



Rooted in Faith, Growing to Serve

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
140 Gathering Place Lane | Iowa City, IA 52246
www.saintandrew-ic.org

Session Meeting

February 23, 2023 | 7 pm

Moderator: Rev. W. Robert Martin III

Attending Members: Elders: Tim Benson, Helen Bryce, Susie Engelhardt, Eric Goers, Thomas Hartley, Virginia Ibrahim-Olin, Sara Penn, Beth Anne Pigge, Rebecca Schuchert, Becka Simpson (via zoom), Maria Story, Jon Swearingen, Gregs Thomopulos, Bruce Walker. **Pastors:** Pastor Rob Martin and Pastor Kyle Otterbein.

Excused Members: Doug Wildes, Kaitlyn Schmidt-Rundell

Devotions & Opening Prayer: Pastor Rob opened the meeting at 7:02 pm with devotion and prayer. He also shared that he and Do have a new grandson in California, their daughter's second child. He read a Teresa Avila poem, called Christ Has No Body; it reminds us we are His feet, hands, eyes, & body on earth.

Amend/Approve Agenda

MOTION: to approve the agenda as presented.

MOS

Approval of Session Minutes:

- **DRAFT MINUTES FROM January 2023**

MOTION: to approve the minutes by consent.

MOS

- **Draft Minutes from February 2023 Congregational Meeting**

MOTION: to approve the minutes with one correction (change 8% to 8.5% recommendation from presbytery as listed in the personnel section).

MOS

Consent Agenda

MOTION: to approve the consent agenda.

MOS

- **Mental Health/Wellness Team Report (MOS focus for 2023)**
- **Worship Team**
 - **February 2023 Minutes**
 - **Website for Information on Purchasing New Pew Chairs**

- **Personnel Team Report**
- **Building and Grounds Report**

Leadership Team Reports

- **Lead Pastor: Pastor Rob** reported the land sale is scheduled for March 7th and he will send out a notice once it is complete. Adult Ed class has had a nice mix of ages; Matt Moore will teach the next class in Rob's absence. Amy Schmidt-Rundell is now official as our Mission Outreach Coordinator. Jameson Harms is working out well as building and facility coordinator. Holy Week preparations are well underway. De Decker, who led a workshop a few years ago that focused on technology and is now head of communications for the denomination, is bringing a film crew here May 1st to focus on our Matthew 25 work. They are also intrigued by our mission/outreach/service focus this year on mental health.
- **Associate Pastor: Pastor Kyle** expressed gratitude for those who attended the Guatemala fundraiser on Sunday. The kitchen dishwasher is working well again. Pastor Luis from Impacto in Guatemala plans to visit St Andrew later this year.
- **Ministry Directors: Thomas Hartley, Children and Family Ministry** said there was a good turnout for the family communion workshop last Sunday afternoon and he thanked Helen Bryce and Patti Benson for their assistance, birthday in a bag donations are coming in, and service dog presentations are upcoming this Sunday and in March.

Clerk's Report:

- **Communion Stats-** 231, in-person on February 5, 2023
- **Baptism, New Members, and Roll Changes:**
 - **MOTION: To approve 4 new members presented to the congregation Jan. 29 (Scott Fisher and Patricia Cone-Fisher, Michael and Rebecca Tilley, and 1 adult Baptism held on January 29, 2023 (Patricia Cone-Fisher). MOS**
- **Presbytery**
 - **Special meeting report from Feb 16:** All proposed amendments to the Book of Order were passed by our Presbytery. The final determination of which ones will be included in the Book of Order this summer will be determined at the General Assembly meeting in June. Helen Bryce and Patti Benson served as commissioners to the recent meeting, also attending were with both pastors and Jeff Charis-Carlson who serves as moderator.
 - **Presbytery Commissioners:** The clerk would like to propose that session elect 3 elders as commissioners & 2 alternates to serve from now through August 2023 (and then elect this same number beginning August 2023-24 and annually going forward) as St Andrew's commissioners to Presbytery Meetings so as to avoid electing commissioners prior to each called Presbytery meeting. The clerk is to document in the session minutes who serves as commissioners but this doesn't always happen since 3 volunteers don't present

themselves at the time of the session meeting. Having consistent commissioners serve for a 12-month period would be advantageous for several reasons, and this would put us in compliance with recommended annual documentation in our minutes.

