

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Akron, Ohio
Tuesday, November 28, 2017
Minutes of the Session Meeting

Be adaptive, engaging, generous, inclusive and relevant. Be faithful. Be Westminster!

The regular meeting of the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church was called to order by Moderator and Pastor Jon Hauerwas at 7:05 p.m.

Elders (+ present, * excused, - absent)

Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019
+Michael Dunbar	+Ellen Daugherty	+Harriet Chapman
+Roger Nelson	+Nancy Keogh	+James Gray
+Kyle Vuchak	+Sue Wallin	+Ed Labbe
+Todd Willis	+Gert Wilms	+Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Also present:

Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator; guests Reverend Mark Ruppert, liaison to Westminster from Eastminster Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, Shelley Koutnik, Church Treasurer, and Brad Hall, incoming elder.

Opening

Pastor Jon opened the meeting with prayer at 7:05 pm.

Quorum

The presence of a quorum was confirmed and declared.

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Agenda

A **motion prevailed** to adopt and approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda as amended (prior minutes, Properties motions and wedding request were pulled from the consent agenda).

A motion also prevailed to extend the floor to the guests.

Committee on Ministry

After Pastor Jon formally introduced Rev. Ruppert, the floor was given to him (Rev. Ruppert). His last visit with Session was on May 23, 2017. Session members were asked if there were concerns we would like him to be keeping in prayer. Requests included the replacing of 2 staff members, overall direction of Westminster, Presbytery's role in guidance to congregations, particularly on the west side of Akron, and general caring and concern for the congregation and community. Rev. Ruppert then led Session in prayer.

Among the items shared that have occurred since Rev. Ruppert's last visit were the formation of a Membership Committee, which has been leading the production of a new church pictorial directory; formation of a new task force on safety and Security; Tween and youth activities; and an active adult Sunday School class. The 2018 Terms of Call for the pastor will be finalized at a congregational meeting in the spring after the 2018 budget is approved.

Regarding how Rev. Ruppert or Presbytery can be supportive to Session and the church, a suggestion was made for Presbytery to lead leadership classes for new officers, including Presbyterian polity.

Before leaving, Rev. Ruppert noted that his next visit will be at the regular May meeting (5/22/18), and he will meet with Pastor Jon and the Clerk of Session to review 2017 minutes on June 4, 2018 at 10 am.

Clerk's Report

Correspondence received included a thank you letter from Shelter Care for a food donation (dated 10/23/17); an email from Westminster member Bill Mever regarding the decrease in Christmas baskets to be delivered (dated 11/27/17), and a letter from Bill Mever regarding long term planning (also dated 11/27/17).

The Clerk noted that work is progressing in reconciling membership rolls between the official chronological record book and the All Church System (ACS) database.

The Consent Agenda as approved included the following motions:

2017-135 MOTION prevailed to receive the following report of all weddings, funerals, baptisms, and Communion that have taken place since Session's October 24, 2017 meeting:

1. Weddings: none
2. Funerals: none
3. Baptisms: none
4. Communion: November 12, 2017 (10:30 a.m.)

2017-136 MOTION prevailed to receive the report of the average worship attendance for October: 158.

2017-137 MOTION prevailed to approve the membership statistical report for the month of October 2017:

Total Membership as of 10/1/17	399
Additions: new member class: Barbara and Cy Blackfan, Stephanie and Christopher Blaha, Bridget and Rob Gilbert, Donna and Dan Gorring	8
Deletions: none	0
Deaths: none	0
Total Membership as of 10/31/17	407

2017-138 MOTION prevailed to remove Ron Allan from the Membership Roll of Westminster Presbyterian Church (died 11/27/17).

On behalf of the Deacons / Befrienders group:

2017-139 MOTION prevailed to approve a Bake Sale on Sunday, January 21, 2018 for the Befrienders, a sub-committee of the Deacons, to raise funds for their Valentine's Day project.

From Finance:

2017-140 MOTION prevailed to authorize the Treasurer to engage Hilary Beatrez, CPA to conduct the annual Agreed Upon Procedures. [Clerk's note: No change in fee is anticipated.]

From Pastor Hauerwas and Worship:

2017-141 MOTION prevailed to approve the following communion schedule for 2018 (10:30 and served from the front of the sanctuary unless otherwise noted):

January 14 - second Sunday of the month

February 11 - second Sunday of the month

March 11 - second Sunday of the month

March 29 - Maundy Thursday (7:30 p.m.)

April 1 - Easter Sunday

May 13 - Mother's Day. Second Sunday of the month. Seated Communion.

June 10 - second Sunday of the month.

July 8 - second Sunday of the month

August 12 - second Sunday of the month

September 9 - second Sunday of the month

October 7 - first Sunday of the month. World Communion Sunday. Seated Communion.

November 11 - second Sunday of the month.

