**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

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

**August 18, 2024**

**We Assemble in God’s Name**

**Members Present:** Stephanie Sorge, Moderator; Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session; Jason Brown; David Carothers; Yogi Gillette; Kandy Grant; Virginia Healy; Amy Lemmons; Susie Phend; and Bob Schminkey.

**Excused/Absent**: Rick Comstock; Mark Dewey; Mary Lou McMillin; Ginnie Reinhold; and Kim Shank, Associate for Pastoral Care. Approved. A quorum was present.

**Visitors Present**: Kathy Gillette and Frances Sale to provide an update on landscaping around the church building.

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

**Opening Devotion**: Amy shared a devotion on St. Joseph’s Church in Le Havre, France. Destroyed during WWII, it was rebuilt in a minimalist style featuring stark geometric glass designs from the outside, but a beauty from the inside as the sun moves across the windows throughout the day.

**Sharing Joys and Concerns:** Stephanie and Session members shared prayer concerns and joys for members and friends of the Trinity congregation. We shared special memories of Beverly Silver and her impact on our lives. 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 July 15, 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, August 4, 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 examined relative to his willingness and readiness to fill the Ruling Elder vacancy resulting from Dane Byers’ resignation for medical reasons. Virginia made, and Amy seconded, a motion to approve his examination. Approved. He will be installed as an Elder, Class of 2025, during worship at a later date.
3. Trinity member John Speer, passed away on Saturday, August 10. A celebration of his life was held at Sunnyside on Friday, August 16. Beverly Silver, a long-time member of, Trinity, passed away on Saturday, August 17. A celebration of her life is tentatively planned for Trinity at 4:00pm on Saturday, September 7.
4. Linda shared several recent thank you notes.

**Finance Team:**  Linda

For Action:

1. Balance Sheet – Janet Morris has completed work on Trinity’s new balance sheet process and has submitted an invoice for 51 hours at $30/hour – for a total of $1,530. The team is very grateful for her assistance on this intensive project and requested approval of this expense. Approved.
2. Board of Pensions Changes for 2025 – The Board of Pensions is requiring new insurance coverage plans for both installed pastors and staff working 20 or more hours a week. The team requested approval for Stephanie to enroll in the Transition Plan for installed pastors. This would increase Trinity’s contribution from 39% to 43% of her 2025 effective salary to retain the same level of family coverage as she has now. Approved. There will be additional increases over the next several years, culminating in a final percentage for individual coverage, plus flat rate costs for spouse, children, or family. Approved.

In addition, the team recommended that Kim Shank and Christabell DeMichele be enrolled in the Covenant Plan, which is available for all employees who work more than 20 hours a week. This would cost 10% of their salary and would require the revision of their contracts. Stephanie and Bob will follow up with the Personnel Committee on this. Approved.

The deadline for indicating which plans Trinity will offer and support is October 4, and the enrollment period will begin after that.

For Information:

1. The Operating Budget Report shows that we had a total general year-to-date income of $191,357 as of the end of July 2024 – which is approximately 124% of the general income anticipated year-to-date. This figure includes pledges, loose offering, building use, and interest.  Our actual expenses were $175,520 – which is 97% of our anticipated year-to-date expense. The Fund Activity Report shows a current balance of $178,676. Note that there may be some minor changes once the July bank statement is reconciled.
2. Edward Jones Investments – The account with Raymond James as part of the bequest from Vivian Hevener has now been closed and all funds transferred to Edward Jones. The total Edward Jones balance as of August 15 was $635,481.46. This includes our capital reserves; the two bequests from Bolling Nalle and Vivian Hevener; the music, parish nurse, and memorial garden funds; plus $71,153.61 in the Skip Whitmore Fund.
3. Habitat for Humanity –A total of 19 persons have submitted the $50 registration fee for the Habitat Banquet on September 5. This $950, plus the $500 for Habitat in our operating budget will be forwarded to Habitat.
4. Standard Operating Procedures – We discussed the need for a clearer picture of who has access to, and responsibility for, various responsibilities across our several financial components – our corporation, Church Windows, Vanco, Truist, Edward Jones, etc. We will be developing a detailed set of procedures for each of these activities and ensure that more than one person is trained to carry out these functions.
5. Stewardship – We reviewed the Matthew 25 team’s current draft of Trinity’s Theology of Stewardship statement and provided suggestions that would link it more closely with the PCUSA’s three charges for Matthew 25 churches.

