**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

**Stated Session Meeting (In-Person)**

**September 15, 2024**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

**Members Present:** Stephanie Sorge, Moderator; Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session; Jason Brown; David Carothers; Rick Comstock; Yogi Gillette; Virginia Healy; Amy Lemmons; Mary Lou McMillin; Susie Phend; Ginnie Reinhold; Bob Schminkey; and Kim Shank, Associate for Pastoral Care.

**Excused/Absent**: Mark Dewey and Kandy Grant. Approved. A quorum was present.

**Call to Order:** Stephanie called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

**Opening Devotion**: Yogi shared a devotion on a recent encounter he had with another person that began somewhat negatively, but ended very positively on both sides as they listened to each other.

**Sharing Joys and Concerns:** Stephanie and Session members shared prayer concerns and joys for members and friends of the Trinity congregation. Other pastoral concern items are contained on the Session website. Stephanie led a moment of prayer.

**Consent Agenda**: Today’s docket, the minutes from the Stated Session Meeting on August 18, 2024 and the excused absences from today’s meeting were approved.

**Clerk’s Report:**

1. Communion was observed during online and in-person worship on Sunday, September 1, as previously approved. The Rev. Bill Reinhold and Ginnie Reinhold served Communion as an extension of the table to one person at Bridgewater Retirement Community.
2. Yogi Gillette was installed as Elder, Class of 2025, during worship this morning.
3. The Celebration of Life for Beverly Silver, a long-time member of, Trinity, was held at Trinity at 4:00pm on Saturday, September 7.
4. Linda shared a recent thank you note.

**Finance Team:**  Linda

1. Treasurer’s Reports – The Operating Budget Report shows that we had a total general year-to-date income of $202,789.69 as of the end of August 2024 – which is approximately 117% of the general income anticipated year-to-date. This figure includes pledges, loose offering, building use, and interest.  Our actual expenses were $203,433.80 – which is 98% of our anticipated year-to-date expense. The Fund Activity Report shows a current balance of $178,300.
2. Our Edward Jones Investments as of the end of August were as follows:
* Account with CDs and money market   $240,278.17 5.2% growth rate
* Account with Skip Whitmore funds           $ 72,153.38 8.1% growth rate
* Account with combined funds (managed)     $328,316.93 9.7% growth rate
* Total balance as of 8/30/24                       $641,003.48

The account with Raymond James as part of the bequest from Vivian Hevener has now been closed, with the balance, $108,000, transferred to our Edward Jones account. This amount is reflected in the Edward Jones total balance above.

For Action;

1. Two days before our Finance Team meeting, we unexpectedly, and gratefully, received an additional check for $147,683.80 as the final distribution from Vivian Hevener’s estate. We now have roughly $255,000 to invest. As you can see from above, the managed accounts are performing better than the CDs and money market account. The managed accounts are not as safe as the CD and money market accounts, but they are more likely to outperform over time.

**The team proposes that Trinity invest $50,000 into two additional CDs of $25,000 each – one for 18 months and the other for 24 months, and renew two current CDs that come due in October and November at their current time periods so that we have a laddered investment. Then we would move the remaining $205,000 into the managed account. Approved.**

There was discussion about renaming the Parish Nurse Fund more appropriately since we do not currently have a parish nurse. It was suggested that the Pastoral Care Team and the Personnel Committee first explore need for a parish nurse.

For Information:

1. Work on the Balance Sheet is continuing, and the team hopes to have this ready to share with the Session in October.
2. The team is continuing discussion to develop a detailed set of Standard Operating Procedures for each of its many activities and to ensure that more than one person is trained to carry out these functions. The goal will be to have the document complete by the end of the year!

1. Stewardship – Nancy and the Matthew 25 Team will make some final revisions to the Theology of Stewardship statement to present it for Session approval in October.

The team also identified a potential schedule of stewardship activities for this fall:

* October Nous article
* Moments for Stewardship in October (coordinate with Harvest Team)
* Time and Talent form revisions – Session Teams, House Churches, Marks Groups – due by October 13
* 2025 Budget requests – due by November 10
* Giving statements – distribute in October
* Stewardship packets – prepare for distribution at congregational retreat on October 27 at Massanetta Springs
1. Personnel Update – Bob Schminkey is now serving on the Personnel Committee. Bob, we will miss you!

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, October 10, 6:30 over Zoom.

**Pastoral Care Associate’s Report**

For Information:

1. Bill and Ginnie Reinhold continue to offer Communion as an extension of the table to Jean Hogshead and others at the Bridgewater Retirement community.
2. Trinity grief groups are up and running. There are 4-7 people coming to the Thursday morning groups. The bi-weekly Wednesday group may become a virtual offering that is open to the larger community.
3. Kim is currently meeting with 3-4 Trinity folks on a weekly basis for pastoral care or spiritual direction.
4. As outreach, Kim is also meeting with four members of the surrounding community, free of charge, for pastoral care. She has been approached by others to whom she has connected for longer term counseling. Feel free to send friends and neighbors to her; she loves getting people connected to whatever services they need. \* Short-term pastoral care would be for things like marital difficulties, phase of life concerns, questions of vocation, or spiritual wranglings.

