

Saint Andrew Presbyterian Church
Minutes of the Session Meeting
February 22, 2017
Heidger House

Present: Pastors: Matt Paul, Kyle Otterbein; **Elders:** Patti Benson, Sarah Brakke, Jeff Charis-Carlson, Gene Dierking, Kathy Duys, Cindy Kasper, Cecilia Norris, Aaron Shileny, Dan Steele, Cindy Vonderhaar, Jan Waterhouse. **Guests:** Jason Schuchert.

Excused: Elders: Mark Beerends, Margaret Heidger, Kelly Lamb, Jenny Pigg, Bruce Walker.

A quorum was established and Matt opened the meeting in prayer at 7:04 p.m.
Jeff Charis-Carlson was identified as clerk pro-tem.

CLERK'S REPORT

Motion: To allow non-members Zac Rasmussen and Ellen Turner to use the sanctuary for a wedding June 16, 2018. The offer is being extended as a courtesy to Bettendorf Presbyterian Church. MSC

Examination Committee

The Session received the report of the Examining Committee that Kathy Habley and Margaret Heidger had passed their examination for Deacon and Elder, respectively.

Question on Minutes

Dan Steele mentioned that he wanted to see minutes from the meeting put online as quickly as possible. He stopped short of making a motion, however, because the session is without a permanent clerk right now. *(Given the likelihood of such a motion coming in the next few months, church staff should prepare the website for such an addition.)*

PASTORS' REPORT

Pastor Kyle: Bruce Walker, Cindy Kasper and Kyle Otterbein were commissioned to receive new members Feb. 19. The following have been received:

Douglas and Angela Storm, via transfer of membership from Zion Lutheran Church
Daughters, Madelyn and Abigail, will be added to the baptized member rolls.

Pastor Matt: Matt encouraged more elders to offer submissions for the "Joy in the Journey" series – even offering to interview and ghostwrite the individual devotionals for people.

ROCKET DOCKET

Kathy Duys: Urged session members to fill out the elders' comments on Matt's goals. Personnel Team needs it by Sunday.

Matt Paul: Reminded elders that financials are online and urges them to keep track of upcoming session events listed on the agenda. He also called for a one-page dashboard summary on the financials for Session meetings.

Jan Waterhouse: Put in a plug to Feed My Starving Children – more information will be in the March messenger.

Kyle Otterbein: March 5 is the first Sunday in which we are scheduled to bring communion to the homebound members of the congregation.

PROJECT COST UPDATE

Finance Team member Jason Schuchert presented information showing that St. Andrew will have a little less than \$5,000 left in terms of borrowing capacity at move in to the Camp Cardinal property. With \$11,906,067 estimated for remaining construction costs, subtracting the amount of cash on hand, that leaves \$5,795,038 needed at the time of move in. The maximum loan amount approved by the bank is \$5.8 million. The total loan amount approved by the congregation is \$6 million.

The Session received the report.

Motion: Elder Dan Steele moved, on behalf of the Finance Team, that the following eight recommendations be accepted in principle and that the finance team be directed to recommend specific actions and accountabilities to implement the plan and report back to the session by the April Session meeting.

- **No. 1: Balance operating budgets in 2017 and 2018, creating planned operating surplus by 2019. (Pastors & BWT) Consider nominal one-time cost reductions and continuing annual income growth as specified. Pursue more aggressive cost reduction consistent with membership and attendance levels, reducing dependence on income growth.**
- **No. 2. Complete land sales at nominal prices or better by the end of 2018. (Land Sales team) Report activity and status monthly.**
- **No. 3. Establish project cost controls, identifying and reducing uncertainty. (Finance and Building Teams) Avoid project creep (added features) or feature enhancement (higher quality). Concentrate on control and completion. Determine initial and revised budgets by major groups. Report funds expended by budget groups, percent of work completed (where appropriate), and fund sources used and remaining. Identify recognized risk issues. Submit in monthly progress report.**
- **No. 4. Reconcile project cost and funding shortfall. (Finance and Building Teams) Determine action to reduce costs or find source of funds for the \$200,000 funds shortfall. (Based on Jason's presentation, this recommendation was found to be no longer applicable.)**
- **No. 5: Begin sustained attendance growth initiative in 2017. (TBD) As the building is occupied and the energy is high, commence a very active hospitality and integration program for new attendees. Likewise, for returning members, commence an active program of inviting and welcoming those with interest. Understand and counteract reasons for leaving. Plan attendance and membership growth correlated with budget income plans (recognizing historical time lags). Establish monthly reporting of attendance and membership and annual reporting of pledge rates and retention.**
- **No. 6: Establish a Progress Report for consolidation of monthly data for session. (Finance Team) Regularly report status of goals and other key indicators to session.**
- **No. 7: Plan a capital campaign to bridge deficit for an additional 3 years, 2019-2021, with a nominal \$900,000 goal or more. Apply excess funds to principal pay down as a priority.**
- **No. 8. Begin planning for full funding of capital needs by 2022. As we build initial experience and relationships, establish a balance capital budget from routine sources by 2022 where debt service is fully funded within a unified budget.**

The session also agreed that following the April session meeting, a special congregation gathering will be held to hear a presentation on the long-term financial picture of the church.

