

Stated Session Meeting

North Decatur Presbyterian Church

May 19, 2019

The Session of NDPC met for a stated meeting on **Sunday, May 19, 2019, at approximately 12:30 p.m.** in the Church Parlor.

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

Elders excused: Ellen Herbert, Deedee Murphy, Macon Sandifer, Ike Veal, Holly Williams

Elders absent: None

Pastors and Staff present: Co-Pastors David Lewicki & Beth Waltemath

Guests: None

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

Devotional: Carol Tveit led the Session in a moving opening prayer and devotional based on Corinthians 12, 4-11.

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

Caring/Sharing/Connecting: Following on momentum from the April retreat, Rev. Beth Waltemath facilitated a discussion with the group by posing the question: where have you seen caring, sharing and connecting in your groups, committees or councils? David Wilkes mentioned that he recently opened an Adult Education meeting by asking attendees to share concerns before the opening prayer, which he felt led to a positive, more personal experience. Congregational care calls were mentioned as another example, along with a great experience at a recent small group Men's gathering as well as CYF coming together absent permanent staff support. Session members then lifted up several specific prayer concerns.

Post Retreat Follow Up Reports: Minutes from the April retreat breakout sessions by Council were previously distributed electronically and handouts were also provided during this meeting. Each of the council Moderators, Mike Johnson, Rev. Beth Waltemath, Carol Morgan, and Rev. David Lewicki, summarized their Council discussions with added input and support from other Council members. All agreed the time was well spent as the groups focused on potential pruning opportunities, areas of potential growth, and sharing specific challenges. Refer to the April minutes for further details.

Potential “Stuck” Issues - A Proposed Process Framework: Carol Morgan provided a framework for group problem solving to be piloted at the June 9th Session meeting, during which the topic for focused problem solving will be on the lack of volunteers and sign ups for food during the Fellowship hour. Carol provided a handout summarizing the framework, which is included with the minutes. Essentially the framework begins with a factual presentation of the issue, followed by a go round asking fact-based questions. This is then followed by brainstorming explanations for the problem in order to put it into context, and only then does the brainstorming for a solution begin. After some explanatory questions, it was agreed that session should pilot the framework in June as proposed.

Proposed Framework for Three Year Financial Planning: Jill Jacques has agreed to lead an effort across councils and committees to focus on a three-year budget planning horizon. The goal is to step out of the typical day-to-day budget and planning horizon and instead start dreaming about what could be. This process will also be linked to Stewardship and Communications, which will allow for the articulation of a stronger vision and “what” explanation for each area. In other words, we want to answer the question: “what do we need to fund to bring our strategic plan to life?” Jill handed out a template that will be used to guide the process and she passed around a sign-up sheet requesting that each committee reach out for a time to begin the discussion with her. She asked that all come to the meeting with her prepared with an understanding of their budget, and any relevant facts related to their respective committees.

Congregational Care Calls: Next, Mike Johnson led a discussion related to the Congregational care call program that began in March. The discussion was centered around three primary questions: 1) what, if any, themes emerged from your care calls? 2) what, if any, process changes would you recommend for next year’s calls? and 3) what was the general response to how the Congregation feels most connected to NDPC? While not everyone has yet completed their call list, for those that had, this still proved to be a worthwhile discussion. Different approaches to the calls were mentioned from cold calling, to emailing in advance followed by a call, to in-person conversations. Connections with NDPC also ranged from worship and the sermons to choir to various ministries and programs. In all, people contacted appreciated the connection and opportunity for input. Also, it was strongly agreed that conducting the calls by Parish was a positive change worth continuing into coming years.

Council and Committee Updates / Action Items:

- *Community Ministries* - Nancy Gathany requested Session approval to conduct the annual backpack fundraiser in support of the Initiative for Affordable Housing; funds will be used to fill backpacks for 25-30 children. **A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously in support of the fundraiser.**
- *Personnel* - Wendy Cromwell discussed a motion that was previously distributed electronically in advance of the meeting to allocate use of \$23,100 in surplus personnel funds from 2018. The motion recommends the allocation of these funds as follows:

pastors sabbatical and summer coverage at 22%, professional development and training for staff at 43%, space and facilities (offices) at 19%, general miscellaneous expenses at 12%, and benevolence (pastors fund) at 4%. After some discussion, **the motion was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously**. While she had the floor, Wendy also provided an update on the CYF leadership search. Specifically, she mentioned that the search committee had narrowed the search to the top 6 candidates, which represented a diverse pool except they all were female. Of these, 3 withdrew and the focus is now centered on a specific candidate who the committee is strongly supporting; in fact, the candidate came to church this Sunday to work with the children, and all early reports are very positive. The next step is for Personnel to work with Finance on a proposal. (The Personnel update was moved up in the agenda to follow the Council reports.)

- *Worship Committee* - Janet Jasper and Rev. Beth Waltemath provided an overview of the summer preaching series that will be focused on “surprising texts in the Bible”. Preachers will include several affiliate preachers as well as diversity-oriented preachers. Specifically, with regard to the latter, Laura Cheifitz is proposed to preach on June 9, and Isaiah Lewis is proposed to preach on June 23. **A motion to approve these two preachers was made, seconded, and approved unanimously by Session.**

Staff Reports:

- *Co-Pastors Report* - Rev. Beth Waltemath and Rev. David Lewicki both mentioned that May has been an extremely busy month. They are excited about the CYF candidate and have been working hard on completing the revitalization grant proposal, submission of which is targeted for June 1. Two new interns are expected to begin with the next educational calendar year, with a 2-year commitment each. The co-pastors will be on vacation from June 2-21 but have arranged for support from affiliate pastors.
- *Music Ministries* - Clint Miller submitted his report in writing, which is included in the monthly committee/council reports summary.

Calendar “Go Round” Discussion: All were encouraged to review and finalize the calendar previously distributed by Iyabo.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on **Sunday, June 9, 2019, at 11:30 a.m. in the Parlor.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Johnson, Clerk of Session