

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020
REGULAR MEETING OF SESSION

On Monday, September 21, 2020, the 621st regular meeting of Session was held by Zoom video due to ongoing developments with the Corona virus pandemic. Dr. Lancaster opened the meeting with prayer at 7:02 p.m.

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

Also present: Kim Tilghman, Chair WECEP Board and Attorney Andrew Roman

REPORT OF THE CLERK – Motion to approve the minutes from the 620th (August 17, 2020) regular meeting (as reviewed and corrected) and to take action with respect to the members set forth below were approved.

DEATHS

Patty Twigg, August 14

John R. Goodman, September 3

WEDDINGS

Carolyn Mae Painter & Mark James Matthews, September 19

BAPTISMS

August 22

Kendall Vivian

Reed Alexander

Parents: Nicole & Charles Morgenstern

Barrett Marie

Parents: Dominique & Andrew Schuster

Mia Nicole

Parents: Amy & Mark Wesolek

September 19

Mabel

Parents: Carrie & Jim Fick

Gavin James

Parents: Kristie & Mark Proud

SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

On Sunday, September 6, 2020, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered at worship services.

BUSINESS ITEMS

WECEP Update: Kim Tilghman, Chair WECEP Board

Elder Williams introduced Kim Tilghman, Chair WECEP Board, who then provided an review for Session of WECEP's operations since WECEP's previous Chair, John DiSimone, addressed Session at its June 15, 2020 regular meeting. The Child Care Center reopened on June 29, 2020 with a few spots open. The Nursery School reopened on September 14, 2020 at approximately one-half capacity, and since then has received numerous children from local organizations that closed and have not reopened. The WECEP Board has played a seminal role in all these activities due to the fact that WECEP's executive director resigned in late June 2020. The Board is optimistic that it will have a new executive director in place by year end.

Ms. Tilghman reported that WECEP's finance committee's preparation of budgets for the upcoming year are nearly complete and that when completed, this information will be shared with Session. She also advised Session that WECEP is currently defending a lawsuit brought against WECEP and Westminster Church by parents of a former kindergarten student. The parents are suing for a refund of student tuition arguing that WECEP failed to provide in person instruction to their child notwithstanding the mandatory governmental closure. The suit was filed before the local district magistrate

Finally, Ms. Tilghman noted that the time may be appropriate for a joint WECEP/Session review of WECEP's operating documents which establish WECEP, LLC's business model and its legal and business relationship to Westminster Presbyterian Church.

WECEP Insurance Claim Update: Andrew Roman, Reed Smith

The Clerk introduced Andrew Roman of the law firm of Reed Smith who provided Session with an update of developments relating to the insurance claim filed on behalf of WECEP, LLC to recover financial losses due to the actions of the Church's and WECEP's former business administrator. Brotherhood Mutual, the insurer, has retained local Pittsburgh counsel to contest the claim, and Mr. Roman has spoken with him recently. The attorneys agree that the issue in dispute is very limited and narrow, namely whether the language of the insurance policy contract provides separate coverages for the Church and for WECEP, which would entitle each entity a recovery of \$250,000, or alternatively, the policy language provides a single limit of liability to be shared by the two organizations that each

have sustained in excess of \$250,000 in losses. The gravity of the issue is that it is an all or nothing outcome for the insurance company.

Mr. Roman explained that in these all or nothing types of situations, resolution depends highly on the claimant (Westminster for WECEP) convincing the insurer of its willingness to pursue its claim. The action normally taken by the claimant at this point is demonstrating its resolve to pursue recovery by filing a lawsuit in the form of a writ of summons in local or federal court.

Mr. Roman and counsel for Brotherhood Mutual agreed to each report back to their clients on the narrow issue in dispute (set forth above), and to speak again as to whether there is a means to resolve the claim amicably. Session approved an overture suggested by the Clerk that Mr. Roman be authorized to indicate to opposing counsel that the claimant is predisposed to continue to pursue the claim. Mr. Roman will advise Session of the insurance company's position when he next speaks with opposing counsel.

Finally, a short discussion ensued relative to the costs to be incurred in proceeding with litigation. Mr. Roman noted that costs of the initial filings are relatively small, but litigation of the case to a conclusion could cost tens of thousands of dollars. Given the fact that the thefts at issue occurred nearly two years ago, a decision as to when and whether to proceed could be required as early as this November.

Presbytery Meetings are now being held via You Tube. Next meeting September 24, 2020 at 10:00 am. Elder Heilman has agreed to attend.

COMMISSION & COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTIONS

Finance. Elder Lee reviewed a Finance Commission Report for the period ending August 2020, which had been circulated to Session members prior to the meeting. There was a material drop off in August contributions. While the church is still in sound financial position, a protracted deficit trend is not sustainable. The Commission is preparing a three-month projection of finances to the end of the year. YTD revenues are ahead of budget by \$38,400. YTD expenses are under budget by \$194,000. The Commission estimates a shortfall of \$364,994 in receipts from the Forward in Faith campaign. This report was received without question or comment.

Membership. Elder LeBeau reported that an inquirer's class will be held this coming Saturday in the courtyard with six people planning to attend.

Stewardship. Elder Heilman noted that the new stewardship campaign is underway with events scheduled for October 4 and October 11. Commitment Sunday will be October 25.

PASTORS' REPORTS

Dr. Lancaster reported that he is working with staff and outside groups regarding resuming meetings in the church facility. He also noted that twenty-two baptisms have occurred since March notwithstanding the closure occasioned by the pandemic. These are important measurers of the church remaining focused on ministry in trying times.

Rev. Rogers reported that she received word from the Allegheny County Assistant District Attorney that Connie Reiter was sentenced to one year of house arrest and three years probation. She was also ordered to pay restitution. Dave Reiter sought review of the length of his sentence and his sentence was reduced to 5-10 years, eligible for parole in 5 years. Westminster Church was not asked to participate in any of these deliberations.

Rev. Rogers also reported that on or about July 7, 2020, numerous checks were stolen from the church's mailbox and processed through a local ATM. The thieves were subsequently caught. Now the mail is immediately delivered to Peg Kinsey's office.

ADJOURNMENT WITH PRAYER

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:10 p.m. The next regular meeting of Session will be held on October 19, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



H. Brian Peck
Clerk of Session

Date approved: October 19, 2020