

Stated Session Meeting

North Decatur Presbyterian Church

March 18, 2018

The Session of NDPC met for a stated meeting on **Saturday, April 21, 2018, at approximately 9:00 a.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, Kathryn Sandifer, Thom Schreck, Carol Tveit, Bob Way, Holly Williams

Elders excused: David Markham, Marion Reeves

Elders absent: Pam Joyce

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

Guests: Rick Neale, Bobbie Wrenn Banks

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

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

Devotional: Rev. Lewicki asked the Session to adjourn to the outside memorial garden where he led the Session in an opening devotional and prayer via song.

After the opening song, the Session returned to the Parlor where Rev. Lewicki led a strategy discussion including a handout (attached) that helped walk through several provocative statistics regarding religiously unaffiliated Americans, Millennial church affiliations, and PCUSA membership, to name a few. He also facilitated a conversation regarding what it means to be spiritually mature. The discussion was a thought provoking and effective way for the Session to begin the retreat.

Preaching Approval: A request for Session to authorize Mr. Tarek Abuatta to preach at the 8:30 worship service on Sunday, May 13, 2018, was submitted. Rev. Lewicki mentioned that Mr Abuatta is as a leading Palestinian Christian theologian. **The preaching approval request was approved unanimously by Session.**

Sabbatical Coverage Planning: Rev. Beth Waltemath began this portion of the meeting by introducing the sabbatical coverage team: Rick Neale and Bobby Wrenn Banks, who each in turn talked about their respective backgrounds and excitement to be supporting NDPC during this period. Rev. Waltemath distributed a copy of the NDPC Preaching and Worship Calendar for 2018, that extends from the end of May through August (attached). She also discussed the on-site, staff coverage duties.

This was followed by Personnel Committee Chair, Wendy Cromwell, who provided an overview of the estimated hours of coverage and funding plan for these hours. Specifically, 11 hours is covered by the .25 FTE increase previously approved in the 2018 budget for co-pastor compensation that will not be used during the sabbatical period. Guest preacher expenses are covered under the Worship Committee budget. Estimated excess hours over the 11 hours, for up to 20 hours total per week, and a stipend for miscellaneous expenses, all which collectively total \$3,500, are proposed to be covered from the Memorial Fund. The Session engaged in a robust discussion of the coverage plan and funding proposal, primarily to ensure complete clarity and understanding.

Following this conversation, the Personnel and Finance committees moved for Session to approve: 1) up to 20 hours a week for sabbatical coverage with a baseline of 11 hours a week and a prorated stipend of \$250 for travel and other business expenses incurred over the sabbatical period; 2) an additional 5 weeks of honorariums to be added to the Worship budget for guest preachers to cover 12 weeks of guest preachers as needed; and 3) the use of memorial funds up to the following amounts: \$3500 for sabbatical pastoral coverage, \$1000 for guest preacher honorariums, and up to \$250 stipend for expenses. **Session voted unanimously to approve the Personnel and Finance motions.** (Note the musician schedule during Clint Miller's sabbatical will be reviewed at the May 20th Session meeting.)

Children and Youth Ministries Transition Plan: Rev. Beth Waltemath introduced this topic by reminding the Session that much of the transition logistics were previously discussed in Amanda Osenga's resignation announcement to the congregation. An important component of this plan is the hiring of the firm, Ministry Architects, who will perform a review of the youth program from May 18, 19, and 20th, with the last day culminating in a presentation to the congregation scheduled for 4:00 p.m. (Note the start time for the Session meeting scheduled for May 20th will be changed to begin at 2:30 or 3:00.) The plan from Ministry Architects will focus on families, leadership and staffing with the goal of improving, strengthening, and growing a sustainable youth program for NDPC. This information will also inform future hiring decisions related to ministry support for the children and youth programs.

Session members asked numerous questions throughout the discussion and were informed that CYF leadership is confident that the program is well established through the end of 2018. From a calendaring standpoint, May is viewed as an assessment period, while this summer will be a period of further discussion and discernment, followed by initiation of the hiring process in the Fall. Also in the Fall, an intern has been identified who will assist with the youth program.

The Session adjourned for a short break at approximately 10:30 a.m. and reconvened at approximately 10:45 a.m.

Overview of Committee Goals for 2018: A handout was provided to the Session in advance of the meeting (attached) that organized committees by council and included the stated goals of each committee for 2018. The Session engaged in a round table discussion of the goals and priorities for each committee for the year. This process sparked a very good dialogue and improved awareness with numerous questions, comments, and opportunities for cross-committee partnerships identified.

Council Breakout Group Discussions: Unfortunately the Session ran out of time and was not able to breakout into council discussions as originally planned. Instead, **all councils are encouraged to meet separately with a report out by council on common objectives, areas of overlap, and gaps relative to the strategic plan to be discussed at the June 10, 2018 Session meeting.**

Calendar “Go Round” Discussion: Session members were reminded to enter any subcommittee, committee or council activities on the calendar posted in the hall outside of the Parlor.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on **Sunday, May 20, 2018, from either 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. in the Parlor.**

After a closing prayer in the memorial garden led by moderator Rev. David Lewicki, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Johnson, Clerk of Session