

Minutes of the  
Saint Andrew Presbyterian Church  
Congregational meeting, Sunday July 30 noon

The meeting was called to order by The Rev. Kitch Schatzer, honorably retired, moderator pro tem, at noon, representing the Presbytery of East Iowa Commission on Ministry. She introduced Harry Hoyt of the same committee, who has worked on this matter at previous meetings. A quorum was established.

Kitch opened the meeting in prayer. She introduced Ann Ford, Clerk pro tem.

Ballots were distributed, showing “yes”, “no”, and “abstain” votes on the motion to accept the terms of the “Motion to Dissolve the Pastoral Relationship.” Jeff Charis-Carlson stated the business before the congregation is the motion on the ballot. The agreement shows the complete financial terms and the date of the end of Pastor Matt’s service as no later than November 30, 2017. After that, the agreement provides up to 6 months of severance pay and benefits, or until he accepts a new call. Kitch reminded us that only active SAPC members may speak or vote at this meeting, and there can be no absentee ballots.

The Motion to Dissolve the Pastoral Relationship was seconded and discussion followed.

Questions have been sent in by e-mail, asked at the listening posts between services Sunday July 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday July 23<sup>rd</sup>, and answered, with Jeff as the leading voice for the session. Some wondered why November 30<sup>th</sup> was chosen as the ending date: it was picked to provide a good schedule for the Paul family and Arie’s school schedules, since it provides severance pay until the end of the school year, if needed.

Jeff described session’s process toward the difficult decision, though some details cannot be given. Session is grateful for the congregation’s expression of concern and prayers.

Pastor Matt then spoke to the motion. He said he arrived in May 2011 at a difficult time for Saint Andrew, when St. Andrew faced difficult building decisions. The capital campaign consultant hired by the congregation suggested framing issue from a building question to a vision question. Matt said he began to work on that, inviting all members to participate. That new perspective helped move the process forward, but the demands on his leadership have been great and burdensome. When Matt learned that a vote over dissolution was likely, he wrote a letter to the Session sharing his thoughts and concerns. Once he heard that the vote had passed – and that representatives of the Presbytery’s Commission on Ministry concurred -- he accepted the decision. He joined the session’s recommendation to approve the dissolution agreement.

Microphones were provided for comment. Asked what the 3 (yes, no, or abstain) votes would mean, Kitch answered that a 51% majority decides the question. Because a majority is based on the number of members present, abstentions would be counted with the “no” votes. A majority of “no” votes would require Presbytery, Pastor Matt and session to begin the negotiation process

anew. Asked about Pastor Matt's vote, it was explained that he is not a member of SAPC, but of the Presbytery. Bruce Walker then explained the process leading to the session decision, starting with the personnel team and then relying on the Presbytery COM for guidance.

Questions were asked about whether all of this could be rescinded and Pastor Matt would stay, the answer was no. Kitch said that Matt has told her that he hopes today's vote will end the matter because he sees God's will at work. As Pastor Matt said before the presentation of the motion, he sees this season of ministry as coming to an end. As one of his friends explained to him, much of the transitional work required at St. Andrew made the past six years seem more like an interim period.

Session cannot reveal confidential details of the personnel committee's evaluations, but those evaluations followed a process agreed upon by the session. Session unanimously supported the motion before us. We were asked to consider our vote prayerfully and several made pleas to avoid division within our congregation.

Presbytery makes the final decision after our vote, and Harry Hoyt said a yes vote today will be the end agreeable to Presbytery. If a no vote, Presbytery may form an administrative commission to take over session's responsibilities.

**Motion** Move the question and proceed with the vote on the motion. It seconded and passed.  
**MSC**

Ballots were filled out and passed in for counting.

**Motion** to Dissolve the Pastoral Relationship according to the agreement passed: 125 yes, 25 no, and 4 abstentions.  
**MSC**

The information will be sent to the Commission on Ministry at the Presbytery of East Iowa.

**Motion** to adjourn the meeting.  
**MSC**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m. and Kitch ended with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Ford, Clerk pro tem

Kitch Schatzer, Moderator