

Stated Session Meeting

North Decatur Presbyterian Church

February 18, 2018

The Session of NDPC met for a stated meeting on **Sunday, February 18, 2018, at approximately 12:30 p.m.** in the Church Parlor.

Elders present: Charles Bonner, Ginny Bowen, Ryan Cass, Wendy Cromwell, Jarvis Ellis, Nancy Gathany, Ellen Herbert, Janet Jasper, Mike Johnson, Sallie Owens, Gabriel Ramirez, Marion Reeves, Kathryn Sandifer, Thom Schreck

Elders excused: Pam Joyce, David Markham, Carol Tveit, Holly Williams

Elders absent: Bob Way

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

Guests: None

The meeting was called to order in the Parlor by Rev. David Lewicki; a quorum was declared present by the Clerk and the agenda adopted as submitted.

Devotional: Marion Reeves led the Session in an opening devotional and prayer.

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

Communication Items and Session Lunch Proposal: Mike Johnson discussed several items of general interest with the Session. First, Mike distributed several letters expressing thanks and gratitude to NDPC for financial and prayer support to various missions and community service programs. This type of information is shared regularly with the Session as a reminder of the important work and difference that is being made by the NDPC congregation through their contributions and through the committee/mission work of the church. Second, with respect to the upcoming calendar, Mike mentioned that there will not be a confirmation class in 2018, while Amanda Osenga confirmed that preparations are in place for a confirmation class in 2019. Third, with regard to lunch volunteers for Session meetings, Mike offered the suggestion that we can routinely order lunch from Jason's Deli for delivery (Meghan in the Church office would handle the order), covering the expense with a \$5 donation per Elder. This proposal would limit lunch volunteer expectations to bringing drinks, meeting the delivery person, and collecting funds. Everyone was supportive of the suggested process going forward.

2017 Annual Statistical Report: Mike Johnson reviewed the 2017 annual statistical report distributed in advance with the Session meeting materials. The report is submitted to PCUSA every year and includes general information on average Church attendance, demographics, budget, Sunday school attendance, etc. Rev. David Lewicki explained the importance of the report for the Session in understanding the statistical story of the church. Several questions and comments were raised including opportunities to amend the report to account for 2017 confirmands as new members, update the average attendance figure, and add capital receipts and expenses. After discussion, the **Session unanimously approved the 2017 statistical report subject to these adjustments.**

The Session then took a brief break to gather lunch at approximately 1:00.

Approval of Upcoming Baptisms: Immediately following lunch and as requested by Rev. David Lewicki, **the Session unanimously approved the upcoming baptism of Theo Scott.**

Hess Academy Lease Discussion: A task force was previously formed to discuss, evaluate and make recommendations regarding potential options for the Hess Academy lease, which will expire in 2019; a memo summarizing the task force recommendations was distributed in advance of the meeting. Marion Reeves and Amanda Osenga provided a summary of the task force discussions and added additional background and perspective. Options include: 1) renewing the lease but at a more competitive rate and/or adding amendments that allow for NDPC to more flexible, personalized use the space, 2) seeking alternative tenants, or 3) no longer leasing space. Questions and concerns were raised with regard to revenue implications, potential tenant alternatives, and the importance of having a dialogue with Hess to gain a better understanding of their future plans. In response to questions regarding the Hess partnership, Rev. David Lewicki responded, and others agreed, that Hess has been a responsible and cooperative tenant. Rev. Lewicki also provided some history related to the Hess Academy and their mission. He also invited any Session members who are interested in coming up with alternatives to let him know. While no decisions were made, there was general support from the Session for exploring a continuing relationship with the Hess Academy if feasible.

