

Stated Session Meeting

North Decatur Presbyterian Church

March 19, 2017

The Session of NDPC met for a stated meeting on **March 19, 2017, at approximately 12:20 p.m.** initially in the Church Sanctuary, then moving after several discussion items to the Church Parlor.

Elders present: Charles Bonner, Ginny Bowen, Genia Cayce, Mike Johnson, Pam Joyce, Martha Osborne, Sallie Owens, Marion Reeves, Kathryn Sandifer, Martha Shepherd, Carol Tveit, Bob Way, Holly Williams

Elders excused: Heidi Gleason, Annie Godfrey, David Markham, Mary Nevil, Bryden Sandifer

Elders absent: Kent Haythorn

Pastors and Staff present: Co-pastors David Lewicki and Beth Waltemath, Amanda Osenga

Guests: Sue Westfall

Immediately following service, the meeting was called to order in the Church Sanctuary by Rev. David Lewicki, who also opened with a prayer. In addition to Session members and guests, numerous members from the congregation were also in attendance.

Long-Range Strategic Planning Process & Survey: Rev. David Lewicki led a discussion regarding the purpose and process for developing a new long-range strategic plan for NDPC. The proposed process to develop a new 3 year strategic plan was outlined and summarized using a PowerPoint presentation. Benefits from use of the Holy Cow survey, such as demographic information, consistency, and local consultation, were also discussed, and new Planning Committee members announced (see below for additional details). Numerous questions and suggestions, such as the timeline and leveraging lessons learned from the prior strategic planning process, were fielded from the congregation.

Executive Presbyter Nominating Committee: Special guest Sue Westfall led a discussion on behalf of the Executive Presbyter Nominating Committee. Specifically Sue was seeking input from the Session and congregation regarding the following questions:

- What do you appreciate about the Presbytery?
- What do you need from an Executive Presbyter?
- What are the primary qualities desired in an Executive Presbyter?
- What is the first thing the Executive Presbyter need to address?
- Any other comments or questions?

A robust discussion ensued regarding the proposed questions with common themes centered around the need for strong leadership, focus on reconciliation, and communicating a shared vision. Encouraging greater cooperation across churches, increased transparency and strong communication were also important attributes emphasized by the congregation.

This concluded the agenda items discussed in the Church Sanctuary.

After moving to the Church Parlor, a quorum of the Session was declared present and the agenda was adopted.

Devotional: Bob Way led the Session in an opening devotional.

Approval of February Session Minutes: Minutes from the prior February Session meeting were approved unanimously with minor suggested edits.

Approval of Upcoming Baptisms: The Session voted unanimously to approve the upcoming baptisms, with no specific target dates, of Isabel Hahn and Gus White.

Confirmation of the Strategic Planning Committee: Rev. David Lewicki recommended the formation of a new a Strategic Planning Committee to be chaired by David Markham, with members including Clark Hair, Carol Morgan, Chet McQuaide, and Penny Cannon. The Session vote unanimously to approve the new committee and proposed membership.

Staff Reports:

Music Ministry: Clint Miller was unable to attend but Mike Johnson read his report. The choirs are preparing for Holy Week Services; the new AV team is in place and we are “learning our way” into the new sound and visual systems (and Clint is very grateful for all those who volunteered to be part of the ministry team); and grateful thanks to Karen Fletcher for leading the Middle Schoolers in a handbell piece today!

Children's Ministry: Amanda Osenga reported that the Children's Ministry is looking forward to Easter Service. She also reported out on the success of Youth Sunday, which received numerous positive comments from Session members. Finally, Amanda mentioned that she and several youth will be making an upcoming trip to review a retreat in Green Bough, Georgia, to explore contemplative Christianity.

Co-pastor's Report: Rev. David Lewicki reported that the Co-Pastor's are prioritizing the strategic planning process and capital campaign, with thanks to David Evans for leading the latter effort. They are also looking to hire additional administrative support for approximately 20 hours per week that they hope to fill by this summer. One sticking point to date is office hours, so there was some general discussion of the need for a 9-5:00 open office versus a more flexible schedule.

Council and Committee Updates and Action Items: Several Committee updates were provided in a separate attachment and reviewed by the Session prior to the meeting but not specifically discussed. The following updates and actions were discussed by the Session.

Finance Committee: Sallie Owen reported that the 2016 “books” are officially closed. She also indicated that the Church has a \$55,000 property reserve at the end of February. The budget is slightly in the red at this early stage which is not unusual for this time of the year.

Worship Committee: The following summer worship schedule was proposed: moving to one service beginning on May 28th at 10:00am continuing through September 10th when the 11:00am service will be reinstated; the second 8:30am service is scheduled to recommence on September 17th. The Session unanimously approved the

recommended summer service schedule. A recommendation was also made by Martha Shepherd to have the confirmands serve communion by intinction on confirmation Sunday, May 7th; this recommendation was also unanimously approved by the Session. Martha requested volunteers to serve communion on Easter Sunday, and Rev. David Lewicki encouraged all Elders to attend Easter service as well as other special events in the life of the Church.

Administrative Committee: Kathryn Sandifer provide an overview of the role of this new committee, which is to review the overall structure of the Church and how well it functions and suggest policies, systems and procedures to support the staff and leadership in their ministries. As a starting point, Kathryn will build a four month rolling calendar of events and meetings to ensure effective communication and avoid redundancy. Kathryn also invited all committee chairs to meet the following Sunday following service and bring their lists of volunteers and events. An additional goal is to review the number of volunteers for various activities and groups to help streamline roles and reduce overlaps.

Peace & Justice Committee: Carol Tveit introduced a motion to join the Sanctuary Movement of Atlanta. A handout was distributed that provided an overview of the movement and included a proposed pledge to be adopted. Carol and Rev. David Lewicki discussed the goal of the movement, which is to work within the existing legal system framework to provide safe, physical space for those in danger of being deported. They also made clear that should the motion be adopted, NDPC is not proposing to be a sanctuary church (Columbia Presbyterian Church is proposing to be a sanctuary church but our facilities are not currently conducive). Some concern was expressed with regard to the language in the proposed pledge, specifically that the language focused on immediate political policies rather than longer term enduring principles. Various alternative motions were discussed such as amending the pledge or affirming support for Columbia Presbyterian without adopting the pledge. Ultimately a request was made to table the motion pending more information and discussion with the Peace & Justice Committee at the Session meeting on May 21st; this request was unanimously approved by the Session with no dissenters.

Session Congregational Care Calls: Mike Johnson provided a handout listing the congregations members and their contact information. The list was also sorted into sections assigned to each member. Joined by Rev. David Lewicki, they discussed the purpose of the congregational care calls, which is to reach out to each member of the congregation to check in on how they were doing, offer assistance in any way, and to solicit any concerns. In addition the calls are being timed to also serve as a reminder of the importance of completing the strategic planning survey. Session members agreed to complete their respective calls over the coming weeks prior to the conclusion of the survey.

Upcoming Meetings:

Stated Session Meeting, Saturday April 22, 2017, 9:00-12:00 in the Church Parlor

After a closing prayer, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Johnson, Clerk of Session