We identified a potential schedule of stewardship activities for this fall, with an introduction in the October Nous, Moments for Stewardship during October worship services, and Dedication Sunday on November 10. Resources may include a summary of the Theology of Stewardship and story-telling as a vehicle to set out a vision and call for year-round stewardship at Trinity that involves all four marks of the church.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, September 12, 6:30 over Zoom.

**Pastoral Care Associate’s Report**

For Information:

1. Kim meets on Sunday afternoons with community members for counseling as an outreach of Trinity. She will plan to attend Session meetings as they occur.
2. She works from the church house on Wednesdays and is available to meet with Trinity members.
3. She visits all day on Thursdays, spends time with house churches when they meet, and also spends part of every Friday morning at Sunnyside.
4. She is available at other times as needed.

**Pastor’s Report:**

For Discussion and/or Action:

1. The Animal Farm: Squirrel discussion from the January Elder retreat was postponed until next month.
2. The three-hour Boundary Training required by Presbytery was postponed until January, possibly at the Session retreat. This would allow inclusion of incoming elders in the training.
3. It was decided that the Nominating Committee will distribute an edited list of persons eligible for nomination as new Elders. This list removes individuals who have not been active in any way over the past year. The Pastoral Care team also has been cleaning up our membership rolls, so this list may be in flux. The document will also remove the statement about electing a youth representative, with the discussion of youth representative being held at a later date. Stephanie asked everyone to check the list for accuracy.

For Information:

1. Trinity has been in an extended season of deep loss, and Stephanie expressed gratitude for the many ways the community continues to support each other in tangible and less tangible ways.
2. Stephanie hopes to find another time to take the Mental Health First Aid training, which had been scheduled during the time of Larry Barber’s memorial service. Her registration fee can be applied to a different course with the same organization, but it may be a while before it works out for her schedule.

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

1. The discussion on two policies: *Harrassment Prevention Policy* and *Medical or Family Leave Policy* has been rescheduled for the next Session meeting.

Grounds for Hope Task Force Mary Lou

No report

**Marks Groups and House Churches**

Reaching Out Kim

No report

Sanctuary Ginnie

1. The August 1 worship led by Sanctuary went very well.

Backpack Stephanie

1. The Backpack Program volunteers will start packing next week. Yogi will fill in for Dane on this.

Centering Space Mary Lou

1. Centering Space is planning an ice cream/dessert social with friends for Palestine on September 1, 8, or 22. Also, it is hoping to learn more about the March to Washington and the subsequent gatherings that occurred there. The group is trying to figure out when/how they can share their experience.
2. New classes: A Yoga session begins on September 3.and an Enneagram class begins on September 9.
3. It expects to offer more second Saturday Expressions events – watch for announcements.
4. It plans to host a shared viewing of *Faith & Democracy: Confronting White Christian Nationalism* on Thursday, September 19 from 6-8:30 p.m. Watch for additional information.
5. It is considering hosting one or two Bible Remixed Zoom courses:
   1. *Colossians Revisited* on six Sundays September 22-November 3 from 7-9 p.m. (9/22, 29; 10/6, 20, 27; 11/3)
   2. *Wine, Women, and Song: Luke and an Economics of Generosity* on six Tuesdays from September 24-November 1 from 7-9 p.m. (9/24; 10/1,8,22,30; 11/1)

Clothes Closet Susie

No report

Hearts and Hands Linda

1. The group will meet over Zoom this month because of the uptick in Covid cases locally. We continue to share shawls and lap robes and welcome recommendations for persons who would appreciate receiving them.

