

Session Meeting
First Presbyterian Church
Davenport, Iowa
October 17, 2022

The stated meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Davenport, Iowa was held on Monday, October 17, 2022. We continue to meet remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moderator Rev. Dr. Kathy Stoner-Lasala called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. A quorum was present. Elder Vicki Stegall opened the meeting with prayer.

	Class of 2022		Class of 2023		Class of 2024
P	Heather Calvert <i>Adult Christian Education</i>	E	David Bowles Edwards <i>Congregational Marketing & Growth</i>	P	Paula Burnett <i>Hospitality & Welcoming</i>
P	Matt Kabel <i>Buildings & Grounds</i>	P	Jim DeReus <i>Adult Christian Education</i>	A	Peter Bawden <i>Personnel</i>
P	Jeanne Sherwood <i>Hospitality & Welcoming</i>	P	Patrick Downing <i>Stewardship</i>	P	Kirk Christie <i>Adult Christian Education</i>
P	Tom Spitzfaden <i>Finance</i>	P	Michael Ferris <i>Worship & Music</i>	P	Nancy Foster <i>Finance</i>
P	Vicki Stegall <i>Christian Ed. & Fellowship for Youth</i>	P	RuthAnn Tobey-Brown <i>Personnel</i>	P	Dawn Hickenbottom <i>Cong Fellowship & Development</i>
		P	James Woods <i>Hospitality & Welcoming</i>	P	Bev Koos <i>Worship and Music</i>
				P	Diane Roebuck <i>Christian Ed & Fellowship for Youth</i>
				P	Karla Ruiter <i>Building & Grounds</i>
				P	Jay Williams <i>Cong Fellowship & Development</i>
P	Mark Jones <i>Clerk of Session, non-voting</i>	P- present E-Excused A-Absent			

Staff members:

P	Rev. Kathy Stoner-Lasala <i>Bridging Pastor</i>	P	Matthew Bishop <i>Director of Music</i>	P	Darren Long <i>Facilities & Custodial Supervisor</i>
P	Rev. Pat Halverson <i>Parish Associate</i>	P	Kristine Olson <i>Finance Manager</i>	P	Kristy Woodrow <i>Director Christian Education</i>
P	Rev. Elissa Bailey <i>Temporary Pastor</i>				

Guests:

- Deacon Paula Hartmann
- Sue Ervin, FPC Member and Scout Troop 7 Organizational Representative
- FPC members Nancy Chapman and Harry Hoyt

On motion and second, the published agenda was accepted with the following changes: Report from Scout Troop 7 Organizational Representative, Sue Ervin and report from the Building and Grounds Committee.

On motion and second, Paula Hartmann, Sue Ervin, Nancy Chapman, and Harry Hoyt were admitted to the meeting with voice but no vote.

DEACONS' REPORT: Paula Hartmann

Deacon Paula Hartmann highlighted the following items from the Deacons. The complete October report was received electronically and is appended to these minutes.

- Homecoming was a great success. In addition to serving 60 meals for homecoming, leftover meals were sent home with attendees and 25 meals were taken to the homeless shelter.
- We need to make use of Deacon's Corner. Ted is going to work on cleaning up the table and designing a poster board of events and needs.
- On Sunday October 13, for Undie Sunday, 23 packages of underwear for all ages were donated. Deacons will continue to follow up with the Caring Closet to see what the most pressing needs are and focus one Sunday a month on those items.
- This year the Children's offering will be different from the past when the children brought in dollars and coins. This year she will ask that they bring in hats, mittens and gloves for the Cocoa and Caring event in December. The event will be December 6th from 3 to 5. The Deacons will have a table set up with hats, mittens and gloves for anyone who stops. As the title suggests there will be cocoa too and candy canes. Cathy Woods is the contact person.
- Trunk or Treat will be Sunday October 30 from 4 to 5:30. We will ask members to come and pass out candy, books or pencils. Pat Halverson is making a sign to advertise the event. Terri Sheetz with the contact person.
- Deacons would like to resume the Farthest Pew. This will need to go to the Pandemic Task Force first.
- Washington School partnership is going well. Alex Gilson has been tutoring chess and is asking for more pupils. The Deacons will be providing a meal for the teachers during teacher/parent conferences on November 2nd. Bob and Andy will be taking dinner to the school. On November 21, Andy McNeil will be the DJ for the children's carnival at Washington School.
- Angel Tree is coming up. There is usually a very short turn around with this event. It is being organized through Bethany, as before.
- The Green Envelopes are a resource for Deacons, but we will wait until after Stewardship to bring focus back to the green envelopes.
- Due to the continuing issues with the Center, it has been suggested we sever ties with them and look at partnering with Care Link instead.

