**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

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

**May 19, 2024**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

**Members Present:** Stephanie Sorge, Moderator; Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session; Jason Brown; David Carothers; Rick Comstock; Mark Dewey; Virginia Healy; Amy Lemmons; Mary Lou McMillin; Susie Phend; Bob Schminkey; and Ginnie Reinhold.

**Excused/Absent**: Dane Byers; Kandy Grant; and Kim Shank, Associate for Pastoral Care. Approved. A quorum was present.

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

**Opening Devotion**: Susie shared a devotion based on Mary Oliver’s poem, “Wild Geese”, noting that striving too much for perfection sometimes can blind us to the good that already exists. She closed with prayer.

**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 April 21, 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, May 5, as previously approved. Rev. Bill Reinhold and Ginnie Reinhold served communion as an extension of the table to two persons at Bridgewater Retirement Community.
2. Joyce Lyon, a beloved member of Trinity, passed away on Wednesday, May 15. A service celebrating Joyce’s life will be held at Trinity on Saturday, May 25, at 4pm.
3. Linda shared that Trinity’s 2023 Session minutes were reviewed with no exceptions by Presbytery on April 27. She also shared several thank you notes that have been received.

**Finance Team:**  Linda

For Information and Discussion

1. Treasurer’s Report – The Operating Budget Report shows that we had a total general income of $136,732.75 as of the end of April 2024 – which is 156% of the general income anticipated year-to-date. This figure includes pledges, loose offering, and building use.  Our actual expenses were $104,126.37 – which is 101% of our anticipated year-to-date expense. The Fund Activity Report shows a current balance of $55,780.
2. Our April 2024 Edward Jones Investments balance was $521,328.46, down $9,205.16 from our March balance. Approximately $281,379 of this amount reflects the current status of two bequests from Bolling Nalle and Vivian Hevener. Approximately $116,424 is invested in capital reserves accounts. The remainder (approximately $123,525) reflects monies invested in the music, parish nurse, garden, and Skip Whitmore funds. In addition, the money market account with Raymond James as part of the bequest from Vivian Hevener has a current balance of $102,590.86 as of April 30, up $399.56 since January 1.
3. Balance Sheet – We are beginning to work on a comprehensive balance sheet to reflect our total assets and liabilities.
4. Vanco Online – Linda and Kelsea are working on revising and updating our Vanco interface on Trinity’s website. Giving opportunities will soon have more relevant images and details attached, and the tile icons are being reordered to place more timely opportunities near the top of the screen. Special offerings tiles will be hidden once a giving opportunity passes, and then will be made visible again when the next opportunity arises. Please check out the online Vanco screen periodically and share any recommendations or edits. It was suggested there should be an opportunity for making donations in memory or honor of persons, as well as a space for including comments.
5. Socially Responsible Investments – Over the next few months the team will be exploring possible options for socially responsible investments.
6. Special Requests Since Our Last Meeting – The team electronically approved $500 from the Parish Nurse Fund to purchase a sand therapy tray and kit as a graduation gift for Kim, It also approved $250 from Music Fund to help support David LaMotte‘s workshop at Massanetta Springs on June 24. It also approved a request to provide a $250 gift card to Lizzy Healy in honor of her graduation and the sharing of her many gifts with Trinity, to be taken from our reserves and presented to her during worship on July 7.
7. Trinity Scholarships – We anticipate a possible seven or eight scholarship applications this year, in addition to the $1,000 that the Session has already approved for Kim’s scholarship match at EMU. Scholarship information will be in the June Nous and Friday updates. Application deadline is June 30.

For Action:

1. The team requested approval of the draft Gift and General Endowment Fund Policy, first reviewed by the Session at its April meeting. Approved.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, June 13, 6:30pm over Zoom.

**Pastoral Care Associate’s Report**

For Information

1. Kim, Millie, and Kim’s cousin David are currently on pilgrimage in Spain, and our prayers are with them.

**Pastor’s Report:**

For Discussion and/or Action:

1. Animal Farm question from the Session retreat in January: What are our sacred cows, aka “That which cannot be messed with?” (and are these things that we rightly don’t mess with, or are some things that need to be messed with?) Responses during the retreat focused primarily on house churches and the four marks of the church. Extended discussion today covered the current role of house churches, the name and charges of marks groups, questions about the terminology, the percentage of persons who belong to these groups, the accessibility and welcoming nature of the groups, how new persons can “plug in” to them, how they help the church find its way in the world today, their relationship to our focus on being a Matthew 25 church, and possibly encouraging people to gather around a topic or interest and support each other. It was decided to forward this issue on to the Outreach and Matthew 25 teams for further discussion and recommendations.