**Pastor’s Report:**

For Discussion and/or Action:

1. We discussed the following Animal Farm Squirrel question from the January Session retreat: What distractions are keeping us from our tasks? Points raised included:
* the grief and constant loss that we are all carrying.
* how much our church is changing and how that is changing us. In ten years, we will be dramatically different, and we don’t know what that will look like. This can produce anxiety, and we need to learn how to move forward through conflict resolution vs. conflict avoidance.
* concerns about money and our need to be good stewards

Next month the Animal Farm topic will be Road Kill: Name and embrace our epic failures.

1. After discussion, Mary Lou made, and Rick seconded, a motion to cancel the December Session meeting because of other schedule conflicts. Approved. Bob then made, and Amy seconded, a motion to pay all bills through January based on our current budget. Approved.

For Information:

1. Boundary training will be held after new Elders are elected.
2. A Church Property Webinar will be held this Friday and Saturday. There is one spot available; please see Stephanie if you would like to attend.
3. Trinity will participate in an ecumenical Blessing of the Animals service on Wednesday, October 2, at 6:30pm at one of the Hillandale shelters. (11 or 12)
4. Stephanie is chairing the Administration sub-committee for the newly reunited COM, which will involve a major overhaul of presbytery forms and policies.
5. Stephanie has applied to a program for women in executive leadership through Princeton Seminary. Interviews are ongoing through November. If she is selected for this, the cost based on our church size would be $3,500, spread over 2025-26, not including travel costs to Princeton for two residential weeks. This would exceed her continuing education budget over those two years combined, and she wondered if this could be subsidized or covered by other budgetary line items or funds. She would welcome any comments, questions, and for the Finance Team to be aware of this possibility as we head into budget creation season.

Calendar Dates:

1. 2024 Vacation (subject to change) - June 7-15, July 22-August 4, November 22-30
2. 2024 Continuing Education - May 6-12 for a conference in Montreat and August 5-11 - Youth Mental Health First Aid training (could not do this because of Larry’s service), watching videos from the Festival of Homiletics, and gathering with clergy friends for a short retreat.

**Task Forces**

Misconduct Policy Task Force Bob

See the report on the *Medical or Family Leave Policy* under the Personnel Team report.

Grounds for Hope Task Force Mary Lou

1. Malcolm Cameron and Mary Lou met with Brett Minnick from Ground Effects on Thursday afternoon to request an estimate for a permeable parking lot adjacent to the Maryland Avenue front property. They don’t have his report back yet. Malcolm is checking with the city about an easement.

Library

1. Judy LePera presented a proposal to the Board of Directors of Open Doors that Trinity develop and support a lending library at Open Doors (see attached). Mary Lou made, and Susie seconded, a motion to accept this proposal. Enthusiastically approved.

**Marks Groups and House Churches**

Reaching Out Kim

1. Reaching Out is considering recalling as a Marks Group.

Sanctuary Ginnie

No report

Backpack Stephanie

1. Forty-three bags were given out last week. The estimate is that this will be the average for the year.

Centering Space Mary Lou

1. Centering Space plans on recalling as a Marks Group on September 22.
2. It is planning an ice cream/dessert social with friends for Palestine on October 6.

1. New classes: Yoga started a new session in September, beginning September 3 with 12 participants. Enneagram class began on September 9 with 13 people registered.
2. Sandy Hodge is coming to talk about our bio-retention base with her garden group on November 8 at 10:00.
3. It is hosting a shared viewing of *Faith & Democracy: Confronting White Christian Nationalism* on Thursday, September 19 from 6-8:30 p.m.Four people have signed up so far.If you would like to join us…please do.
4. It is hosting a Bible Remixed Zoom course: *Wine, Women, and Song: Luke and an Economics of Generosity* on six Tuesdays from September 24-November 12 from 7-9 p.m. (9/24, 10/1,8,22,30, 11/12) If you would like to join, please do.
5. Kim has started two grief therapy groups meeting on Wed (1st and 3rd) and Thurs mornings.

Clothes Closet Susie

1. Clothes Closet switchover day is scheduled for September 28 from 9-12.  Sign up on Sign-Up Genius.

Hearts and Hands Linda

1. The group will meet over Zoom this month because of the uptick in Covid cases locally. We’ve received a large amount of yarn for our projects, and we will recall our group next Sunday.

Turning Tables Kim

1. Turning Tables is discerning its call and what its focus will be.

Valley Interfaith Action Bob

 No report

**Seasonal Teams**

Harvest Stephanie

1. There will be a social at Sunnyside on Sunday, October 20th from 2:30-3:45, and Session will meet at Sunnyside that month - all in the Sunnyside Room.
2. Congregational retreat will be held on October 27 at Massanetta Springs.