On motion and second, the Deacon's Report was accepted with thanks as presented.

Operations Manual Review

The Moderator made the following report:

- The decision was made to remove the Foundation of First Presbyterian Church section from the Operations Manual because the Foundation, though it exists to support FPC, stands apart from the operations of FPC. The Foundation will create their own Operations Manual.
- The Financial section of the Operations Manual has been completed reviewed. Electronic copies were provided the Session.

- **On motion and second**, the Session commended the work of Nancy Chapman and Kristine Olson in so diligently updating the Finance section of the Operations Manual.
- Vote on the entire Operations Manual is still pending.

Called Congregational Meeting

On motion and second, the Session approved, with joy, a Called Meeting of the Congregation for Sunday, November 6, 2022, 10:35 AM, in the sanctuary and on Zoom for the purpose of receiving a report from PNC, voting on the PNC's recommendation for the new Pastor/Head of Staff at FPC, and approving the terms of call.

Active Membership Review – update from Staff – report deferred to the November meeting.

Scout Troop 7 Report – Sue Ervin, Organizational Representative

Sue Ervin provided a report on the status of Scout Troop 7. Highlights included:

- The Scout Troop 7 leadership met recently, following the September 2022 Session meeting votes.
 - The decisions of the Session were conveyed and there seemed to be understanding.
 - The church addressed some issues with Scout Troop 7 by making sure the door fobs and the laptop (for remote opening of the doors) were working.
 - Scout Troop 7 continued to meet at Faith United Church
- The Scout master said the September 2022 Session motion was vague on holding campouts and other activities away from the church.
- Scout Troop 7 may be headed for a split.
- A letter is being drafted that will reiterate the motions from Session that Scout Troop 7 will meet at FPC and the church will retain the Scout Troop 7 charter, numeral, and assets. Those that wish to meet at Faith United will need to obtain a new charter, numeral, and insurance. This letter will be sent to Scout Troop 7 and Scout Troop 1107 leadership above the signature of First Presbyterian Church.
- Session clarified the issue of off-site activities with the following motion:
 - **On motion and second**, the Session approves the statement that First Presbyterian Church, Davenport, the Chartering Organization, instructs Scout Troop 7 and Scout Troop 1107 that all regular meetings be held at FPC and off-site activities such as camp outs are to be held in compliance with FPC's Child Protection Policy.

On motion and second, the Session approved the Scout Troop 7 report by their Organizational Representative, Sue Ervin, with thanks.

CONSENT AGENDA

On motion and second, the Session approved the following items in the Consent Agenda

- Approve the September 15, 2022 Session minutes as presented.
- Approve the minutes for the Called Meeting of Session of September 1, 2022
- Approve the minutes of the Called Meeting of session of September 30, 2022
- Approve the Report of the Clerk of Session for September 2022
- Affirm the following E-Vote

- **Motion:** *The Session approved baptism for Ronald Myers, on Sunday, October 9, 2022, Rev. Elissa Bailey officiating.*
 - Voting period: October 8, 2022
 - Votes: Yes – 15; No – 0; 5 Elders not voting
 - Motion approved

REPORT OF THE CLERK OF SESSION **For the Month of [September 2022](#)**

I. No changes in membership, baptisms, or deaths to report

II. Communion

Communion was served on Saturday, September 3, 2020, 4:30 pm at Christ the King Chapel, St. Ambrose University, Davenport, part of the FPC choir retreat. Rev. Pat Halverson officiated.

Other Business of the Clerk

The following written report was distributed to the Session. Highlights were discussed.

- **Reminder next meeting: November 21, 2022.**
 - **Scheduled Committee Reports:** Finance, Buildings & Grounds, Stewardship, Nominating Committee of the Congregation
 - **Devotions:** CDF
 - December meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 19, 2022
- **Correspondence:** Thank you letter received September 15, 2020 from Presbyterian Mission Engagement & Support for receipt of \$225 for 102 Share Mission Support (One Great Hour of Sharing).
- Recommended amendments (33) to the Book of Order will come before PEIA for a vote sometime in the next few months. An informational meeting will be held sometime in November. The clerk will provide you the meeting details when they are published. The clerk will share with you a copy of the booklet of amendments at your request.
- Bound church records of 2021 have been received from the bindery. They are kept in the Southwood Heritage Center. The records will be examined by PEIA this fall.
- Early reminder that your annual committee reports for 2022 Annual Report are due in early January; late December would be even better. You might want to talk about responsibility for this report at your November committee meetings.