December 9 - second Sunday of the month. [Clerk's note: Sheila has confirmed that the Christmas pageant is held on the 3rd Sunday of Advent each year. The 3rd Sunday of Advent in 2018 is December 16. Thus, there is no conflict with Communion as regularly scheduled on the 2nd Sunday of each month.]

In addition, assuming Westminster offers an 8:30 a.m. service in June, July and August, communion would also be served on the following dates at 8:30 a.m.:

June 10 (also Communion at 10:30 a.m. service)

June 24

July 8 (also Communion at 10:30 a.m. service)

July 22

August 12 (also Communion at 10:30 a.m. service)

August 26

From Pastor Hauerwas:

2017-142 MOTION prevailed to approve vacation time for Pastor Hauerwas from January 3 - January 7, 2018. This includes one Sunday, January 7. The Reverend George Murphy has agreed to preach that day. [Clerk's note: The Rev. George Murphy is a retired Lutheran pastor who served St. Mark Lutheran Church in Tallmadge (1984-1998), was a pastoral associate at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Akron (1999-2008) and continues to provide supply ministry. George's first career was in physics, and he is active in work to help churches deal theologically with issues raised by developments in science and technology. George presented Westminster's Ebert's Lecture Series in 2016.]

Alec Works agreed during the October Session meeting to serve as commissioner for the next Presbytery meeting, scheduled for December 5, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at the Canfield Presbyterian Church.

The next regular Session meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2018. A concern was raised that Westminster's Code of Regulations states that Session is to meet monthly except in July and August. The December meeting was originally scheduled for Tuesday, December 26, the day after Christmas. During its October 24 meeting, Session discussed holding a joint regular meeting for November and December. Session decided on meeting November 28 instead of December 5. Session confirmed that we would hold a special and/or e-meeting(s) if any business needs to be addressed before the regular January meeting.

Committee Reports and Actions

Membership Committee (October – November minutes were attached; no motions)

Moderator James Gray reported that the committee is nearing completion of the church pictorial directory. They expect to submit materials to the publisher soon. Sample general pictures were passed around.

Nominating Committee (no report; new officers were elected on 11/5/17)

Worship Committee (August, September and October minutes and a draft of the revised Memorial and Funeral Policy were attached; see motions below)

Co-Moderators Nancy Keogh and Sue Wallin passed around information on the new candelabras the committee has chosen. They are similar in size to the current ones; they do have a square base and adjustable arms. They would be paid for first using the Kay Lebold Memorial Fund, then the general Memorial Fund. The cost, discounted by using the church credit card, should be \$1,749.50.

2017-143 MOTION prevailed to purchase the 2 candelabras and 6 liquid (oil) candles as presented, using first the Kay Lebold Memorial Fund, then the general Memorial Fund.

A draft of the revised Memorial and Funeral Policy was discussed. The following changes were recommended:

- Under “Who will perform the service”, reword such that if the family desires another pastor to assist in the service, the sitting pastor (Westminster) should extend the invitation.
- For receptions, the occupancy limit for Wright-Herberich Hall is 150 if tables are set up.

Regarding reimbursement for food expenses, it has been more effective to ask families for a donation rather than submitting receipts. A CD recording of the service may be available; however, that is not guaranteed thus the consensus was it was better not to mention it. Pastor Jon agreed to make the suggested changes before submitting the policy for final approval.

Properties Committee (November minutes were attached; see motions below)

2017-144 MOTION prevailed to approve next year’s rental contract with Ohio Living. [Clerk’s note: There is a slight increase in rent.]

2017-145 MOTION prevailed to approve next year’s rental contract with WYDACA.

2017-146 MOTION prevailed to approve the use of the kitchen and Wright-Herberich Hall by Akron Kiwanas for a pancake breakfast on Saturday, April 28, 2018. They will pay the standard building use fees. [Clerk’s note: There is also a flower sale that day, so the building should already be accessible.]

Roger Nelson emphasized that no one should go down the steps to the basement area (WYDACA) after 6 p.m. WYDACA staff set an alarm when they leave. Roger has received 2 calls recently for the alarm going off.

Harriet Chapman asked if there were any plans to repair or paint the church steeple. The basic answer is that there are no current funds for such a project. Roger Nelson said that the sand-blasting performed in the 1980’s caused the “dimples”. Options would include painting, reskinning the panels, or replacing the panels.

Outreach Committee (Minutes to be provided; see motion below)

Moderator Gert Wilms noted that the Salvation Army had discontinued its Christmas in July program. The committee decided to donate the money in that fund to the Salvation Army for its food program.

2017-147 MOTION prevailed to approve donating the remaining money in the Christmas in July account to the Salvation Army for its food program.

Gert reported that the recent Peacemaking Offering was given to Akron's International Institute.

Help is still needed for Third Sunday Dinners, especially dishwashers for December 17.

Discipleship Committee (November minutes were forwarded, see motion below)

Moderator Ed Labbe reported that they would like Sean Williams of Ministry Architects to continue working with them through the end of the school year (June 10, 2018). Funding was previously approved by session to cover costs of this program through the end of 2017. This will enable the committee to establish a firmer groundwork on which to proceed.

