

**MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020  
REGULAR MEETING OF SESSION**

On Monday, March 16, 2020, the 616th regular meeting of Session was held at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Room 238. The meeting was set up as a Zoom video meeting due to recent developments with the Coronavirus pandemic. Dr. Lancaster opened the meeting with prayer at 7:03 p.m.

Session members attending were Dr. Lancaster, Rev. Rogers, Rev. Freyer and Elders Bacik, Burgess, Canose, Conley, Davis, Dilly, Galbreath, Jenkins, LeBeau, Lee, McClintock-Comeaux, Myers, Null, O'Brien, Paul, Rex, Sheap, Singleton, Wagner, Walker, Watson, Weber, Widmar and Williams, constituting a quorum.

Absent: Castelli and Fraser

Excused: Heilman

**REPORT OF THE CLERK** – Motion to approve the minutes from the 615th (February 17, 2020) regular meeting (as reviewed and corrected) and to take action with respect to the members set forth below were approved.

**DELETE BY REQUEST**

Amy, Robert & Philip Humbert

living out of area

**SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

At worship services on Sunday, March 1, 2020, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to 568 communicants.

**DEATHS**

Dick Heilman March 14

**BAPTISMS**

March 15 (approved but will not occur on March 15 due to suspension of services due to Corona virus outbreak)

Kennedy Marie

Parents: Brittany & Luke Coady

Palmer Brooks

Parents: Lauren & Kevin Cunningham

Vayda Bette

Parents: Lauren Smith & John Kramer

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**Westminster Recreation & Outreach Center (WROC) Advisory Board.** A voluntary advisory board has been formed to provide advice and recommendations and serve as a sounding board to the WROC director on issues involving programming, publicity and staffing. The four-member advisory board, comprised of two church members and two non-members who have participated in WROC activities, will serve one-year terms, and will not have decision-making authority and will not issue directives. A motion to approve establishment of a four-member WROC Advisory Board was received, seconded and subsequently unanimously approved. Session will be advised of the persons serving on the Board once they have been appointed.

**Matters relating to Corona virus pandemic.**

Dr. Lancaster advised Session that on March 15, 2020, the Allegheny County Health Department called upon non-essential businesses in Allegheny County to close or implement alternative work strategies for at least 14 days to limit the spread of the virus through personal contact and surfaces. A decision was made to close the Church campus which supports a child care center, senior, community and recreation centers and gymnasium for 14 days to comply with the County Health Department directive. Based on this closure, Session is called on to make the following determinations:

1. Worship services online. March 15 worship was conducted by online video which received more than 450 views as of March 16. Dr. Lancaster sought Session's input on continuing to conduct worship services via online video for at least the next two weeks. Via motion duly made and seconded, Session unanimously approved the conduct of Sunday worship by online video for at least the next two weeks.
2. Financial support of church hourly staff during closure. Dr. Lancaster sought Session's input on continuing to pay church hourly staff who will continue to work during the closure. Via motion duly made and seconded, Session determined that church hourly staff will continue to be paid the next two weeks during the closure.

**Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs (WECEP) funding.** Rev. Rogers, who presently sits on the WECEP Board of Directors as a non-voting board member, provided Session with an update on WECEP operations. She advised that nursery school and kindergarten operations closed in accordance with policy of the Upper St. Clair School system, and that childcare operations closed down for two weeks in compliance with the March 15, 2020 Allegheny County Health Department directive. It is presently unknown when or whether these operations will reopen during WECEP's fiscal year. WECEP's Board has continued to work diligently to prepare financial statements to support its present financial condition, but such statements remain incomplete. Meanwhile, WECEP is unable to meet its financial obligations with regard to staff payroll of \$50,795.46 for March.

Furthermore, WECEP is unable, in its present financial condition, to pay Westminster Church its fee of \$5,000 per month for administrative and custodial support services.

1. WECEP payroll obligations. Rev. Roger's proposed that Westminster Church provide WECEP with funds in the amount of \$50,795.46 to be used to meet WECEP's payroll obligations for the balance of the month of March. The proposal was placed before Session in the form of a motion which was duly seconded. A lengthy and thoughtful discussion ensued on the motion after which Session voted to approve the extension of the necessary funding to cover payment of WECEP's payroll expenses through March 31, 2020.

2. Waiver of WECEP fee for administrative and custodial support services. Rev. Rogers advised that WECEP has requested that Westminster Church waive WECEP's obligation to pay Westminster Church \$5,000 per month for administrative and custodial support services for the balance of WECEP's fiscal year. The proposal was placed before Session in the form of a motion which was duly seconded. A lengthy and thoughtful discussion ensued on the motion after which Session voted to approve waiver of the monthly fee for March 2020 and any succeeding months that WECEP operations remain closed.

#### **COMMISSION & COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTIONS**

**Finance.** Elder Lee reviewed a written Finance Commission report for the period ending February 2020 which had been distributed to Session members along with a Summary Analysis of Revenues and Expenses for January and February 2020 prior to the meeting. Current cash position is strong due to receipt of proceeds of an insurance claim and special contributions. Effort continues to reorganize and refine the Church balance sheet. The Internal Audit Committee is in position to start testing of internal controls. The Commission projects a June timeframe for third party audit of Church balance sheet. The Church has received \$1.8 million of the \$2.5 million pledged in the Forward in Faith Campaign with total expenditures to date of \$320,000. Elder Lee also emphasized the importance of reaching out to members during this period of closure to ensure that pledging and giving remains current.

**Personnel.** Elder McClintock-Comeaux advised Session that negotiations are complete on Dr. Lancaster's annual employment agreement and that Dr. Lancaster will continue to serve Westminster Church as Interim Senior Pastor, Head of Staff in the year to come.

**Property.** Elder Galbreath advised Session on the progress to date on Sanctuary ceiling repair, north and south breezeway repair, upgrades to Church electrical circuitry to generators and security doors, improvements to the children's playground area and parking lot repaving. He also made note of the fact that the Property Commission will go over budget in light of waivers extended to WECEP on its monthly obligations regarding reimbursement for administrative and custodial support services.

**PASTORS' REPORTS**

Rev. Rogers asked that Session members keep the Heilman family in their prayers in light of Dick Heilman's recent death.

Rev. Freyer noted that this past Sunday's video broadcast of worship service received more than 450 views. He also asked for input and suggestions on any You Tube video presentations that might be appropriate for placement on the Church website.

**CONCERNS AND JOYS**

Dr. Lancaster expressed a joy over the success and reception of the past Sunday's video worship service and expressed his appreciation to all those who were involved. He noted that future formats for worship will include that used in Bridge services, and expressed his anticipation that Westminster Church might celebrate Easter and Resurrection Sunday when we are all able to worship together again.

**ADJOURNMENT WITH PRAYER**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:20 p.m. The next regular meeting of Session will be held on April 20, 2020.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

- Apr. 5 Palm Sunday
- 9 Maundy Thursday Worship Service 7:30 pm
- 10 Good Friday
- 12 Easter

Respectfully submitted,



H. Brian Peck  
Clerk of Session

Date approved: April 20, 2020