On motion and second, Other Business of the Clerk report was approved as presented.

Session Committee Reports

Finance Report –Elder Tom Spitzfaden

- The church continues running a deficit for the year, as planned, but it is not as large as predicted. The year will finish with a deficit but it is not possible to predict how large it will be. It will depend mostly on giving in the last 3 months of the year. Often giving is high during this period.

- A temp Account Assistant has been hired. This will help the Finance office keep up on its work and reporting while our Account Assistant is off work for health-related issues.
- Budget process for 2023: Elder Spitzfaden suggested the process could follow the same as last year. The Budget Committee can consist of Session Committee chairs with the Finance Chair as chair. He requested that committees submit their requests for the 2023 budget. He indicated the 2023 budget will also likely need to be deficit budget.
- **On motion and second**, the Session approved the Budget Committee be formed by the Session committee chairs with the Finance Chair serving as the Budget Committee chair.
- The Budget Committee chair will call the first meeting.

	September 2022		September 2021	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
General Fund Income	\$ 32,415	\$ 40,972	\$ 52,359	\$ 38,015
Custodial Accounts Income	2,353	-	6,418	-
Compensation Expenses	(49,635)	(55,148)	(38,755)	(49,179)
Non Compensation General Fund Expenses	(25,183)	(20,097)	(17,882)	(17,439)
Custodial Accounts Expenses	(2,353)	-	(6,419)	-
Surplus (Deficit) Before PPP2 Grant	(\$42,403)	(\$34,273)	(\$4,279)	(\$28,603)
PPP2 Grant	-	-	-	-
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(\$42,403)	(\$34,273)	(\$4,279)	(\$28,603)
	2022 Year-To-Date		2021 Year-To-Date	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
General Fund Income	\$ 423,311	\$ 483,654	\$ 546,001	\$ 483,074
Custodial Accounts Income	84,690	-	31,205	-
Compensation Expenses	(388,609)	(443,708)	(351,454)	(386,866)
Non Compensation General Fund Expenses	(175,220)	(214,484)	(150,841)	(160,163)
Custodial Accounts Expenses	(84,688)	-	(31,204)	-
Surplus (Deficit) Before PPP2 Grant	(\$140,516)	(\$174,538)	\$43,707	(\$63,955)
PPP2 Grant	108,000	108,000	-	-
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(\$32,516)	(\$66,538)	\$43,707	(\$63,955)

All numbers are rounded.

Stewardship – Elder Patrick Downing

- Elder Downing thanked those who had provided positive feedback about the start of the campaign.
- Marty Bowles Edwards' presentation last Sunday was wonderful and well-received.
- Additional Stewardship Minutes will be done in the next few weeks.
- Elder Downing gave thanks for the support given the Stewardship campaign by Kristine Olson.

Building and Grounds – Elder Matt Kabel

- On behalf of Building & Grounds, Elder Kabel presented the following motion:

Buildings and Grounds Committee proposes the following project for Session approval.

The scope of the project is as follows:

1. Replace approximately 10'-12' of leaking condensate line below the wood/concrete floor in Fellowship Hall.
2. Remove approximately 6" width of concrete to gain access to the leaking line. (carpet & wood to be removed by owner)
3. Replace (1) Honeywell electric valve with a Honeywell 2 position line voltage series valve serving the elevator equipment room.
4. Repair (1) leaking hydronic fin tube coil in the elevator entrance from the outside.
5. Replace the removed concrete where it was removed for the line replacement.

Cost of the project is five thousand seven hundred twenty-eight dollars and eighteen cents. (\$5,728.18). This project has been approved by the Finance Committee and is presently waiting approval from the Northwest Bank board of trustees to take the money from the Capital Preservation Fund. Alternative funding will be available if the Capital Preservation Fund monies are not approved.

Following discussion, this motion was approved.

- Additional items reported:
 - Kildalton Cross will be moved inside but some concern that it will not survive the move. It is most certainly will not survive another winter outside.
 - Working on the concrete repairs outside.
 - Fall clean-up day on church grounds will be November 5, 2022, at 8AM. All help will be gladly appreciated.

On motion and second, the Session approved all committee reports as presented.