The question to be addressed next month: What is the elephant in the room that needs to be acknowledged and discussed?

1. The Board of Pensions has invited Trinity to host a gathering with Keenan Rodgers on Wednesday, June 19th, at 4:30pm.This would be open to the presbytery and would provide an opportunity to learn more about the changes in coverage proposed for 2025. The Pentecost Team will be asked to work out the meeting details, including the possibility of providing refreshments and not interfering with the Clothes Closet operating that evening.

For Action:

1. Lizzy Healy will be the liturgist on the next two communion Sundays, June 2 and July 7. According to the Book of Order, W-3.0414, “Ordinarily ruling elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament serve the bread and cup; the session may authorize other church members to do so.” Stephanie requested that the Session approve Lizzy as a server for either or both of these services. Susie made, and Mary Lou seconded, this motion. Approved.
2. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship has organized a new Jim Atwood Institute for Congregational Courage and is seeking financial sponsors for this from members of the “Jim Atwood Fan Club.” Bob made, and Mary Lou seconded, a motion to contribute $1,000 to help sponsor the institute. Approved. The Finance Team will determine how this amount will be expensed. The institute’s inaugural conference will be held in August at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. Several persons from Trinity are planning to attend, and there was discussion of how to provide them with some financial support. Possibilities mentioned included scholarships from Centering Space or Camps and Conferences, and extending an invitation for congregational support. Next year the institute will be held at Massanetta Springs.
3. Stephanie shared a proposal from Give Solar and notes from a recent ecumenical environmental group meeting. Anyone interested in helping Trinity establish more of a relationship with Give Solar should contact Stephanie.
4. Stephanie reminded everyone of the need to decide how to use the $200 from Presbytery for outreach purposes.
5. Stephanie will be on vacation June 7-15. Kim will be on call and will increase her hours to 20-25 hours per week starting in June.

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, watching videos from the Festival of Homiletics, and gathering with clergy friends for a short retreat
3. General Assembly - June 25-July 5 (including online committee meetings and in-person for everything else)

**Present Ministries and Future Dreams**

**Task Forces**

Misconduct Policy Task Force Bob, Nancy, Dave

1. Some templates now available from Presbytery, and the Task Force will begin reviewing them.

Grounds for Hope Task Force Mary Lou

1. The group met on May 13 and discussed permeable parking, a pavilion, and community garden plots. Larry Brown has asked Gil Colman to create a site plan for us with accurate measurements and the property’s boundaries. Malcolm Cameron and Mark Facknitz are looking into the cost of the permeable parking and the amount that the city would contribute to such a project. Mark Facknitz is continuing to research the cost of a pavilion. We expect to have some answers by the time we meet again on July 8 at 6:00pm. The proposal for Habitat for Humanity’s use of the property is still ‘on the radar.’

**Marks Groups and House Churches**

Reaching Out Kim

No report

Sanctuary Ginnie

No report

Backpack

No report Dane

Centering Space Mary Lou

Over the last month, Centering Space has:

1. Completed the Bonhoeffer nurture study
2. Offered the April Expression Event with Judi Coleman.
3. Secured a weed whacker to support the maintenance of the labyrinth.
4. Supported five people on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.  The Camino pilgrims led worship on April 28. They are considering a movie night to view *The Way* after Kim returns from her Camino experience at the end of May.
5. Completed the first spring yoga session.
6. Provided meditation walks through the labyrinth for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and International Day of Transgender Remembrance.
7. Completed the book study *Flourishing on the Edge of Faith* on May 7.

In addition:

1. Centering Space will contribute $250 to support David LaMotte’s workshop at Massanetta Springs on June 19. The Pentecost Team is considering a possible four-week nurture series starting June 2 using LaMotte’s book, *You Are Changing the World.* Centering Space might help to facilitate one of those sessions.
2. Teresa will contact Deanne Chenoweth about a potential learning opportunity around Palestine and Israel with Bernd Kaussler from JMU, folks from EMU, and information from the PC-USA Palestine/Israel network.
3. Additional potential offerings include another enneagram class, an introduction to spiritual direction, a Sacred Threads event in July, and a dance session in August.

