

Stated Session Meeting

North Decatur Presbyterian Church

June 10, 2018

The Session of NDPC met for a stated meeting on **Sunday, June 10, 2018, at approximately 11:35 p.m.** in the Church Parlor.

Elders present: Charles Bonner, Wendy Cromwell, Jarvis Ellis, Nancy Gathany, Ellen Herbert, Janet Jasper, Mike Johnson, Pam Joyce, David Markham, Marion Reeves, Kathryn Sandifer, Thom Schreck, Holly Williams

Elders excused: Ginny Bowen, Ryan Cass, Sallie Owens, Carol Tveit

Elders absent: Gabriel Ramirez, Bob Way

Pastors and Staff present: Sabbatical Pastors Rick Neale and Bobbie Wrenn Banks

Guests: None

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

Devotional: Thom Schreck led the Session in the opening devotional and prayer.

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

Ministry Architects Report: Marion Reeves, chair of the Children, Youth and Families Committee (CYF), began the discussion by providing some background related to the report; specifically she reminded the Session that work on the grant proposal for Ministry Architects began well before Amanda Osenga submitted her resignation; an important reminder that these events are not linked. She also mentioned that the report was supported by funds from the grant, which includes \$1,000 for a Youth project, and the Personnel Committee. Marion displayed two charts on the wall that included statistics related to the programs and a summary of recommendations. She also distributed a handout that provided a nice summary of the assets and challenges described in the report along with the 2018 goals agreed to at the recent CYF meeting.

With this information, the Session discussed the status of the program agreeing that our volunteer commitment supports the potential for further growth and that the Fall program is fully covered. In addition, one of the upcoming interns has expressed an interest in working with and supporting the Youth program. Marion also indicated that CYF will focus on developing a solid Youth working group that will likely meet quarterly to help support that program. A lengthy discussion also focused on the importance of updating the Child Protection Policy and related

training expectations and the need to ensure parents are aware they assume liability for their children's safety outside of structured Church activities. Given the solid foundation already in place, CYF will work with the Personnel Committee on revising job descriptions and the hiring process for a Children and Youth program coordinator targeted for later in the year. **It was further suggested, and Marion agreed, to write an article for the Communitor to update the congregation on the Ministry Architects report, the positive position of the children and youth programs, and future plans.**

Congregational Care Calls: After a short break to gather lunch, Mike Johnson summarized the Congregational care call program and asked for feedback both on the usefulness of the program and method (calls) as well as any feedback themes that were identified. Related to themes, it was agreed that contacts generally felt something similar to the following: "There is a lot of change at NDPC but overall I am very pleased with the Church." The Session shared some experiences from the calls and nice examples of the importance of this type of contact. They also offered several suggestions for improvement next year, with a consensus around the following:

1. Allowing significant flexibility in how communications occur (calls, texts, in-person, etc.) and over a longer period of time while retaining a deadline, and
2. Linking Elder contacts with their Parishes to the extent possible.

Council Meeting Reports: Mike Johnson introduced this topic by mentioning the importance of renewing council meetings and the goal of linking those discussions to the strategic plan objectives. Thom Schreck reported out on the Community Life Council April meeting. At that meeting they agreed to work to more strongly integrate events with communications and social media, and acknowledged that there was a lot of similar work that could be better coordinated. They also agreed to leverage the Parishes to address volunteer shortages, as well as meal care and new member engagement. They will meet again in September.

Marion Reeves mentioned that the Education Council did not officially meet because CFY and Adult Education coordinate on a regular basis. She did agree that an opportunity exists to more tightly coordinate with the Worship Committee as well.

Nancy Gathney reported out on the Mission Council meeting, which included recommendations to continue coordination across all three committees, communicate routinely with each other to avoid duplication of effort, use screens in the sanctuary to promote committee events, offer opportunities for Congregational engagement, and to suggest the need for a person in charge of the affordable housing goal (see below), and explore ways each committee can support the affordable housing goal.

This sparked a lengthy discussion regarding how to move forward with respect to the affordable housing strategic goal including the need for a person(s) in charge of a working group or task force (not a new committee). **Nancy and Rev. Bobbie Wrenn Banks agreed to coordinate communications and begin the process by moderating an upcoming meeting of interested parties to launch this effort.**

During the Council discussions, Ellen Herbert also shared that recent potential new members had a bad experience with respect to schedule time changes related to their interview with the Session. **Ellen will gather potential future dates that work for them for an upcoming interview and Session agreed to hold a Called Session meeting based on their convenience.**

Council and Committee Updates / Action Items:

- *Leader Support and Engagement* - As a follow up to the previous Session meeting, Kathryn Sandifer offered a motion to elect an inactive Elder to serve as a permanent Presbyterian delegate for NDPC for the remainder of 2018 and through the full year 2019. She offer a second motion for Session approval for either Fran Mohr, Martha Shepherd, or David Evans to serve in this capacity. **Both motions were seconded and approved unanimously.**
- *Community Ministries* - Nancy Gathney brought an important volunteer opportunity for an El Refugio volunteer coordinator position. Nancy agreed to forward the volunteer expectations to the Session for consideration and possible recommendations.

Interim Pastors Report: Rev. Rick Neale mentioned that the transition during this sabbatical period has been seamless and that he and Rev. Bobbie Wrenn are still working on the rhythm of their church duties. He reminded Session that they are on hand to support committee needs this summer. He also mentioned that he is excited about the November 10, 2018 meeting of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta which will focus on “Fear+Less Dialogues”, a groundbreaking program that focuses on real solutions to problems of chronic unemployment, violence and hopelessness. Finally, Rick provided an update regarding a homeless individual who frequents the NDPC grounds; she now has a valid Georgia ID and is working with Ariel Hart toward receiving disability income. Rick and Rev. Bobby Wrenn are planning to gather individuals who have experience working with her for a “summit” to coordinate activities and objectives.

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta Meeting Volunteers: Janet Jasper and Nancy Gathney graciously volunteered to represent NDPC at the August 18, 2018 meeting that will be held at Roswell Presbyterian Church, while Ellen Herbert and Marion Reeves volunteered for the November 10, 2018 meeting at Clairmont Presbyterian Church.

Calendar “Go Round” Discussion: Session was reminded to include any new events on the hall calendar. Nancy Gathney mentioned that, again this year, there will be an apple tree in the Narthex this coming July to support back to school backpacks.

During this time, Wendy Cromwell also asked the Session for a short daily prayer for CYF and the Personnel Committee during this time of discernment and transition.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on **Sunday, August 19, 2018, at 11:30 in the Parlor.**

After a closing prayer led by moderator Rev. Rick Neale, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Johnson, Clerk of Session