Report from the Nominating Committee of the Congregation

- Elders Ferris and Tobey Brown indicated they are now in the process of organizing the first meeting of the committee.
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Staff Reports

Darren Long, Facilities Manager

- The annual Fire Department inspection was completed and passed.
- The bell motor in the bell tower is installed and operational.

Matt Bishop, Director of Music

- PAS brochure and subscription information has been mailed. \$15K has been received to-date (goal of \$25K)
- The first PAS concert will be November 13, 2022.
- Planning is underway for the choir 2023 outreach trip in the Twin Cities. Concerts are being planned for Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis and Central Presbyterian Church in St. Paul.
- A Halloween party-fund raiser is planned at the home of Ted and RuthAnn Tobey Brown.
- Musikgarten is meeting in-person.
- Kirkwood and Cherub choirs have been combined and sing next Sunday.

Kristine Olson, Finance Manager

- Working on Stewardship, Budget, and quarter-end reports
- Requested that all committees submit to Kristine information on any major budgeted expenses that are anticipated before the end of the year.

Pat Halverson, Parish Associate

- Has been out-of-town recently.
- Preaching as asked.

Kristy Woodrow, Director of Christian Education

- Sunday School has started; volunteers are still needed.
- Nursery Coordinator has signed on; interviews for staff are on-going. The nursery is being redesigned; hoping to open soon.

Rev. Elissa Bailey, Temporary Pastor

- Working on presentations to several presbyteries on the proposed amendments to the Book of Order.
- Also working on presentations on up-coming changes to the Statistical Report.

Rev. Dr. Kathy Stoner-Lasala, Bridging Pastor

- Rev. Stoner-Lasala presented her report to Session entitled, *"Ask the Pastor Anything: Wrapping Up the Turmoil Times."* A copy of this report is appended to these minutes.
- Rev. Stoner-Lasala reviewed the sections of the report in detail: Background, Introduction, What I've Learned, and Recommendations.
- The report references two additional documents:
 - *"At the Crossroads"* prepared by the Pastor Nominating Committee. Copies of this have been published on the church website for several months and widely available to the congregation. A copy can be found in the Appendix to the bound FPC records for 2022.
 - *"Observations of the 2018 Church Government & Personnel Committee."* A copy of this document is appended to these minutes.
- Rev. Stoner-Lasala indicated she has created notebooks that document the research she has done regarding the questions posed to her during the *Ask the Pastor Anything* sessions and the turmoil times. These will be placed in the Southwood Heritage Room.
- Those attending the meeting made observations and asked questions about the report.
- Rev. Stoner-Lasala indicated she would work on appropriate ways to share her report outside Session.

- Rev. Elissa Bailey commented that from her current understanding of the turmoil time events that she was sorry that the church and its members had to continue to deal with this; actions taken against FPC were inappropriate, wrong, and not fair.

On motion and second, the Session received the *Ask the Pastor Anything* report as presented and unanimously approved the recommendations in the Ask the Pastor anything report as follows:

- + that Session receive: this report; “At the Crossroads,” the Pastor Nominating Committee’s report (Attachment A); and “Observations of the 2018 Church Government and Personnel Committee” report (Attachment B)
- + that Session acknowledge the personal pain of the last several years, state its regret for harmful actions, and make whole – by name – any who would like to have exoneration and support spread across the Session minutes. Persons who have asked for this include Nancy Chapman, Brock Earnhardt, Louise Hales, Judy Hawthorne, Harry Hoyt, and Diane Schroder.
- + that Session affirm and approve the motion of June 2020 recommending the Session welcome any members sidelined by the Administrative Commission and its process or by any dissolutions with various pastors.
- + The Session share its thanksgiving for individuals scarred by the conflict trauma and extend its invitation to these individuals for continued fellowship as First Pres moves forward.
- + the Session invite church members to inform the Clerk if they wish to be listed in the Session minutes whenever full restoration is offered to members hurt by the turmoil times
- + the Session work with your new pastor (who is a denominational authority on accountability and disclosure) to determine standards for confidentiality and disclosure in the Personnel Committee’s work
- + the Session organize information about the turmoil years into a single collection housed in the Southwood Heritage Center. Resources I recommend the Session preserve include:
 - the publication “*At the Crossroads*” produced by the Pastor Nominating Committee
 - the paper “Observations of the 2018 Church Government & Personnel Committee”
 - the notebooks and files I collected concerning the dissolutions of the pastorates of Rev. Heather-Brown Huston, Rev. Pamela Hoogheem, Rev. Scott Minter, and Rev. Dr. Richard Miller; records of the Presbytery’s Administrative Commission; and investigative reports commissioned during the departure of Mr. Allen Wirtz.

