

Stated Session Meeting

North Decatur Presbyterian Church

November 17, 2019

The Session of NDPC met for a stated meeting on **Sunday, November, 17, 2019, at approximately 12:30 p.m.** in the Church Parlor.

Elders present: Charles Bonner, Wendy Cromwell, Jarvis Ellis, Nancy Gathany, Audra Grace, Ellen Herbert, Jill Jacques, Janet Jasper, Mike Johnson, Carol Morgan, Deedee Murphy, Gabriel Ramirez, Marion Reeves, David Root, Thom Schreck, Carol Tveit, David Wilkes, Holly Williams

Elders excused: None

Elders absent: Macon Sandifer, Ike Veal

Pastors and Staff present: Rev. David Lewicki, Rev. Beth Waltemath, Erin Cooper, Clint Miller

Guests: None

The meeting was called to order in the Parlor by the Moderator Rev. Beth Waltemath; a quorum was declared present by the Clerk and the agenda adopted with the addition of two added fundraising proposals and a Personnel Committee update, all to be discussed in the Council and Committee Updates section of the agenda.

Devotional: Gabreil Ramirez led the Session in an opening prayer and devotional.

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

New Committee Assignments for 2020: Rev. Waltemath discussed proposed new committee assignments for the elder class of 2020, which are listed below.

- Claudia Brogan - Community Fellowship
- Mark Cochran - Congregational Care
- Virginia Pribbenow - Children, Youth & Family
- David Roberts - Clerk
- Cile Vardeman - Congregational Care
- Susan White - Communications

In addition to these changes, Audra Grace will join the Peace & Justice Committee. Moreover, Gabriel Ramirez is filling a two year term, and has agreed to extend that term for a third year to support continuity for the Finance Committee; this results in an increase in the number of elders on Session for 2020 from 18 to 19 (note, Gabriel was nominated to fill this added term at the

October 20th Congregational meeting). **A motion was presented by the Nominating Committee to expand Session from 18 to 19 for 2020 only.** After some discussion to ensure this would not result in a permanent increase in elders on Session (absent a separate motion and discussion), **the motion was adopted unanimously.**

Revitalization Grant Status Update: Rev. Lewicki led a discussion of the status of the Revitalization Grant. Specifically, he mentioned that a team is working with Hess Academy and Science of Fun on plans to update the playground area while maintaining its existing natural feel. Up to four Choir scholars are being lined up to enhance the youth choir experience; they will be paid \$30 per hour for rehearsals and performance time. Regarding Ministry Fellows, Rob Schoonover is looking to extend his commitment and hours in 2020 beyond the initial one year to add a few more hours devoted to the youth. This has been approved by Personnel Committee. A few questions ensued, such as confirming the final amount of the grant at \$55,000.

Matthew 25 Church Discussion: Rev. Lewicki introduced the idea of NDPC becoming a Matthew 25 church. PCUSA initiated a bold vision to invite all churches to formerly agree to be a Matthew 25 church, which calls us all to be engaged in the world around us through peace and justice in mission. By becoming a Matthew 25 church, NDPC becomes part of a group of churches that affirms that our core identity is to focus on Congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. A motion was made and seconded for NDPC to officially join and become a Matthew 25 church. After some discussion including clarifying that there are no financial implications, another motion was made to amend the initial motion to acknowledge that NDPC is already adhering to the tenets of Matthew 25; this motion was seconded and approved unanimously, **therefore the initial motion was amended to acknowledge that NDPC already adheres to the Matthew 25 tenants and, in so doing, is accepting the Matthew 25 invitation. This motion was approved unanimously.** (Note, subsequent to the meeting, the Clerk registered NDPC as a Matthew 25 church.)

Memorial Reserve Fund Proposal: A copy of a proposal from Finance Committee related to the use of Memorial Funds was previously distributed to the Session. Gabriel Ramirez led a discussion of the proposal. A lengthy discussion ensued primarily focused on walking through several possible scenarios to ensure everyone had a complete understanding of the proposal. Several suggestions were offered to amend the proposed policy. These included dropping the first bullet requiring a Pastor to kindly request family members to consider the main focus of funds and to replace the phrase “zero out” with “reallocate”. The Finance Committee will update the policy to reflect these suggestions. Related to recommendations 2-5, Session thanked and encouraged the Finance Committee to continue to work on developing policies and procedures to implement those recommendations and to discuss those with the Session at the appropriate time.