Clothes Closet Susie

No report

Hearts and Hands Linda

1. The group will meet in person tomorrow evening at Trinity and will share a blessing of shawls at worship during Time with the Young Disciples next Sunday, May 26.

Turning Tables Kim

No report

Valley Interfaith Action Bob

No report

**Seasonal Teams**

Lent/Easter Rick

No report

Pentecost Amy

No report

**Other Teams**

Benevolences Kandy

No report

Building and Grounds Dane

1. Landscaping adjacent to church: Frances Sale and Dane are meeting with Phil Nisly of Fine Earth on Wednesday to discuss landscaping the areas directly around the perimeter of the church. A detailed description of the proposed work is on the Session website. Mr. Nisly will send detailed plans with prices within the next two weeks. Dane noted we may need to not only pace the work but also make and prioritize choices for affordability’s sake. Dane respectfully recommended that Session consider this project outside of the larger, longer-term discussions by the Grounds for Hope Task Force. He noted that landscaping has not been updated for nearly 15 years.
2. Painting estimates: Dane has received one estimate from Galindez Painting ($8700) and will meet with Black Brothers Painting on May 17 for an estimate for painting brick work and power washing the parking lot and sidewalks.
3. Cracks and weeds on the parking lot: Various options are under consideration, including transforming the church’s parking lot to a permeable surface. There are financial incentives through municipal government, and the cost may be $60-70k+ even after local subsidies. The Grounds for Hope committee is in ongoing discussion regarding these options.

Larry Barber has suggested we look at companies (Superior Sealing of Broadway or Golden Rule of Grottoes) to consider filling cracks, sealing and repainting parking lot lines now. The team recommends discussion and analysis of several options by obtaining estimates for this alternative approach.

1. Sam Nickels, a neighbor on Maryland Ave whose home borders our back lot, previously approached and received Trinity’s approval to begin work on constructing raised beds for an assortment of berries in front of Lee’s workshop on the far end of the west side of the playground yard lot. There are stakes up now that show where he plans to construct and place these beds this summer. This project is designed to serve the church and the community and is consistent with a “community gardens” concept and he would maintain the beds.

Matthew 25 Kandy

No report

Nominating Jason

No report

Outreach Mark D.

No report

Pastoral Care Mary Lou

1. The team ‘met’ via email this month. Its primary concern was Joyce Lyon, who was being moved home under Hospice with 24/7 care. The team reviewed the list of people who continue to be on our Prayer List each week. When Kim returns from her pilgrimage, she will check in with some who may be OK being removed from the list at this time. The team has decided to have a card shower for Bill Sanders who turns 98 on June 12.
2. Since the team’s meeting, Phil Boucher was hospitalized with a pulmonary embolism and has returned home. In addition, Joyce Lyon has died. The committee will be working with the Funeral Planning Committee to plan the reception for Joyce and to obtain the needed volunteers for her service.
3. The team’s next meeting will be June 3 from 1-3:00 in the Yoke Room.

Personnel Susie

No report

Presbytery Meeting Mary Lou

1. The 201st meeting of Shenandoah Presbytery was held in person on May 14 at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Waynesboro. Worship was led by The Better Together group of Waynesboro churches. It was very meaningful and included the commissioning of the GA Commissioners/YAD (including Commissioner Stephanie Sorge and YAD Lizzy Healy) and the observance of Communion.
2. Other ‘highlights’ were:

Guests from Ethiopia – one of whom brought greetings to us from the Illubador Bethel Synod;

A report on the Community Cup, New Worshipping Community in Martinsburg, WV. The church supports/runs a Coffee House and a ministry to those suffering from addiction(s) and/or poverty. Mary Lou suggested a field trip to Martinsburg would be a fun adventure to learn more about this small community of faith that is serving the marginalized of society.

The approval of a $50,000 gift to the City of Harrisonburg for the purpose of purchasing kitchen equipment for the homeless shelter being constructed on the former presbytery office property. The money will come from the proceeds of the sale of the property.

Approval of the dissolution of the Committee on Pastoral Transitions and the Committee on Relational Ministry and the re-assignment of the members, responsibilities, and commission authority to a new committee: the Committee on Ministry.

At the conclusion of the business, attendees divided into small ‘break-out’ groups to discuss the last five chapters of “Why Presbyterians Are Like That”.

Processing the Meeting

Excellent discussion on sacred cows!

Next Meeting: Sunday, June 16, 4-6pm, in person. Mark D. will have the devotional.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 5:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session Stephanie Sorge, Moderator