On motion and second, all Staff Reports were approved as presented.

On motion and second, the Session approved the August 2022 Session minutes as presented.

Commissioner Report from the 203rd Stated Meeting of the Presbytery, September 22, 2022.

- The commissions reported the meeting had a positive tone but was largely procedural.
- The meeting included a presentation by International Peacemaker, Carmen Elena Diaz Anzora, from El Salvador.

Election of Commissioners to the 204th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of East Iowa, to be held on Thursday, December 1, 2022, 6-8 PM, on Zoom only.

- **On motion and second**, Elder Nancy Foster was elected as a commission to the 204th Stated Meeting of PEIA. Additional commissioners will be sought.

ADJOURNMENT

The agenda was completed. On motion and second, the meeting was adjourned at 10:08 PM. Elder Vicki Stegall closed the meeting in prayer.

The next Stated Meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Davenport, Iowa will be held on November 21, 2022 at 7 PM.

The Rev. Dr. Kathy Stoner-Lasala
Moderator

Mark Jones
Clerk of Session

Appendix 1: FPC Session Minutes, October 2022: October Deacon Minutes received electronically.

Homecoming was a great success. In addition to serving 60 meals for homecoming, leftover meals were sent home with attendees and 25 meals were taken to the homeless shelter.

We need to make use of Deacon's Corner. Ted is going to work on cleaning up the table and designing a poster board of events and needs.

On Sunday October 13, for Undie Sunday, 23 packages of underwear for all ages were donated. Deacons will continue to follow up with the Caring Closet to see what the most pressing needs are and focus one Sunday a month on those items.

Minute for Mission will be put on hold during the Stewardship Campaign. There will be messages from the Stewardship committee each Sunday. During Stewardship, Deacons will use other means of communication to include Enews, Facebook and the bulletin.

If you need something put on social media, talk to Glenn or Susan or email Matt Bishop.

Kristy Woodrow asked that this year the Children's offering be different from the past when the children brought in dollars and coins. This year she will ask that they bring in hats, mittens and gloves for the Cocoa and Caring event in December.

The event will be December 6th from 3 to 5. The Deacons will have a table set up with hats, mittens and gloves for anyone who stops. As the title suggests there will be cocoa too and candy canes. Cathy Woods is the contact person.

Trunk or Treat will be Sunday October 30 from 4 to 5:30. We will ask members to come and pass out candy, books or pencils. Pat Halverson is making a sign to advertise the event. Terri Sheetz with the contact person.

Food collection for the pantry is every Sunday.

We would like to resume the Farthest Pew. This will need to go to the Pandemic Taskforce first.

Washington School partnership is going well. Alex Gilson has been tutoring chess and is asking for more pupils. The Deacons will be providing a meal for the teachers during teacher/parent conferences on November 2nd. Bob and Andy will be taking dinner to the school.

On November 21, Andy McNeil will be the DJ for the children's carnival at Washington School.

Angel Tree is coming up. There is usually a very short turn around with this event. We need to let the congregation know before Thanksgiving so that shopping can be done.

The Green Envelopes are a resource for Deacons, but we will wait until after Stewardship to bring focus back to the green envelopes.

The photos of the Homecoming Celebration were great, and Glenn suggested that if we are at a church event we should take photos so that they can be shared.

Due to the continuing issues with the Center, it has been suggested we sever ties with them and look at partnering with Care Link instead. A motion was made and passed to end our partnership with the Center.

Ted had some concerns with Care Link because of past issues. It was proposed that we have someone from Care Link speak to the Deacons about their process and accountability with funds. If possible, we would like someone to come the November meeting.

Appendix 2: FPC Session Minutes, October 2022: “Ask the Pastor Anything” submitted by the Rev. Dr. Kathy Stoner-Lasala

“Ask the Pastor Anything: Wrapping Up the Turmoil Times”
Bridging Pastor’s Report to the Session
October 17, 2022

Background

Between July 24 and August 18, 2022, I offered a series of eight conversations for congregation members to talk about any lingering issues and concerns that might hold back the congregation from moving forward into a future not encumbered by the turmoil of the past. Prior to these gatherings, Clerk of Session Mark Jones made the excellent suggestion to hold these conversations on both Sunday mornings and weekday evenings. There aren’t many unencumbered blocks of time on the church calendar. Fortunately, during the choir’s and Adult Christian Education’s summer break, both Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings were available.

