

Stated Session Meeting

North Decatur Presbyterian Church

October 15, 2017

The Session of NDPC met for a stated meeting on **Sunday, October 15, 2017, at approximately 12:30 p.m.** in the Church Fellowship Hall.

Elders present: Ginny Bowen, Heidi Gleason, Annie Godfrey, Mike Johnson, Martha Osborne, Sallie Owens, Marion Reeves, Kathryn Sandifer, Martha Shepherd, Carol Tveit,

Elders excused: Charles Bonner, Genia Cayce, Mary Nevil, Bryden Sandifer, Holly Williams,

Elders absent: Pam Joyce, Bob Way

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

Guests: Emily Harris, Katie Harris, David Roberts, Shelly Roberts

The meeting was called to order in the Fellowship Hall by Rev. David Lewicki; a quorum was declared present by the Clerk and the agenda adopted as submitted, with the addition of several new members to be examined.

Devotional: Heidi Gleason led the Session in an opening devotional and prayer.

Approval of September Session Minutes: Minutes from the prior September Session meeting were approved unanimously, with no changes.

Examination of New Members: Prospective new members were introduced. This was followed by introductory comments from each Session member, after which the prospective new members introduced themselves and reflected upon their respective interests in joining NDPC. After further discussion, **the Session voted by unanimous consent to accept the following as new members** and welcomed them to the NDPC congregation: Emily Harris and Katie Harris (reaffirmation of faith), and Shelly Roberts and David Roberts (reaffirmation of faith).

Council and Committee Updates/Action Items

Peace & Justice Committee - Carol Tveit requested authorization from the Session for the Clerk to send two letters indicating Session approval for NDPC to continue its partnership in Presbyterians for a Better Georgia and the Presbytery Peacemaking Partnership. **The Session unanimously approved the request.** (Subsequent to the meeting both letters were sent as authorized on October 16, 2017.). Carol also reminded

the Session that Just Bakery, an organization that provides opportunities for refugees, will be selling baked goods at the church this upcoming Sunday.

Worship Committee - Several items were addressed by Martha Shepherd related to the Worship Committee. First, Martha mentioned that worship on November 5th will include communion by passing, which requires additional volunteers. A signup sheet was distributed.

Second, Martha requested Session approval for the middle school Sunday school class to serve communion at a specially planned worship service they will lead at Wesley Woods on November 5th, noting that Rev. Mary Anona Stoops will be present. **Session approval for communion was unanimously provided.**

Third, Martha led a discussion of the "It's Worth the Effort" offering initiative. Specifically, as a follow on to the discussion at the prior meeting, Martha recommended that the initiative continue into 2018 with a focus each month on a different ministry linked to the Minute for Mission series and with 10 percent of the collected proceeds distributed to that monthly ministry (the remaining proceeds would be distributed to the general fund). The goal is to ensure a continued ministry focus and support, while also not inadvertently redistributed funds away from the general fund. The Session discussed the proposal at length, offering several alternatives for consideration. Ultimately **the Session approved unanimously a three month trial beginning in January 2018 (to be reassessed in April 2018) to continue "It's Worth the Effort", link monthly offerings to the Minute for Mission series, and split the donations on a 50/50 basis between the respective monthly ministry and the general fund.**

Children/Youth and Adult Ministries - Ginny Bowen ran through the list of Adult educational classes that are / will be offered during the Fall 2017 through Spring 2018 season. Marion Reeves also discussed the children's program over this same period. **The Session voted unanimously to approve the curriculum.**

Children, Youth, and Family Committee - Marion Reeves presented the following motions for Session consideration:

1. Approve the response team for any child protection issues. Members are: Kathleen Allen, Carolyn French, Andrew Godfrey Kittle, Rusty Godwin, Amanda Osenga, Bert Weaver, and Lisa Wise.
2. Approve collaborating with Morningside Presbyterian late in January to offer a weekend program to parents and children of grades 4-6. The curriculum is Sexuality and Faith for Tweens.
3. Approve offering Our Whole Lives (OWL) training for youth and parents grade 7-8 in January. (Subsequently amended to 6-8 grades.)
4. Approve two funding events for Middle and High School trips to Asheville, N.C. And Guatemala in 2018, respectively.
 - a. A parents night out or Christmas shopping day child care event this fall.
 - b. A youth auction on February 11, 2018.

All of the above motions were approved unanimously by the Session.

Community Ministries - Martha Osborne requested Session approval for the elementary school classes to offer a souper bowl fundraiser on Super Bowl Sunday, February 4, 2018. **The Session approved the proposed fundraiser unanimously.**

Staff Reports: Rev. David Lewicki and Rev. Beth Waltemath provided the co-pastors report, which included the following:

- New elders training is scheduled for November 18th.
- They reminded elders to review their respective committee and church policies to ensure they are up-to-date and that changes to church policies require Session approval.
- They offered a reminder that the stewardship campaign has been launched, all electronic this year, and the need for the Session to play a leadership role.
- They thanked the Session for the pastoral care feedback discussed at the prior meeting, noting that there needs to be an appropriate balance between privacy and communication with the Session and congregation.
- Staff annual performance reviews have been completed, with good discussions and feedback; the staff enjoys working at NDPC.

Child Care Usage - Marion Reeves discussed the negative budget implications of both the high volume of child care usage thus far in 2018 (which is a nice problem to have), combined with an increasing number of “no shows” after care has already been arranged. Usage as part of the Parish Salt Shakers dinners also adds to the cost. Several solutions were discussed such as establishing a web-based signup process and holding all church committee meetings on a similar schedule. Committee chairs were encouraged to try to hold meetings on the first Sunday of the month to coordinate and share costs.

“Elder on Duty” Program - Mike Johnson asked for feedback on the program, specifically whether there were sufficient benefits associated with it and/or whether or not it should be continued. Feedback was generally positive in that it provides a visible role for elders, and helps assist with traffic flow at the end of worship. It was agreed that the program should continue.

Strategic Plan Discussion - David Markham provided an update on the strategic planning process. Finalization of the plan is progressing well, with the hope to distribute a near final draft for Session review and comment in advance of the November Session meeting. The target deadline is to officially roll out the plan in January to start the new year.

Leadership Support Ministry - Based on Session member feedback, Kathryn Sandifer mentioned that she is looking into a Session “gathering” or some type of special event in January. She also has been discussing the idea of proposing a change to the term “committee” to “ministry teams” or something similar. Rev. Beth Waltemath stressed the importance of

eliminating a work style connotation in favor of a more enrichment based approach. Kathryn requested that members consider the suggestion and any other options, and to email suggestions to her. The Session agreed to make any final decisions in alignment with the strategic plan timeline.

Personnel Committee - Annie Godfrey informed the Session that Maria has announced her intent to retire at the end of December. The hope is to find a replacement by the beginning of December to ensure a smooth transition. The position will remain part time at 20 hours per week. Annie also mentioned that the Sabbatical Policy is being reviewed and will be presented at the November Session meeting. Specifically the NDPC policy has a 2 month sabbatical benefit compared with the Presbytery sample policy and industry average of 3 months. It also limits sabbaticals to 1 staff member per year. A more thorough review and discussion will occur at the November meeting.

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta Meeting Volunteers:

Marion Reeves and Carol Tveit volunteered to attend the the next Presbytery of Greater Atlanta meeting on November 14, at the Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church in Duluth, Georgia, from 9-12:00. Prior to the Session meeting, Mary Nevil had also expressed her willingness to attend.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on **Sunday, November 19, 2017, at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.**

After a closing prayer led by moderator Rev. David Lewicki, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Johnson, Clerk of Session