Turning Tables Kim

No report

Valley Interfaith Action Bob

No report

**Seasonal Teams**

Pentecost Amy

No report

Harvest Stephanie

For Action:

1. The team requested approval to designate 25% of the Peace and Global Witness offering to New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center. Approved.

For Information:

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.

**Other Teams**

Benevolences Kandy

No report

Building and Grounds Yogi

For Action:

1. Landscaping: Frances Sale and Kathy Gillette met with the Session to share an update on 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 $12-20K. 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 $12K, and they could start with some of this in the fall. Stephanie noted that the eventual Grounds for Hope Task Force report will be more comprehensive in covering use of the entire church grounds for more than just landscaping and would require a separate funding plan. Session noted that Trinity has approximately $13,000 in the Memorial Garden Fund and $4,450 in the Environmental Bequest Fund. After discussion Session recommended continuing with the Shreckhise proposal, but to come back to Session if the final proposal exceeds $12,000. Approved. [Note that after the Session meeting, Kathy and Frances requested permission to contact a third company to provide an estimate for these plans. Approved electronically.]

Matthew 25 Kandy

1. Peter Michael Egwudah from Nigeria will be making a peacemaker visit to Shenandoah Presbytery September 13-19. Keith Philips from Massanutten Presbyterian sent us the hosting information guidelines. Nancy has contacted the hosting team about how Trinity can help during this time. Nancy has communicated this to the Harvest Team.
2. The new Matthew 25 Team slides for the online announcements before worship should be in rotation this week. An additional slide with information about who is on the team if people have questions or want more information is in process.
3. House Church and Marks Group closing worship is scheduled for September 1, and calls will be made on September 22. The Matthew 25 team can help persons with discerning and preparing to make calls. Last year the team offered a nurture session on the meaning of calls, but no one attended. Linda and Nancy will write an article for the September Nous with a synopsis of House Church and Marks Groups guidelines.

Nominating Jason

1. See Stephanie’s report

Outreach Mark D.

No report

Pastoral Care Mary Lou

For Information:

1. Pastoral Care Concerns: In collaboration with the Hearts and Hands ministry, the team delivered a Shoo Box to Susie Phend, a ‘Blessing Box’ and ice cream to Phil and Sally Boucher, a Blessing Basket to Louisa Painter, and a small ‘Prayer Box’ to Ann Speer.
2. Review of Church Directory: Review of the church directory continues. An information slide was included with the online announcements on Sunday, August 18, and will continue through August. A printed copy of the directory will be available in the Commons for people to check their contact information. Someone will also be available to take directory pictures on August 28 and September 8.
3. Prayer Cards**:** Kim provided the team with blank cards. They wrote a brief note on each one and all present signed each card. They were sent to the 12 people who have birthdays in August. The team has designed a post card that will be used in subsequent months to be sent to each person having a birthday in that month.
4. Barber Reception: The Pastoral Care Team/Funeral Committee coordinated and provided a lovely reception following the memorial service for Larry Barber on August 8**.** An abundance **of** food was left over andthe team will evaluate that in September.

Personnel Susie

1. Stephanie expressed gratitude to Victoria for taking charge of the hiring and onboarding process for our new administrator, Christabell, while she was away. Christabell is still getting her grounding, so please continue to introduce yourselves to her, share helpful information with her, etc. Right now the team consists of Sue Burket and Susie Phend. In conversation with Bob Schminkey, Bob shared that he feels called - eager and willing - to serve on the Personnel Committee, and with the Session’s approval, he would like to shift from Finance to Personnel. Approved.

Processing the Meeting

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

1. Yogi will be the new Elder, Class of 2025, replacing Dane
2. The proposed landscaping project
3. Nominating of new Elders, Class of 2027 coming up
4. Bob Shminckey now on Personnel Committee

Presbytery Meeting – Jason made, and Bob seconded, a motion to elect Virginia as Trinity’s delegate for the Presbytery meeting at Massanetta Springs on September 14. Approved.

Next Meeting: Sunday, September 15, 4-6pm, in person. Yogi will have the devotional.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 5:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Linda Bradley, Clerk of Session Stephanie Sorge, Moderator