The first sentence of recommendation 1 related to the designation of use of the Memorial Funds requires Session approval. Therefore, a motion was made and seconded to adopt the recommendation. After discussion, the recommendation was amended to read **“The Finance**

Council recommends that the minimum for the Operating Reserve level be set equal to 3-months basic must pay operating expenses.” A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously to adopt this recommendation. Session thanked Gabriel and his Committee for their quick, excellent work.

2020 Calendar Proposal and Discussion: Mike Johnson distributed and walked through a proposed calendar for Stated Session meetings and critical events for 2020. Session walked through each month providing comments related to holidays, school conflicts and discussed the possibility of a session retreat. The calendar was amended accordingly and subsequently distributed for another round of consideration.

Council and Committee Updates / Action Items:

- *Stewardship Committee* - Jill Jacques mentioned that the capital campaign has received \$1.35 million compared to its \$1.4 million goal. In addition, for the 2020 stewardship campaign, current pledges account for 89 percent of the goal with several likely pledges still outstanding! Specifically, 49 pledge units are expected, with \$76,000 needed. Calls and emails to those units will be going out shortly. Jill also mentioned that 65 Time & Talent forms have been received compared to approximately 50 or so at this time last year. The hope is to automate this process in Realm in the near term. Jill will do some research into how other churches manage this process.
- *Personnel Committee* - Wendy Cromwell mentioned that the Committee is working on updating the personnel manual. She also mentioned that the benefits enrollment period has expired; dental was added this year and she thanked all for their feedback into the benefits work. Wendy discussed a deeply personal matter asking for continued prayers for her health from the Session.
- *CYF Committee* - Marion Reeves discussed a fundraiser that is being planned by the youth to raise money for their retreat; the fundraiser would involve a talent type show to be held in April. **A motion was made, seconded and adopted unanimously to authorize the planned youth fundraiser.** Marion also discussed the possibility of having the youth babysit during church events; youth who feel compelled to would have the opportunity to donate their earnings to support this year’s retreat efforts. Marion was encouraged to remain sensitive to the voluntary nature of the activity.
- *Music Request* - Clint Miller requested session approval to receive a donation during the December Holiday concert, with half of the proceeds to be donated to LANTA for music scholarships. **This motion was received, seconded and approved unanimously.**
- *Miscellaneous* - During the Committee discussions, David Root mentioned that the Science of Fun lease has been extended for 3 years, and David Wilkes mentioned that he is soliciting new Adult Education Committee members.

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta: Holly Williams, Ellen Herbert, and Martha Shepherd attended the November Presbytery meeting and Holly reported that they were impressed with the alliteration and purpose of the meeting. In addition to the core of the meeting, Holly mentioned that the Hunger Walk is scheduled for March 15, 2020. Mike Johnson mentioned that a new permanent

Presbytery delegate will be needed to replace Martha in 2020, and he asked session members, especially who's term is expiring, to consider serving in this capacity.

Staff Reports:

- *Children and Youth Ministries Report* - Erin Cooper recently met with the parents of middle schoolers to begin discussing the process of confirmation for 8th graders in 2020.
- *Music Committee Report* - Clint Miller submitted his report in writing.
- *Co-Pastors Report* - See Rev. Waltemath's comments below.

Calendar "Go Round" Discussion: Mike Johnson mentioned that there is a Called Session meeting on November 24th immediately following worship in the Parlor for the purpose of examining potential new members. Rev. Waltemath discussed the need for a session training activity to prepare session to accept Karen Fletcher and Allison Arsino under NDPC care as Ministers in Word and Sacrament. The Stated Session meeting in December will be held to examine Karen Fletcher for this purpose.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 15, 2019, at 12:30 p.m. in the Parlor.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Johnson, Clerk of Session