve Fund to fully restore funds borrowed from that fund in 2023.

Each team had previously submitted a 2025 budget request. The proposed budget has an amount for each team. Mr. Winstead explained differences between the amounts requested and budgeted for each team. These differences are a result of additional anticipated income and do not result in a reduction for any team. Of particular interest is \$60,000 in the Personnel Team budget as a reserve for the new pastor.

The Personnel team budget includes a 3% cost of living raise for all staff. The Pastor's time commitment is increased from 50% to 60%. Modifying the compensation for the Pastor requires congregational approval.

The proposed Session budget is \$24,000. Session funds will be used for support for the Pastor, per capita contribution to the Presbytery (\$18,096), and for contributions to other organizations. The Session budget includes \$5000 to be used in the transition to a new pastor.

Sue Safford moved that the Session budget be increased by \$11,000 for contributions of \$5000 for UKirk, \$5000 for Dogwood Acres, and \$1000 for Montreat. Previous annual contributions of similar amounts were

noted. The Treasurer expressed concern that we do not overspend our retained earnings. Session members expressed strong support for these 3 organizations as major contributors to the life of the church.

Jane Atkinson proposed an amendment to fund only Dogwood Acres for \$5000. That amendment was defeated.

A friendly amendment was offered to increase the Montreat amount to \$5000 and to use retained earnings for these contributions. The motion was approved as amended. The proposed Session budget was increased by this motion to \$39,000.

The budget was approved as amended.

### **Worship Team**

The Worship Team asked Session Members to volunteer to be Usher Captain for one month. The Usher Captain is responsible for finding people to usher each week. A signup sheet was passed around.

### **Personnel Team**

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to call for a Congregational Meeting sometime soon to amend the terms of call of the Pastor. The new terms include a 3% raise and an increase from 50% to 60% of full time.

Claire Hodges is working in the office on a temporary basis. The Personnel team is interviewing candidates for a permanent position.

The Personnel Team is looking for additional members. They meet on the first Thursday of the month at 6 pm.

### **Spiritual Formation Team**

The Spiritual Formation Team needs a new team leader because Greg Riccardi is now Clerk.

### **Care and Outreach Team**

The Care and Outreach Team hosted a Chili and Caroling event and gave gift cards to the staff in December. They are responsible for picking up the visitor slips and monitoring Breeze for visitor information. They reach out to visitors.

Visits and outreach to Church members are a joint responsibility of the Pastor and the Care and Outreach Team. The Team has a list of people who need care and keeps in touch with those people.

### **Compassion and Social Justice Team**

The activities of the Compassion and Social Justice Team are detailed in the Session packet.

The Vista grant that was submitted by Trinity UMC was approved and funded. The grant intends to work with Trinity UMC and First Presbyterian to investigate new ways of serving the homeless and reaching out to expand the number of churches that are working together on programs to do this. Elizabeth Bradley has been hired to be the coordinator. She will be a researcher and ambassador to other churches.

The outreach to Grace Mission was a big success.

The Healing Racism Task Force has decided to encourage church members to read and study and may form a book club. Additional activities to engage the Session in their work will be deferred until a new Pastor arrives.

The FAMU Legacy Concert Chorale intends to participate in one or more worship services, but no date has been set. They are looking for rehearsal space.

### **Property Team**

The Candlelight group has requested to sell merchandise at their concert in the sanctuary in February. The Session did not approve merchandise sales when the concert was approved. No details were provided. The Clerk will request details and provide more information to the Session by email.

Theresa Heiker, chair of the Property Team, is planning to convene a meeting of team leaders to discuss the allocation of space.

### **Stewardship Team**

Some pledges are still outstanding.

### **Heritage Committee**

The committee is looking for quality space to house artifacts.

### **Presbyterian Women**

The Winter Gathering will be February 9 after church and will include a salad luncheon. Latricia Scriven of St. Paul's UMC will be the speaker.

The Dorcas Circle, at Westminster Oaks, is feeling underserved. Janet Fixel will be meeting with them soon.

The study guides may cost \$14 this year after many years of \$10.

### **Preschool Report**

Jane Atkinson has reported that an agreement to separate insurance and liability of the Preschool from the church is almost ready.

### **Pastoral Nominating Committee**

The PNC is reviewing applications and is encouraged by the quality of the candidates.

### **Next Session Meeting**

The next stated session meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2025 at 12:30pm.

### **Prayer Concerns, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment**

The meeting was closed in prayer by Rev. Glenn Hodges.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Gregory Riccardi, Clerk of the Session**