Elders opted to table this suggestion and have the clerk send the dates of the March and June Stated Presbytery meetings via email so they can check their calendars to determine who could serve. Susie Engelhardt stated she is willing to serve as 1 commissioner and Helen Bryce and Beth Anne Pigge would be willing to serve as alternates.

Action & Discussion Items From Teams:

- **MOS**
 - **Report for February**
MOTION: to approve funding distribution to PDA disaster relief from the earthquake in Turkey in the amount of \$1,500. MOS
- **Inclusion Task Force**
 - **Draft Update on Statement of Inclusion-Elder Eric Goers** reported for the team.
Several suggestions were presented and the team will incorporate these, along with any email comments/suggestions received by February 28th. A revised statement will be provided to session for the March meeting and if approved will go out to the congregation for its consideration. After the congregation has had an opportunity to comment, the team will prepare an updated statement for session to review for final approval.
- **Finance Team**
 - **February Report**
MOTION: to accept the finance report by consent. MOS
John Benson has set up a designated pews fund account for the purchase of the pews . He would like session to be aware there will be a negative balance in this account until enough donations have been received to fully cover the cost of the pews.

New Business

- **Discussion of Confirmation Plans-Pastor Kyle Otterbein** reported on plans for a new approach to confirmation drawing upon our understanding of ourselves as a Matthew 25 congregation. This will be a new way to encourage and build up our young people as members of Christ's church, emphasizing that all are welcome to participate in the life of the church. This approach starts with affirmations of who one already is as a baptized member of Christ's church. Confirmation would begin with a retreat held on Friday-Saturday at which time mentors would come alongside interested teens who want to be a part of the Matthew 25 experience. Those who are ready for membership would then be presented at the worship service on Sunday following the retreat and commissioned for service in the world. Eight characteristics of being a Matthew 25 congregation would be emphasized in separate experiences during the mentorship period. The main idea is to make one stronger in their faith. Kyle would assign 2 mentors to 4 teens, not 1 on 1 as that can be intimidating. There would no longer be the expectation that one participates in confirmation as an

8th grader, it provides multiple opportunities at various ages. The plan is to offer this mentorship from 7th grade onward. There is nothing one needs to complete to become confirmed, and one could participate multiple times in this experience if they so choose.

Questions & comments—when would youth vote? We as a Presbyterian Church are required to maintain both a Baptized member roll and an Active member roll—one can vote once placed on the active member role. Session would decide when to give youth both a voice and vote; Kyle suggests at the end of the retreat weekend. Would the questions posed to those adults who join the church be used for the youth also? Baptism as an infant offers no choice, at some point a choice of declaring one's faith should be independently voiced. Public profession of faith- does this occur or not? A broader opportunity to welcome the teens into our congregation, a sense of community, would take place at the worship service the Sunday morning after a Fri-Sat retreat. The session could commission the mentors who volunteer to serve, or the teens could seek out their own mentors. These mentors might ideally be post college adults.

Things session can do to help with this new approach:

1. Identify mentors
2. Prepare families for this change/transition
3. Determine the best time to hold the retreat weekend
4. Determine whether to hold the retreat once or twice in a given year
5. Plan out a 4-month time period for the 8 Matthew 25 experiences.

- **Setting the date for the March Session meeting.**

MOTION: to set the March session meeting for March 23, 2023.

MOS

Rocket Docket: Nominating team is seeking names for deacons and elders. Saturday at 1 pm is a voice recital by Austen Wilson. On March 4th there will be a handbell concert by St Olaf Handbell Choir and Resound Bell choir from St Andrew will join them for one selection. A new baby boy was born to Beckie Aghsaee & her husband.

Meeting closed with prayer at 8:28 by Pastor Kyle

Next Meeting: March 23, 2023 at 7 pm

Respectfully submitted,

**Patricia Benson
Clerk of session**

**Rev W Robert Martin, III
Moderat**