

## **Stated Session Meeting**

### **North Decatur Presbyterian Church**

**March 18, 2018**

The Session of NDPC met for a stated meeting on **Sunday, March 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, Pam Joyce, Sallie Owens, Gabriel Ramirez, Marion Reeves, Kathryn Sandifer, Carol Tveit, Holly Williams

Elders excused: David Markham, Thom Schreck, Bob Way

Elders absent: None

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 the moderator, Rev. Beth Waltemath; a quorum was declared present by the Clerk and the agenda adopted subject to two modifications: 1) deletion of a duplicate agenda item for preaching approval and 2) the addition of a fundraising request by Global Missions.**

**Devotional:** Sallie Owens led the Session in an opening devotional and prayer.

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

**Communication and Calendaring Discussion:** Mike Johnson discussed several options developed by an ad hoc group consisting of Mike, Kathryn Sandifer, Marion Reeves, Martha Shepherd and Rev. Beth Waltemath to enhance cross committee communications within the church. The overall purpose is to improve information flows, including calendaring, and ultimately to enhance the Congregational experience. Suggestions discussed include developing a common protocols document for use by all committees and subcommittees. The idea is to better define the roles of the committees, relations with subcommittees, leadership authorities, pastoral connections, meeting frequency, clarify decision-making and how work is distributed, etc. A similar idea is to develop a communications and email protocol framework that would address time sensitive communication and include protocols that deal with issues like acknowledging receipt, staff office hours, when to use the phone, email or text and other communication challenges. A third idea is to reinstate periodic council meetings; this idea will be piloted at the upcoming April half day Session planning meeting.

In addition to the ideas above, Mike suggested that we could add a standing agenda item to each Session meeting that would involve a “calendar go round” where each committee chair highlights new or significant upcoming events. A further suggestion was to engage the Communications Committee to provide further assistance on this topic, including Google calendar training and other similar activities.

Kathryn Sandifer then described a specific proposal to improve calendaring transparency. Under her proposal, a monthly paper calendar representing each month for the upcoming four to five months would be brought to each Session meeting; members would update the calendar in writing at the beginning of each meeting. Rev. Beth Waltemath distributed copies of an electronic monthly calendar that staff can produce for each Session meeting as a refinement to Kathryn’s suggestion. A suggestion was made to merge this idea with the “calendar go idea” concept previously discussed. Session members engaged in a robust discussion of all of these ideas and suggested that a portion of a meeting in the Fall could be devoted to discussing the calendar for the upcoming year. With these suggestions, a consensus formed around trying the monthly calendar, calendar go round, Fall calendar meeting and council meetings initially.

**Session Congregational Care Calls:** Mike Johnson distributed a listing of the NDPC active member rolls, and discussed the annual Session Congregational care call program. The idea is to have an Elder reach out to each active member household as a “check in” to make sure NDPC is meeting their needs, and offer assistance and fellowship as needed. The approved active member roll was divided amongst each Elder, and a **target deadline of April 30th was agreed upon to complete the Congregational care calls.**

**April Stated Session Meeting Agenda Discussion:** Rev. Beth Waltemath reminded the Session that the April Stated meeting is designed as a half day Saturday morning meeting running from 9am - 12:00pm. Initial thoughts for the agenda are: 1) a detail discussion of the sabbatical coverage plan; 2) an overview of each committee’s goals for 2018; 3) council breakout groups to identify common objectives, potential overlaps, and/gaps relative to the strategic plan. **Session members agreed that this would be an appropriate and robust agenda for the planning meeting.**

#### **Council and Committee Updates / Action Items:**

- *Worship Committee* - Janet Jasper requested Session approval for Aisha Brooks Lytle to preach at the May 6th worship service; **Session approval was granted unanimously.**
- *Children, Youth, and Families Committee* - Marion Reeves walked through changes to the *Child and Youth Protection Covenant*, copies of which were previously distributed to the Session. Among other changes, Marion highlighted the expanded list and 24 hour timeframe to report suspicious activity. She also discussed the new social media policy included in the Covenant, which emphasizes the importance of avoiding individual communications. This topic sparked some discussion related to specific examples and

circumstances of necessary communications or those that might be initiated by the youth; of course, youth safety and common sense need to be applied to the policy. Marion also mentioned that the travel guidelines in the policy were reviewed by parents as well as from a legal perspective. **A motion was made to adopt the *Child and Youth Protection Covenant* as presented; the motion was approved unanimously by Session.**

Marion also requested Session approval for City Bar BQ, or a similar restaurant, to sponsor a day in April when a percentage of their profits will go to support the youth program at NDPC. **Session approval was granted unanimously.**

- *Global Missions* - Gabriel Ramirez requested Session approval for a contingency fund raising event to support the Kamil family, who recently had to move apartments for safety reasons. While necessary, the move resulted in breaking their lease with the original apartment complex. Funds from a fund raising activity would be used to pay any fees associated with breaking the initial lease. At this early stage, specifics related to the amount of funds needed, timing or type of fundraiser are not yet known. **While Session members were sympathetic and supportive of the concept, additional information was requested before moving forward with a Session vote.**

#### **Staff Reports:**

- *Co-Pastors Report* - See committee reports for a complete discussion of the co-pastors report. Of the items in that written report, Rev. David Lewicki highlighted that there is a high volume of building use requests for summer camps and youth activities from third party organizations. While the interest is a positive development potentially from a budget standpoint, it is putting a strain on staff to effectively analyze each proposal and to make decisions without a sufficient building use policy. Staff is working on such a policy and exploring the fair market value for our space. David suggested and it was agreed that a task force should be formed to support the evaluation process.
- *Music Ministries* - Clint Miller mentioned that the children are preparing to assist and help lead worship service on Palm Sunday.
- *Children, Youth and Families* - Amanda Osenga mentioned hard as it is to believe, but we are already recruiting for Sunday school teachers in the Fall. She further encouraged the Session to get to know are terrific youth at the church on a personal level.

**Presbytery of Greater Atlanta Meeting: Pam Joyce and Kathryn Sandifer** volunteered to represent NDPC at the next Presbytery of Greater Atlanta meeting on May 1, 2018, from 4-8:00pm, at the Smyrna Presbyterian Church in Conyers, Georgia. An opportunity for one additional volunteer remains if another Elder is interested.

#### **Upcoming Meetings:**

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on **Saturday, April 21, 2018, from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in the Parlor.**

After a closing prayer led by moderator Rev. Beth Waltemath, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Michael Johnson*, Clerk of Session