

Saint Andrew Presbyterian Church

Special Session Meeting Sunday,

July 2, at 6:00 p.m. at

St. Andrew North Campus

Elders present: Mark Beerends, Patti Benson, Sarah Brakke, Jeff Charis-Carlson, Gene Dierking, Kathy Duys, Margaret Heidger, Cecilia Norris, Jenny Pigge, Aaron Shileny, Cindy Vonderhaar, Bruce Walker, Jan Waterhouse.

Excused Elders: Cindy Kasper, Kelly Lamb

Pastors present: Matt Paul, Kyle Otterbein

Personnel Team member: Lora Morgan-Dunham ,

Moderator: Nathan Williams, Echo Hill Presbyterian Church, Cedar Rapids

Please respect the confidentiality of the documents distributed.

Matt distributed copies of his letter to the congregation dated July 2. Jeff distributed copies from Session of the motion to call a congregational meeting, and a copy of the agreement, and a copy of questions and answers document.

The purpose of this meeting is to approve the terms of dissolution of the pastoral relationship between St. Andrew and the Rev. Dr. Matt Paul, pursuant to the action taken at the June 27th special Session meeting. Included with the call to this meeting, please find the proposed terms of dissolution and a draft communication from the Session to the congregation.

Call to order 6:05 pm and Nathan opened with prayer (Nathan)

Also attending were Harry Hoyt from Commission on Ministry, and Lora Morgan-Dunham, here as advocate for Pastor Matt.

Motion: accept Ann Ford as clerk pro tem.

MSC

Motion: Pastor Matt proposes that Lora be seated as his advocate, without vote, until executive session begins. After consultation and approval from Harry and other session members, this was approved by Rebecca Blair, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of East Iowa.

MSC

Motion: Jan moved that Session approve the terms of agreement as on paper distributed, proposed terms of dissolution of pastoral relationship Discussion followed until about 6:50 p.m.

MSC

The agreement is between Pastor Matt, Jeff, Jan and Kathy; all 4 agreed that the it meets their needs. There had been some discussion about ending date going to the end of December. He will not be here after November 30th as pastor but would like the option of worshipping at SAPC. At the end of Matt's employment he cannot worship here again until at least one year later.

Statements from Pastors Matt and Kyle. Matt read his letter to the congregation, dated July 2, 2017.

Kyle said he is clearly deeply saddened and values his work and relationship with Matt. He has struggled with the Session decision and he feels torn. He appreciates the commitment and prayerful consideration of the elders.

Motion: Enter now into executive session, excluding Matt, Kyle and Lora, during this part.
MSC

Executive Session follows, beginning 6:30. (Note: Minutes edited from here to edit out confidential information.)

Jeff asked Tony Roetlin to attend to answer questions about financial matters. He was seated when he arrived.

Gene commended Matt, Jeff, Kathy and Jan for doing a very good job working out the agreement.

Discussion of communications from Session to congregation. The Q & A document and the agreement would be available to congregation members to read. Refer questions from congregation members to Session members.

Motion Jan moved that session approve the terms of agreement as on paper. proposed terms of dissolution of pastoral relationship Discussion followed until about 6:50 p.m
MSC

Motion at 6:55: Stay in executive session to discuss answers to congregation.
Discussion followed.
MSC

Motion at 7:35 Move out of executive session and bring Pastor Matt, Pastor Kyle and Lora back into the meeting.
MSC

Take a 5-minute break.

Lora questioned what is going out to congregation and revising some questions. We should distribute the agreement with terms too. Maybe make the document available but not send it out. Phrase "will not accuse..." sounds peculiar but it is legal language. Harry said they are quite standard in such agreements, and are protective for both sides.

Question about Presbytery's part in the agreement, and it is covered. Maybe use some space under signatures to attest to dates and procedures. Then *after* Pastor Matt and church agree,

Presbytery is asked to concur. On page 2 add the website address to refer to Standards of Ethical Conduct (37 pages). There are separation ethical guidelines, e.g. separation of the pastor from the church for worship. Document handling for Sarah Dyck? Send out the motion for July 30th but not the 3-page agreement. The agreement could be available if requested in printed form at the office with a cover letter. It is a legal document so contains more words than might seem necessary, so can use a briefer cover letter inviting questions to an elder. The legal agreement is between Pastor Matt and the Session. Clerk of session pro tem will communicate with Sarah about this.

Lora had questions about the document and the severance pay. Pastors don't have unemployment insurance so they do get severance pay. A few changes were suggested in the Q&A document, e.g. about "pastoral needs shifting." Gene and others suggested that Matt change his letter's wording for "my leadership has been called into question" to something less broad and likely to invite inaccurate conclusions. There was quite a bit of discussion with Session members wanting Matt to soften the language, but Matt said he does want to be honest about the situation. Advice when answering questions is that we need to be focused on our future needs.

How to communicate with the 6 incoming elders about this situation. Should try to bring them up to speed before they are ordained and installed. Send out letter electronically? There is a difficulty in keeping it confidential until it's announced or sent out. Our snail mail list is not that big – maybe 10% of the membership. Send it out by USPS Wednesday and all-church e-mail Thursday? Need to contact 3 incoming elders first: Ethan, Bethany and Eric. Kathy will phone them about it Monday. We need to talk to team members from the past, but not immediately. Jeff will send revised Q&A document out by 10 am Wednesday. Paper letter to be sent Wednesday and e-mail out Thursday. Sarah Dyck can do this – get it ready to send. We will need address labels attached to send letters, as we do with Messenger.

Pastor Matt will announce to staff Monday morning (tomorrow). Session may tell their families confidentially now. Agreement is ready to sign, motion will be sent out,

Concluding statements among Session members and the pastors. Pastor Matt expressed his appreciation for the efforts.

Note: The following 2 motions were distributed in printed form at the beginning of the meeting.

Motion: The Session and the Reverend Dr. Paul hereby call a special meeting of the congregation for 30 July 2017 immediately following the 11:00 A.M. worship service to act on the motion below and recommend that the congregation approve the motion. **MSC**

Motion: That the pastoral relationship of Reverend Doctor Matthew Paul with St. Andrew Presbyterian Church be dissolved in accordance with the terms, conditions and dates specified below and that this action of the congregation be forwarded to the Commission on Ministry for concurrence. That:

- Reverend Doctor Paul's last day worked as Pastor be no later than November 30 2017.
- Reverend Doctor Paul actively seek a call.

- If Reverend Doctor Paul accepts a call, or other gainful employment, prior to 30 November 2017 the date of dissolution and his last day worked will be determined by discussion between him and the session and in consultation with Commission on Ministry. In this case, the congregation hereby delegates authority to the session to set the date of dissolution and of last day worked with the concurrence of Reverend Doctor Paul.
- If Reverend Doctor Paul has not accepted a call, or other gainful employment, prior to 30 November 2017 his last day worked will be 30 November 2017. In this case the date of dissolution of his pastoral relationship with the congregation will also be 30 November 2017, and the church shall pay him his regular pay and benefits on the normal dates for such payments for a period of six months ending 31 May 2018. If he accepts a full-time call, or other gainful employment, prior to 31 May 2018 this payment of pay and benefits shall cease as of the date he begins such call or other gainful employment. If he accepts part-time employment prior to 30 May 2018 this payment of pay and benefits will be prorated according to his employment status.
- The church will pay accrued, unused vacation. **MSC**

Nathan closed with prayer (Nathan) at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Ann Ford
Clerk pro tem

Pastor Nathan Williams
Echo Hill Presbyterian Church