Introduction

I invited the congregation to send questions to me in advance of the gatherings if those questions might require research. Some church members sent questions for research via email. The questions I researched in advance included:

- +Why did the church dissolve the pastoral relationship with Rev. Dr. Miller?
- +In a dissolution, what are the differences between the powers and responsibilities of the Congregation and the Session?
- +What were the sexual harassment issues raised during Rev. Dr. Miller’s pastorate?
- +What are the definitions of acceptable office and professional behaviors in the 21st century?
- +What is the definition of sexual harassment in the PC(USA)?
- +How will church members find out the specific details of the dissolution with Rev. Dr. Miller?
- +Rev. Katie Styrt disclosed that she identifies with the LGBTQIA+ community; did Rev. Dr. Miller tell Rev. Styrt that she couldn’t mention this in worship services?
- +What does it mean to be a “Biblical” church?
- +How are pastors, staff and others held accountable for their actions?
- +What recourse is available for church members who feel they have been wronged by a pastor?
- +What were the circumstances and what records does the church retain about the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with Rev. Heather Brown-Huston?

Some raised their questions for research during the “Ask the Pastor” conversations. The questions I researched between July 24 and August 18 included:

- +What were the circumstances of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with Rev. Pamela J. Hoogheem?
- + After their departures, what happened in the lives of former associate pastors whose pastoral relationships were dissolved in circumstances of conflict?

Other questions were both posed and discussed during the “Ask the Pastor” conversations. These included:

- +Why didn’t the Presbytery object to the dissolutions of the relationships with several associate pastors during the senior pastorate of Rev. Dr. Miller?
- +Why are the circumstances of pastors’ departures kept secret from the congregation?
- +Do we all worship the same God?
- +Why does our church have a long-standing pattern of withholding information and what can

we do about this?

- +Under what circumstances did the Session move into Executive Session during the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Miller?
- +How can we get over the memory of that congregational informational gathering on October 14, 2018?
- +Are we ready to call a permanent pastor?
- +Does Rev. Dr. Miller's severance agreement protect the congregation and Session from legal action by him?
- +Is the "gag order" over or are there things we still can't talk about?

With generous assistance of the members of the 2018 Church Government and Personnel Committee, and after hours spent reading Session minutes and former associate pastors' personnel files, I've compiled detailed records of the dissolutions with Rev. Dr. Miller, Rev. Pamela J. Hoogheem and Rev. Heather Brown-Huston. Rev. Pat Halverson shared records of her service on the Administrative Commission assembled by the Presbytery following the departure of Rev. Dr. Miller. I will ensure that these records are secured together with records from the church's dissolution with Mr. Allen Wirtz that have been stored for decades in the pastor's study.

When I was seeking God's guidance about whether to send my PIF to the Bridging Pastor search committee, I had meetings over zoom with (then) Stated Clerk Ruling Elder Rebecca Blair and (then) Ministries and Congregations Commission of the Presbytery of East Iowa Moderator Rev. Jennifer Jennings about their perceptions of the congregation and their goals for the Bridging Pastor's work. These included:

- +Perception that the church is afraid of its neighborhood and, because of this fear, has invested significant resources in a complicated security system that cedes access to the church facilities to the church staff and controls when individual church members can enter the church building
- +Perception that the church keeps secrets, maintains opaque operations and avoids discussion of difficult issues
- +Perception that the church does not understand or follow Presbyterian polity or Reformed ecclesiology
- +Goal of full disclosure and processing of Mr. Allen Wirtz' misconduct
- +Goal of resetting communication patterns toward open disclosure and fluid conversation around issues
- +Goal of training Session and congregation in Presbyterian polity and Reformed ecclesiology
- +Goal of establishing collegial, frequent, redundant and cordial communications and operations

What I've Learned

The October 2018 congregational meeting that was orchestrated by the Presbytery of East Iowa, its (then) Stated Clerk Elder Rebecca Blair and its (then) Ministries and Congregations Commission Moderator Rev. Jennifer Jennings is a trauma modal point for many in the congregation, especially those who were swept up in the Presbytery's dragnet including the 2018 Church Government and Personnel Committee and other church officers.