ACE Susie

For Action:

1. The team requested that Trinity designate Open Doors as a recipient of donations in lieu of poinsettias at Christmas. The team would also like to invite in-kind contributions for the Clothes Closet in December (books, stuffed animals, etc. for children’s gift bags), and Open Doors and Strength in Peers in January and February (checking with them to see what the biggest needs are at that point). Approved.

For Information:

1. Team members include Susie Phend, Mark Dewey, Nancy Hopkins-Garris, Judy LePera, and Diane Wilcox.  We are also coordinating with Turning Tables for some special activities.

**Other Teams**

Benevolences Kandy

1. The team will begin meeting soon.

Building and Grounds Yogi

For Action:

1. Landscaping: As a recap from the August Session meeting, Frances Sale and Kathy Gillette have received two estimates for a project to rejuvenate the landscaping near the church’s perimeter and memorial garden. They have consulted with the Grounds for Hope Task Force, which is in agreement regarding the plans. They have worked with both Fine Earth and Shreckhise Shrubbery on plans that would require less watering and maintenance for workers and our “aging volunteers.” Plans would include removal of invasive plants and older plants that are not viable for the future, use of stone to the left of the bioretention basin, etc. Fine Earth submitted a proposal for $12-20,000. They then talked to Michael Shreckhise, who suggested getting rid of invasive plants, using a less expensive stone in front, and using native plants. Their estimate was $12,000, and they could start with some of this in the fall. After discussion Session approved continuing with the Shreckhise proposal, but to come back to Session if the final proposal exceeds $12,000.

After the August Session meeting, Kathy and Frances requested permission to contact a third company to provide an estimate for these plans. This was approved electronically. However, they are still waiting on that proposal, and currently are favoring the least expensive plan. At this time, Session concurred with Kathy and Frances on their recommendation.

Matthew 25 Stephanie

For Information:

1. Nancy and Virginia have worked with the Presbytery peacemaker visit by Peter Michael Egwudah September 13-19. He attended the Presbytery meeting and Big Event at Massanetta. He will be speaking at the Broadway/Timberville Rotary and attending other events around the Presbytery. The agenda for his visit is posted on the Presbytery website. Trinity is not hosting any events.
2. The new slides about the Matthew 25 work are in the pre-worship rotation of announcements. We discussed new ways to increase awareness of the goals of Matthew 25 initiative. We especially want to continue the awareness of racial equality which Trinity began during the Season of Repentance.
3. HC and MG Closing was held on September 1 and calls will be September 22. To help with exploring the process of making calls, the team discussed helping with nurture on the Sundays between the closing and calls, but decided not to do this.
4. The Finance team reviewed the work on the Stewardship theology and suggested emphasizing the final paragraph in the document and bringing some scriptural references into it. Nancy will work on this and send out another draft to review at the Session’s October meeting. The hope is for it to be used as part of the stewardship season and packet.
5. A discussion occurred related to the Time and Talent sheet. Some people do not complete it on line, and the paper version appears very long and daunting. The team wondered if it could be printed in such a way to be fewer pages. The Finance Team and the Harvest Seasonal Team will work on this.

Nominating Jason

1. The committee is contacting possible nominees now. One person has responded positively to date.

Outreach Mark D.

 No report

Pastoral Care Mary Lou

For Information:

1. The team coordinated and planned a successful reception/memorial service for Beverly Silver, with gratitude for ALL who assisted and especially for Turning Tables preparing the Chex Mix.
2. It is working to update the Church Directory and add pictures as necessary.
3. It has designed a post card (with a greeting and prayer) and is sending it to each member of the congregation in their birthday month – signed by the Committee. It has done this in August and September and will continue through the year.
4. It continues to hold in prayer all those in our congregation whose names appear on our weekly prayer list, as well as others whose concerns are more private.

Personnel Bob

For Action:

After discussion, Session approved Presbytery’s new *Medical or Family Leave Policy*, which extends family leave to 12 weeks for all staff working 20 hours or more, as well as for clergy. An amendment that specifies 14 weeks in case of an employee having a C-Section was also approved for inclusion in Trinity’s policy.

For Information:

1. Current members of the Personnel Committee are Bob and Susie. They would like to add a third member if someone is interested.

Presbytery Meeting

1. Virginia was Trinity’s delegate for the Presbytery meeting at Massanetta Springs on September 14. She noted that Bronwyn Boswell has returned as General Presbyter. The report from General Assembly was reviewed, and they heard from Peacemaker Peter Michael Egwudah from Nigeria. They had the first reading of the anti-harassment and anti-racist policy. There was limited discussion of the family and medical leave policies. There was some concern that churches might look to hire only single clergy because of the new higher Board of Pension fees.

Processing the Meeting

The following items were identified to include in the Friday Update Session Notes:

* Library Open Doors policy
* Family Leave policy
* Presbytery Program by Peacemaker
* Congregational Retreat

Next Meeting: Sunday, October 20, 4-6pm, at Sunnyside. Mary Lou will have the devotional.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session Stephanie Sorge, Moderator

Attachments:

1. Library’s Open Door Policy
2. Revised Family and Medical Leave Policy