PRESBYTERY REPORT

The pastors reported that the Presbytery of East Iowa recently passed a resolution that was critical of the presidential executive order concerning refugees and natives of seven majority-Muslim countries. They also reported that the presbytery has taken on the challenge to raise \$200,000 to build a facility for educating older boys at a Presbyterian school in Lahore, Pakistan. The MOS Team has been informed. Pastor Kyle also noted that the presbytery had a \$111,000 short fall out of a \$450,000 budget.

WEDDING POLICY

Elder Jan Waterhouse reported that the ad hoc group of elders is continuing to work on three documents to present to the congregation. Drafts of the proposed new wedding policy – along with general statements providing the rationale for the proposed policy – are expected to be completed before Spring Break. They will be on the agenda for the March Session meeting, and there will be an open form scheduled with the congregation scheduled for March 26 between services.

There was discussion about the need for a more formal process by which members could express any concerns about the new policy. Questions also were raised as to whether this issue represented such a change to the church that, as with all property questions, it should be voted on by the congregation.

Pastor Kyle said that the taking a first reading of the policy to the congregation is a formal and serious process for eliciting input from the congregation. He said that, although the Book of Order requires congregation votes for property questions and pastoral terms of call, it does not provide such a mechanism for other issues.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Elder Sarah Brakke discussed suggestions on how new Session members could be trained and brought up to speed more quickly. Some of the suggestions included:

- *Extending an invitation for new members to attend the July meeting even though their terms do not officially begin until the August meeting.
- *Calling on the Finance Team or organize a Church Budget 101 training session with new members toward the beginning of their terms.
- *Provide a more complete job description for the position that includes more details about needed skills and time requirements.
- *Partner each new member with a returning session member and urge the pair to meet before the first few meetings – allowing some basic questions to get answered in a more private setting.

GIFTS AND MEMORIAL POLICY

Motion: To approve the changes to the proposed policy with the following changes:

MSC

- *No. 3: Remove the role of the Finance Administrator as an ex officio member.
- *No. 8: Change “one year” to “one year from when the first gift is received and a memorial is established.”
- *No. 11: Change “general church budget funds” to “general operating budget.”

There was much discussion about the need for strong coordination among the pastors, the Camp Cardinal Building Team and the families of anyone looking to make a memorial gift. Everyone involved needs to appreciate the difficult balance between honoring donor intent and respecting the difficult decisions that have been made to keep the costs of the new building project under control.

Motion: To charge the moderator, Pastor Matt, with bringing a list of possible team members to the Session by the April meeting.

MSC

Matt noted that, to speed things along, elders may be asked to approve the list of team members electronically before the next meeting. Anyone who disagrees with the recommended names can pull the issue from electronic consideration and add it to the agenda for the next in-person session meeting scheduled.

BUDGET WORKING TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Motion to adopt recommendations No. 1 (striking C); No. 2 and No. 3. MSC. Clarifying that MOS would continue to receive its full 14 percent of actual giving. MSC

MSC

No. 1. BWT recommends using \$4,740 for a partial re-funding of Continuing Education and Professional Expenses:

- a. \$3,290 to restore Continuing Education for non-pastoral staff as a pooled amount to be used per the usual application procedure.
- b. \$1,450 to restore Professional Expense for Pastors and Ministry Directors, distributed as follows:

- 1. 3 Ministry Directors at \$200 each = \$600 (rationale: Ministry Directors have access to other program dollars to fund Professional Expenses so amount is less than for Pastors)
- 2. 2 Pastors at \$425/each = \$850 (rationale: Pastors were approved for Presbytery minimum and don't have access to any other program dollars)

No. 2: If there are surplus general fund dollars at the end of FY2017, those dollars go to a contingency fund for the purpose of debt service.

No. 3. Session refocuses on using the pulpit and other communication avenues to explain the necessity of members to pay their \$36 per capita contribution to benefit the MOS.

OTHER BUSINESS

Motion: Approve the design work for a communion table, which will be done at no cost.

MSC

There was renewed discussion about the complicated balance between respecting the families of donors and the prioritization of projects from the Camp Cardinal Building Team and the forthcoming Gifts and Memorials Team. In the end, it was decided that the offer of free design services for new communion table – constructed from wood harvested from the 1300 Melrose property – was an offer too good to refuse.

The meeting was closed in prayer at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Charis-Carlson
Clerk of Session, *pro tem*

Matt Paul
Moderator

DRAFT