The congregation was denied opportunities for closure by: Presbytery's "gag order" that prohibited conversation about any aspect of Rev. Dr. Miller's departure; Rev. Dr. Miller's sudden and mysterious departure; the presence of a Presbytery Administrative Commission that did not address the congregation's trauma, and, indeed, saw the congregation as a perpetrator; the presence of an ineffectual interim pastor who was perceived to be a puppet of the Presbytery; the onslaught of the COVID pandemic; the departure of dozens if not hundreds of church members; the failure of the disciplinary process to produce an investigation of the events surrounding Rev. Dr. Miller's departure; the Administrative Commission's forcing the Session to take punitive actions against church members

without due process; the Administrative Commission's forcing the Session to take unconstitutional actions concerning the congregation's Nominating Committee.

My experiences with First Pres have invalidated most of the perceptions shared with me by Elder Blair and Rev. Jennings. Further, the congregation completed the recommendations of the Synod Administrative Review Committee (SARC) and participated in the Reconciliation Process required by the SARC. Church officers have attended officer training on Presbyterian polity and Reformed ecclesiology. Congregation members speak openly about both Mr. Allen Wirtz' misconduct and the church's actions to ensure Mr. Wirtz would no longer be their pastor. Inappropriate anxiety about the neighborhood appears to be confined to a couple members of the staff, a couple church leaders, and a couple families who have moved their memberships to churches in other neighborhoods. Church staff do, however, control access to the church building by individual church members.

Recommendations

Is First Pres "done" with the trauma?

- +There is no single or unanimous view about the value of continued discussion of the facts of Rev. Dr. Miller's departure.
- +The Session, Reconciliation Process, Pastor Nominating Committee and members of the 2018 Church Government and Personnel Committee have each published a public account of the "turmoil times."
- +The reports of the "turmoil times" published by the Session and Reconciliation Process have been included in Session minutes; the Pastor Nominating Committee's report (At the Crossroads) and the report by the members of the 2018 Church Government and Personnel Committee ("Observations of the 2018 Church Government & Personnel Committee") have not yet been adopted by Session action.
- +The church continues to take actions that are consistent with restored and healthy communication habits.
- +The Session has not yet determined the degree of confidentiality required for Personnel Committee deliberations
- +While, for the most part, the operational authority of staff has been reset to appropriate levels, access to the church building continues to be restricted by staff

I recommend:

- +that Session receive: this report; "At the Crossroads," the Pastor Nominating Committee's Report (Attachment A); and "Observations of the 2018 Church Government and Personnel Committee" report (Attachment B)
- + that Session acknowledge the personal pain of the last several years, state its regret for harmful actions, and make whole – by name – any who would like to have exoneration and support spread across the Session minutes. Persons who have asked for this include Nancy Chapman, Brock Earnhardt, Louise Hales, Judy Hawthorne, Harry Hoyt, and Diane Schroder.
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- +the Session invite church members to inform the Clerk if they wish to be listed in the Session minutes whenever full restoration is offered to members hurt by the turmoil times
- +the Session work with your new pastor (who is a denominational authority on accountability and disclosure) to determine standards for confidentiality and disclosure in the

Personnel Committee's work

+the Session organize information about the turmoil years into a single collection housed in the Southwood Heritage Center. Resources I recommend the Session preserve include:

- the publication "*At the Crossroads*" produced by the Pastor Nominating Committee
- the paper "Observations of the 2018 Church Government & Personnel Committee"
- the notebooks and files I collected concerning the dissolutions of the pastorates of Rev. Heather-Brown Huston, Rev. Pamela Hoogheem, Rev. Scott Minter and Rev. Dr. Richard Miller; records of the Presbytery's Administrative Commission; and investigative reports commissioned during the departure of Mr. Allen Wirtz.

Appendix 3: FPC Session Minutes, October 2022: Attachment B of the Ask the Pastor Anything Report submitted by the Rev. Dr. Kathy Stoner-Lasala

From the six members of the 2018 Church Government and Personnel Committee:

Harry Hoyt, Brock Earnhardt, Nancy Chapman, Diane Schroder, Judy Hawthorne and Louise Hales

To the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Davenport to use as it sees useful

Date: 3 October 2022

Subject: Brief Summary of events before, during and since October 1, 2018

Observations of Events Previous To, During and Since October 1, 2018

It is widely known within and outside our congregation that First Presbyterian Church of Davenport, Iowa (the Church) has experienced traumatic events beginning on October 1, 2018. What may not be known is that the Presbytery provided inaccurate and incomplete information surrounding the departure of Rev Dr Richard Miller. The Presbytery also ordered that no information be given the congregation other than what they provided. With this communication, we wish to correct that by sharing the background leading up to these events and details of what has taken place since then as we know and understand them.

