

HIGHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Meeting Minutes

17 November 2021

Hybrid Meeting

Moderator Rev Kent Winters-Hazelton called the meeting to order with evening prayer at 6:02 PM. A quorum was present.

Elders Present: Laurie Anderson, Ralph Bowling, Kevin Burns, John Ferre', Clyde Foshee, Sara Gambrell, Steve Makela, Kathy Mounce, Alex Novak, Carol Pye, Mike Reed, Craig Siegenthaler, Becky Slagle, Paul Troy, Bill Wade, Cynthia Welch, Lauren Wood.

Staff Present: Kent Winters-Hazelton, Megan McCarty, Melissa Worthey, Charles Brockwell.

Guests: Joel Weible, Steve Holmes

Elders Absent: Ben Anderson, David Morrison, Abby Sekula

With a motion and second, the agenda was adopted with no objections.

Clerk's Report

Minutes. With a motion and a second and no objections, the minutes from the Stated Session meeting on 20 October were approved and the minutes from the Congregational meeting on 24 October were received.

Deaths. Virginia Hancock, 23 October 2021; Rob Emrich, 28 October 2021.

Membership. Anne Baker, Meghan and Victor Glasper, and Lisa and Dale Thompson requested to be removed from the HPC roll.

Session Resignations. Angie Andriot, Renata DeWees.

With a motion and a second and no objections, the report was approved.

Consent Agenda

1) Membership changes as noted above.

2) From Worship and Spiritual Life: Request to serve communion on Sunday, 26 December.

Open Forum

1) Joel Weible. The beginning of a listening time and discussion of reflection about the last year in the life of HPC.

Elders mentioned the appalling moderating by Rev Jim Martin with MKP CoM of the congregational meeting. Jim has since stepped away from the task force.

Others mentioned the sense of loss – sense of community, personal attacks by email and phone of other members, a lack of trust in the Session.

Some suggested an apology from MKP CoM concerning the Jim Martin's moderating.

There is a sense of relief from those whose issues have been ignored for years that this has taken place, and their hope to return to committee positions they had left.

A sense of hope and promise for the future: how to move forward seeing cherished members leave, gratitude for the staff for persevering amid discord, HPC has always had strong youth and children's programming and that will continue, the youth counselling session went well, the children's music program had seven children recently – a spark of life.

Joel emphasized that this is the beginning of the conversation, and closed this portion with prayer.

2) Kevin Burns and Becky Slagle. Youth program has hired a grief counselor, and he is doing a good job.

Motion: from Christian Education: request a task force of youth reps, and youth and children's parents, for how to handle the interim. Recommended people for this task force are Kim Hansford, Rebecca Wood, Steve Holmes, Hannah Thomas, Carolyn Cromer, Amelia Connally, and Amelia Sekula. A staff person will be assigned as well. The committee also offered job descriptions for the interim directors of the youth and children's programs.

Sara Gambrell made an amendment: to add people from the congregation, and invite other parents and youth from the congregation. Kent added that the task force needed to add Session and Personnel committee representation.

[Note: Sara Gambrell, Paul Troy, Tracy Morrison, and Ann Lacy later volunteered to be on the task force.]

The amendment and the motion became the motion, and it passed with majority.

Action Items

1) **Motion:** Discussion and approval for congregational listening groups. Group leaders will be Joe Phelps and Erin Mires, initialing leading four groups, at different times, with three being in-person and one virtually. There will be more meetings after the first of the year if needed. It passed with a motion and second, and no objections.

2) **Motion:** Approve Kathy Mounce, Carol Pye, and Cynthia Welch as commissioners to the MKP meeting on 20 November 2021. With a motion and second, it passed with no objections.

Committee Reports

Finance. Mike Reed presented a preliminary budget. As of 8 November, the pledged amount is \$340,745, which is half of the proposed budget.

Christian Education. Becky Slagle. HPC has reservations at Montreat for eight youth and three adults, pending Covid restrictions. The children will do a pop-up Christmas pageant during the Advent workshop on 12 December. Youth will conduct the 11 PM service on Christmas Eve, with Rev Jenny (Hockenberry) Edlin preaching.

Church in the World. Megan McCarty. It did not meet this month.

Task Force on Racial Equity. This group is not meeting while the race audit group continues their work. Phase Two is nearing completion.

Congregational Nominating. Alex Novak. There are three Deacon openings, from the resignations of Kimberlee Burns, Kathy Emrich, and Amy Hoyt.

Fellowship. Megan. They are looking for a new chair and events to bring the congregation together. There will be Christmas caroling in the neighborhood on 19 December, followed by hot chocolate at the church.

Pastor Nominating. Kevin Burns. The Minister Information Form (MIF) is online at the Church Leadership Connection (CLC). They have received about 60 referrals.

Personnel. Craig Siegenthaler. Jean Grawemeyer has left her position as Church Accountant. Joy Blandin will continue to work remotely as HPC continues the search.

Property. Bill Wade. The committee has not met.

Stewardship. Pledges are down – 83 so far, compared to 114 this time last year.

Worship and Spiritual Life. Carol Pye. The Longest Night service will be 21 December. There will be two services on Christmas Eve, at 4:30 PM and 11 PM. The theme for advent services will be Hope. Communion was served on 7 November.

Task Force on Reopening for Worship. It has not met recently.

Deacons. Cynthia Welch. The Deacons are starting a new book study on “There’s No Cure for Being Human.”

Pastors’ Reports

Both are online.

With a motion and second, and no objections, Megan adjourned the meeting with prayer at 7:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia B Welch

Clerk of Session