

Special Session meeting minutes

Wednesday, 23 August 2017 8:00 pm.

Heidger House

Elders present: Mark Beerends, Patti Benson, Tim Benson, Sarah Brakke, Jeff Charis-Carlson, Dave DeGroot, Kathy Duys, Ann Ford, Ethan Goers, Margaret Heidger, Bethany Lagani, Cecilia Norris, Cindy Vonderhaar, Jan Waterhouse

Excused Elders: Bruce Walker

Pastors present: Matt Paul, Kyle Otterbein

Moderator Rev Kitch Shatzer

8:04 Kitch opened with prayer.

Meeting August 20: At our meeting Sunday, August 20, with the Presbytery Committee on Ministry members, Harry Hoyt opened with a statement from the COM, rescinding their directive that Matt Paul's last day be August 30th. COM apologized for not consulting with Saint Andrew elders before issuing their directive, which contradicted the dissolution agreement between the Session and Matt Paul that the last day would be November 30th 2017. COM has offered to pay for in-depth career assessment for Matt before he accepts a new call.

Patti Benson and Sarah Brakke made a request of the moderator (Kitch), as follows, which Kitch approved:

I call a special session meeting for Wednesday August 23 at 8 p.m. at the Heidger House, to 1.) to form a joint COM/Session task force and 2.) determine the best end date for Matt's pastoral duties.

Kathy Duys brought up changing the date for MP's severance package to start when MP leaves Sept 15th. COM left all but the date. It would mean 8 months of severance, not 6. Jeff had talked about 5 months of severance but 3 pastors' salaries wouldn't work if we have an interim pastor. Discussion about ending date and what is best. We do need to consider carefully what our finances can afford.

Questions for finance committee, because it would cost more. Interim pastor could start earlier and that would add to salary costs.

Interim pastor would help with healing, but the one interim candidate wouldn't be available until November. Nov 30 would be a too-long time, outside of HR standards.

COM will meet tomorrow to choose 3 for task group. Kitch is not anticipating but that Task force will bring a recommendation. Tonight we can talk about feasibility of MP's proposal from email Monday. Does session accept MP's proposal? No motion tonight,

per Kitch. MP sent his proposal to make it easier for all of us. Harry wants us to find an acceptable date, thought we might do that tonight, with MP's date of Sept 15th.

Matt could be at the dedication of the new building, since we are inviting our other previous pastors also.

Sarah said Harry has asked for elders to be present tomorrow 24th Aug at 2 pm COM meeting, per e-mail to Sarah yesterday. Harry asked that some who have been involved in previous agreement would be among those at the meeting. Kathy D cannot because of her job. Jeff is also very busy now that the U of I has started again, but would be willing to work on it. Assessment for MP would be 2nd week of November. Many are too busy. Bethany, Margaret, Patti, & Ann volunteered to be available.

Patti asked Matthew about how the staff is handling it, and he said they are not panicked, that they are doing okay.

Motion select Jeff, Patti & Ann for task force with Margaret and Bethany as alternates. Work with COM for a new date. **MSC**

Have all e-mails etc. go through Clerk. In a voice vote, most elders would prefer a later date than Sept 15th. Cecilia asked that task force people talk to staff about their reflections. Kyle will ask staff for their ideas. Does Session have a date in mind? . Bethany said she'd like to stick close to Nov 30 if possible. Mid October? Anything between Sept 30 and Nov 30 would be acceptable to Sarah. When MP steps down from pulpit severance would start? Kitch said last day of work is to truly be the last day of work. Phasing out could be negotiated.

We noted that Steve Dunham does not wish to be ordained as an elder, as explained in an email letter to session members.

From Pastor Matt 21 August, to elders by e-mail:

I would like to propose that my last day of ministerial service be moved to Friday, September 15, with my last Sunday in the pulpit being September 10.

Furthermore, I would also propose that between now and September 15, my responsibilities would be limited to worship preparation and leadership, attending staff meetings, facilitating the lectionary Bible study, bringing closure to pastoral relationships, and tying up any loose ends with various ministry teams. All of the other terms of the dissolution would still apply, with my last technical day on the payroll being November 30.

The September 15 date would help facilitate a clean break before fall ministry programs kick-in and so attention can be given to seeing those ministries start well. The earlier time frame would also help accelerate the process of seeking/calling an interim, and so on. Sept 15th not acceptable to most elders.

I appreciate your efforts on behalf of the congregation in meeting with COM. I am also grateful for the concern you have shown to me and my family. My hope is that moving my end date to September 15 allows sufficient time to notify the congregation, say our goodbyes, and allow your energies to focus on the future and the many opportunities that await St. Andrew.

Discussion of changes needed for dissolution plan.

We picked 3 elders for Task Force to work with COM. Patti, Jeff, and Ann. Alternates Bethany and Margaret.

Kyle closed with prayer at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Ford, Clerk

Kitch Shatzer, Moderator

DRAFT