Council and Committee Updates / Action Items:

- *Worship Committee* - Janet Jasper requested Session approval for communion to be served at the upcoming Women's and Men's retreats; **Session approval was granted unanimously.**
- *Community Ministries* - Nancy Gathany requested Session approval for the annual backpack fundraiser project that will occur later in the year; the project is coordinated by Jason Schoeneberg and fills approximately 25-30 backpacks for needy students. **The Session unanimously approved this request.** Nancy also mentioned that the annual IAH Christmas party will be held on December 8th. Next, she requested Session

approval for the Home for the Holidays fundraiser, which includes offering handmade ornaments with a request for donations for Decatur Cooperative Ministries at the annual Alternative Gift Market; **this fundraising request was also approved unanimously by the Session.**

- *Leader Support* - Kathryn Sandifer thanked all those who helped with the Session party earlier in the month at Carol Tveit's house, with a special thanks to both Carol and Earl for hosting. She also mentioned that a group of committee chairs had met to discuss patterns of participation and communication within NDPC and across various committees; this led to several clarifying and communication improvement opportunities. In this regard, Rev. Beth Waltemath developed and discussed an organizational chart for the church that was previously distributed. The chart has the congregation at the top, represented then by the Session through various councils and committees. Rev. Waltemath Included with the organizational chart a list of committee liaison assignments by NDPC staff and the co-pastors. Rev Waltemath summarized staff roles as well. Kathryn mentioned that a task force is still working on these issues, although all agreed that the chart and committee liaison assignments was extremely helpful and a terrific step. This topic will be further discussed at an upcoming Session meeting.

Sabbatical Leave Proposals: As chair of the Personnel Committee, Wendy Cromwell led a discussion of proposed sabbatical leave for 2018 for both co-pastors and Clint Miller. Copies of the two sabbatical proposals were distributed to the Session for review. Revs. Lewicki and Waltemath summarized their proposal first, which would run from May 21st through August 12th. Clint's proposal would similarly run through the summer months from June 1st through August 31st. The primary purpose of both sabbaticals is spiritual renewal to be accomplished through writing and reflection as well as, particularly for Clint, attending worship at a variety of churches to observe and gain fresh perspectives. Following several questions related to the sabbatical proposals, the Session discussed the pros and cons of having both sabbaticals overlap during the quieter summer months. There was also discussion of how the daily management of church affairs would be addressed and, of course, how preaching during worship would be covered. Marion Reeves reminded the Session that Amanda Osenga would also be away for extended periods during this time. The co-pastors indicated that they had already reached out to several individuals who responded positively, indicating their willingness to provide assistance; the co-pastors also offered to provide a more detailed plan that ensures effective coverage.

At this time, the co-pastors and staff excused themselves from the meeting to allow the Session to continue the discussion of the sabbatical proposals in executive session. After additional discussion, and subject to review of a more detailed coverage plan, **a motion was made to approve both sabbatical plans as submitted. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by the Session.**

Staff Reports:

- *Co-Pastors Report* - See committee reports for a complete discussion of the co-pastors report.
- *Music Ministries* - Clint Miller mentioned that the Music Committee official met for the first time earlier in the week, and the AV team is meeting next week. Children's choir sang last Sunday, which was videotaped and the children very much enjoyed watching themselves on tape! Lastly p, Clint mentioned that handbells have not been visible for sometime, unfortunately due to various factors such as illness, schedules, etc.
- *Children, Youth and Families* - Amanda Osenga mentioned that child care after worship on the first of the month (when committees are encouraged to meet) is going well but they do not plan to offer child care the first Sunday in March under the assumption that committees will not be meeting due to the Women's retreat. She also mentioned that approximately \$12,500 had been raised so far in the Youth auction, a terrific success and that the OWL program is going very well.

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta Meeting: A summary of the February meeting of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta held at New Life Presbyterian Church was provided in advance by Ellen Herbert and Nancy Gathany (Holly Williams also attended the Presbytery meeting). Highlights from the meeting included the installation of the Executive Presbyter, Aisha Brooks-Lytle, and the new moderator, NDPCs own Rick Neale.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 18, 2018, at 12:30 p.m. in the Parlor.**

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