2017-148 MOTION prevailed to approve spending up to \$3,200 from the Young Endowment Fund for Youth Programming to pay for Sean Williams, Youth Ministry Administrator, to continue in that position through June 10, 2018 (end of school year).

A game night is planned for January 22, 2018. A confirmation class is also planned for the upcoming winter and spring.

Ed raised a suggestion that a flyer be distributed to the congregation inviting members to volunteer to serve on various church committees. Pastor Jon will work with Ed and Germaine Wilson to draft a proposal for the next session meeting.

Finance Committee (October financial reports and minutes were attached; no motions)

Treasurer Shelley Koutnik reported on the Stewardship Campaign. Some more pledges have come in; some more are expected. Some money that previously came in as unpledged is now pledged. Estimated pledges are expected to be around \$360,000. Moderator Todd Willis said that the proposed budget will be presented in January. Estimated expenses for 2018 are currently around \$525,000. So far in 2017 we have not had to use the Rowley Fund principle to pay for current expenses. Revenues to date are above budget; expenses are below, in part due to lower heating bills last winter and lower personnel costs. Through 10/31/17, revenues exceed expenses by \$18,977. Shelley noted, though, that expenses can peak at the end of the year.

Personnel Committee (November minutes were attached; see motions below)

Moderator Kyle Vuchak reported that, although his terms on session are ending, he intends to continue to serve on the Personnel Committee. Nancy Keogh will report to Session for the committee. John Childs has agreed to serve as the new Moderator for the Personnel Committee.

2017-149 MOTION prevailed to approve the request from Personnel to allow John Childs to serve as Moderator of the Personnel Committee for 2018.

Kyle also reported that the committee completed its performance evaluation for Germane Wilson, Director of Communications. The committee recommends a 3% raise for Germaine, to be effective January 1, 2018.

2017-150 MOTION prevailed to approve the request from Personnel for a 3% raise in her hourly rate for Germaine Wilson, Director of Communications, to be effective January 1, 2018.

Regarding the resignation of Daytime Custodian Jeremiah Ward earlier in November, Kyle noted that the committee concurred with the actions taken by Session on November 5 to accept his resignation. A motion was made from the floor to extend Jeremiah's pay by 3 weeks (standard hours) and to extend his health care benefits for 1 month (to December 31, 2017). After discussion,

2017-151 MOTION was defeated to approve to extend Jeremiah Ward's pay by 3 weeks (standard hours) and to extend his health care benefits for 1 month (to December 31, 2017).

Truly Reaching You (TRY) is currently providing daytime custodial services. Properties is considering whether to add additional duties such as minor maintenance to the job description before a position is filled.

Board of Deacons (October minutes were attached)

Task Forces (Safe Church - no report)

Discussion items (none)

Regarding the Music Director Search Committee, Alec reported that there may have been some confusion during the last regular Session meeting as to whether Pastor Jon would serve on the committee, as well as the process followed to select a committee. Alec noted that the handout at that meeting as well as the draft minutes listed Pastor Jon as participating. Session members selected from a list they assembled of candidates by an anonymous ballot, with results tallied by the Clerk. Pastor Jon started with candidates with the most votes, contacting them to determine if they were willing to serve. Pastor Jon discussed his role, noting he was willing to step aside or not exercise his right to vote. Session has the final vote on hiring. Alec recommended that the committee provide Session with some guidelines they would follow. The search committee would work with Jim Mismas as a consultant, as well as the Personnel and Finance Committees. Following a motion being made and seconded,

2017-152 MOTION prevailed to name the following persons to the Music Director Search Committee: Christopher Blaha, Stacy Franzmann, Laurel Labbe, and Jacquie Mabry, with Pastor Jon Hauerwas serving as staff liaison. The search committee is asked to provide their objectives and guidelines to Session, along with periodic updates and any concerns.

Returning to the items pulled from the Consent Agenda,

2017-153 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the regular Session meeting of October 24, 2017.

2017-154 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the Special Session meeting of November 5, 2017 as amended (accept resignation of Daytime Custodian; hire Truly Reaching You for interim services).

2017-155 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the Congregational Meeting of November 12, 2017 (elect new officers).

A discussion followed regarding a request from Heather Keane and Vivek Bhalla to be married at Westminster Presbyterian Church in September 2018, with Pastor Hauerwas officiating. Although Pastor Jon recalled seeing them attending at least one Sunday morning service, neither is a member of Westminster. Heather was involved with a Presbyterian congregation in Pittsburgh before moving to Akron. They have received a copy of and agree with the terms of our current wedding policy. Before acting on their request, Session is asking Pastor Jon to follow up with the couple to ascertain whether one or both intend to become members of Westminster. **ACTION DEFERRED.**

Pastor's Report and Remarks (no further remarks)

New / Other Business

The next regular Session meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Following a motion to adjourn, the Session Meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator