

**MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF SESSION**

On Monday, March 15, 2021, the 626th regular meeting of Session was held by Zoom video due to ongoing developments with the Coronavirus pandemic. Dr. Forrest opened the meeting with prayer at 7:00 p.m.

Session members attending were Dr. Forrest, the Reverend Rogers, and Elders Baculik, Burgess, Canose, Conley, Davis, Exley, Galbreath, Heilman, Jenkins, LeBeau, Lee, Ludwig, Marsh, McGee, Myers, Paul, Rost, Schmitt, Wagner, Walker, Weber, and Williams, constituting a quorum.

Elders absent: Castelli, Fraser, Rex, Sheap and Widmar

**REPORT OF THE CLERK** – Motion to approve the minutes from the 625th (February 15, 2021) regular meeting and January 31, 2021 Annual Congregational, Ecclesiastical and Corporation Meeting (as reviewed and corrected) and to take action with respect to the members set forth below were approved.

**SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

At worship services on Sunday, March 7, 2021 the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to communicants.

**DEATHS**

Joe Irwin, February 14

Jean Noll, February 17

**COMMISSIONERS TO PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY MEETINGS**

The Clerk asked for volunteer commissioners to attend the remainder of Pittsburgh Presbytery meetings scheduled for 2021. Volunteers are as follows:

Thursday, May 20 - Virtual Meeting at 1:00 PM (requires pre-registration); Elders Paul and Rost

Thursday, September 16 – Crestfield Camp & Conference Center at 10:00 AM; Elders Myers and Heilman

Thursday, December 9 – Parkwood United Presbyterian Church at 1:00 PM; Session is still seeking a volunteer commissioner to attend this meeting

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**Election of David Heilman to serve remainder of term of Treasurer.** The Moderator advised that David Heilman has agreed to serve the remainder of the term of the current Treasurer, John Null, and asked for a motion to elect David Heilman to serve the remainder of the term of Treasurer which will expire on May 31, 2021. Upon receipt of a motion and

second, and a short discussion thereon, Session voted to elect David Heilman to serve remainder of term of the current Treasurer, John Null, which will expire on May 31, 2021. Session also expressed its sincere appreciation to John Null for the years of service Treasurer that he has provided to the Church.

**Church check writing authorization.** Elder Heilman observed that upon being notified of the election of a new Treasurer, the banks and financial institutions with which the Church does business will likely require new certifications of those authorized to sign checks. Elder Heilman asked for and received a motion that Session approve Treasurer David Heilman, the Reverend Louise Rogers, and Church Financial Manager Richard Mills to sign checks. The motion was seconded and after a short discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

**In-person Worship and Easter.** The Reverend Rogers briefly summarized the experience of re-opening for in-person worship. In-person worship attendance at both the Bridge and 11:00 a.m. traditional services is substantial but within the COVID-19 guidelines adopted for programs and usage of the Church during the pandemic. Dr. Forrest, the Reverend Rogers and several members of Session expressed their joy at achieving this milestone in returning to traditional worship practices, keeping in mind at the same time the need to continue to reach out to those members still constrained to participating via livestream. The Reverend Rogers also provided a brief outline of plans for worship during Holy Week including Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday.

**Commission & Committee plans for 2021+.** At Session's February regular meeting, Dr. Forrest shared numerous thoughts and impressions gleaned in her first few weeks as Senior Pastor and Head of Staff at Westminster Church. She posed four questions aimed at framing future endeavors and inspired by Westminster's foundational call to serve as a Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh's South Hills. The questions are (1) What is God calling us to do?; (2) How is our work unique in this community?; (3) How do we sustain this ministry?; and (4) How do we steward our resources today and into the future? Dr. Forrest encouraged each commission over the coming months to consider in addition to the aforesaid questions, the following questions. (1) What does your commission feel called to do in 2021+?; and (2) What is needed to sustain your work in 2021 and what is needed in the future? Dr. Forrest reiterated her interest in continued engagement on these questions, and received numerous responses as set forth in commission reports below.

## COMMISSION & COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTIONS

**Adult Spiritual Development** – Elder Myers noted that the Labyrinth will be available for use by worshippers during Holy Week.

**Bridge Worship** – Elder Wagner noted that in-person worship at the Bridge service is at or near participation levels set forth in the re-opening guidelines. However, given in the

size of the WROC it may be possible to provide for increased in-person participation in worship while still meeting social distancing guidelines.

**Children's & Family Ministry.** Elder Williams expressed sincere appreciation for the outstanding leadership displayed by numerous persons employed by and working in WECEP programs. She also noted that the WECEP Board is looking into new grants and fundraising opportunities.

**Communication.** Elder Schmitt advised that the Commission is conducting an in-house assessment of the Church's current capacity as it relates to both internal and external communication functions. The Commission is proceeding through three phases, the first being data collection, and the second and third phases will be short and long-term action plans.

**Finance.** Elder Lee reviewed a Finance Commission Report for the period ending February 2021 a copy of which had been circulated to Session members prior to the meeting. The report confirmed receipt of a second Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan in the amount of \$376,417. General contributions were stronger in February, close to FY 2019 levels. The Church has a positive operating cash balance. The report was received without question or comment.

**Membership.** Elder Lebeau reported that inquirers gatherings are being held in-person and via Zoom. Reception of the next class of new members is being planned for May 23, 2021. Responding to Dr. Forrest's inquiries regarding plans for 2021+, Elder LeBeau reported that the Membership Commission is investigating alternative means if keeping all Church members connected to one another in today's environment where traditional patterns of interaction have been interrupted with the need to maintain social distancing due to the pandemic. The Commission is also considering creating new opportunities for maintaining social interaction such as walks and coffees. One such event, being investigated by the Commission with Kathy Long of the WROC is participation in a 6K walk for clean water on May 22, 2021.

**Outreach.** Elder Conley reported that the Commission has made considerable progress in determining allocation of 2021 distributions to mission partners. Allocations are based on analysis of historical information received from mission partners and current needs. Monthly Commission meetings alternate between discussion and implementation of outreach projects and visioning alternative outreach opportunities.

**Personnel.** Elder Marsh reported that the Commission is in the process of responding to numerous questions posed by the Church's Internal Audit Committee, most of which can be resolved via changes to the Church Personnel Manual. The Commission also spent considerable time this past month focusing on staff support issues, including but not limited to creating job development opportunities, improving communication among staff members, reviewing and editing job descriptions, and annual performance reviews. The

Commission strongly recommends initiation of an aggressive program to hire a full-time director of youth ministries, the position formerly held by Reverend Freyer. Suggestions and comments in identifying suitable candidates are welcome.

**Property.** Elder Galbreath reported on the progress of numerous internal and external painting projects either underway or planned to commence in upon the change of seasons. He also noted plans to renovate Room 176 and the bathroom adjacent to Room 107 to make it ADA compliant.

**Stewardship.** Elder Heilman reported that the Commission spent considerable time addressing Dr. Forrest's inquiries regarding plans of 2021+. The Commission has identified numerous new initiatives, including investigating methods of increasing the number of members who give to the Church and the amount that they give, expanding the concept of stewardship to include non-monetary giving, expanding awareness of what a pledge is and how what we give is spent, and surveying the congregation to identify the kind of experience our members have. Elder Heilman also briefly outlined a 2021 strategic plan based on the theme of "rebuilding the temple" focusing on different concepts each quarter; 1st Quarter – thanksgiving; 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter – why people give; 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter – what the Church does with the money; 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter – stewardship campaign.

**Worship.** Elder McGee reported that the Commission is focusing on worship in both the live and livestream formats, striving to make each worship experience as meaningful and fulfilling as is possible, including reviewing the worship formats used by other churches. The Commission is looking for two more members, including younger persons.

**Youth Ministry.** Elder Walker reported that Veritas continues to meet on a hybrid schedule, in person and via zoom. There was no confirmation class this past Fall. However, a twelve-week Spring confirmation class has been convened led by Ed Sutter. The Session expressed its appreciation to Ed Sutter for organizing and leading the class.

## **PASTORS' REPORTS**

Dr. Forrest expressed her satisfaction and appreciation for the extensive effort expended to reduce risk and place the Church once again on a firm financial foundation. She was also pleased to report that an anonymous donor has offered to match gifts to retire the Church's debt on an outstanding loan from PNC Bank. The matter is presently being addressed by the Finance and Stewardship Commissions and a plan of action to retire the debt entirely may take shape soon.

The Reverend Rogers provided substantial information on WECEP's current programming. As of this date, the Nursery School has 175 children enrolled and 233 children are enrolled for the new year. The Child Care program currently has 75 children enrolled and is operating at capacity. WECEP currently employs 37 people in running these programs.

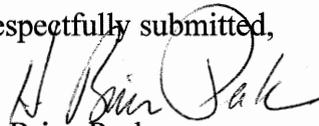
**CONCERNS AND JOYS**

Meeting participants engaged in the exchange of individual joys and concerns for Church members and their families, many of which have been stricken by the COVID-19 virus.

**ADJOURNMENT WITH PRAYER**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:25 p.m. The next regular meeting of Session will be held on April 19, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,



H. Brian Peck

Clerk of Session

Date approved: April 19, 2021