In August 2018 the Church Government and Personnel Committee (the CG&P Committee), in preparation for meeting with the Session, counseled Rev Dr Richard Miller to resign his pastorate due to his continued unacceptable behavior. That included plagiarism extending back to at least 2015, creating a hostile work environment, and verbal sexual harassment among other things. The CG&P Committee had been working with Rev Dr Miller for many months to help him make corrections, however, his behavior did not improve, and they seriously doubted it would.

Rev. Dr. Miller complained to the Stated Clerk and the Moderator of the Ministers and Congregations Commissions (MCC) of the Presbytery. Subsequently, a representative from MCC interviewed Rev. Dr. Miller and then members of CG&P Committee. His conclusion, as verbally stated to the CG&P Committee, and later confirmed in writing, was that the process CG&P Committee had been following, and planned to follow to a conclusion, was well within the policies of the denomination, and that in his experience the behavior of Rev. Dr. Miller would never change.

The Stated Clerk and representatives of MCC interrupted this process with a special meeting of the Session on October 1, 2018, where they presented the Session with a three-page letter of demands and accusations. This intervention prevented the CG&P Committee from providing information to the Session detailing Rev Dr Miller's unacceptable behavior and a recommendation for dissolving his relationship with the Church. This would have brought the process to a successful, orderly conclusion.

In that meeting the Presbytery representatives stated that the pastor would not be returning to the Church and that members of the CG&P Committee must resign from the CG&P Committee and were not to communicate any information about this case with each other, the Session, or the congregation (the "gag order").

The letter stated as fact that the members of the CG&P Committee had "taken action which is in violation of the Book of Order and illegal under Iowa law," although no investigation was conducted, and no evidence was presented then or since. The allegations were unfounded, and the statement was untrue.

The allegations were again presented as fact to a well-attended meeting of the congregation on October 14, 2018, but could not be refuted because of the gag order. The Presbytery's story was, therefore, allowed to stand as the only version the congregation was allowed to hear. This caused a great deal of consternation within the members of the congregation and was potentially slanderous to the six former members the CG&P Committee.

Another result of the gag order was that the Session was unable to learn all the facts from the now former members of the CG&P Committee. Among those facts was evidence that Dr. Rev. Miller could have been discharged for cause without severance. However, in the Special Called Meeting of the Session on October 1, 2018, the Session was told by Pastor's Advocate Elder Jim Claypool and MCC Representative Rev. Kristin Hutson that Rev Dr Miller could sue the Church and each member of the Session for libel personally.

In a subsequent Special Called Meeting on October 23, 2018, the Session was concerned about the threat delivered by Pastor's Advocate Elder Jim Claypool and MCC Representative Rev. Kristin Hutson on October 1, 2018 and voted to grant Rev Dr Miller 10 months of severance in exchange for a release from him that he would hold harmless all members of the Congregation including all members of the Session and the 2018 members of the CG&P Committee. The gag order also prevented the Session and the six former members of the CG&P Committee from informing the congregation of these events.

Formal complaints filed by the former members of CG&P Committee to the Permanent Judicial Commissions of the Synod (SPJC) and General Assembly (GAPJC) were dismissed on procedural grounds so the complaints of irregularities against the Presbytery, the Stated Clerk, MCC, and Rev Dr Richard Miller that damaged the church were not addressed.

The GAPJC ordered the Synod to conduct an Administrative Review. The final report that resulted had several errors, but it also had useful recommendations for improvement for Presbytery and Session. The Session has enacted those recommendations.

Both the SPJC and the GAPJC stated that reconciliation should be pursued. A facilitator was hired for this purpose. The process that was followed resulted in a heightened awareness of the importance of communication and the establishment of a covenant between the Presbytery and the Session. These are positive outcomes. The Session has entered into this covenant relationship with presbytery leadership who were not involved in the actions of October 1, 2018. Full reconciliation will require a dedicated and sustained effort by all parties over the years to come.

Although the need for a new head pastor was urgent, the church had to have permission from MCC to form a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) to make that search. As noted in Attachment A, "The Session was informed in February 2020, that the MCC would not approve the forming of a PNC until a mission goal-setting process was completed and until the MCC felt the congregation was ready."

The gag order prevented critical communication with the congregation when it was most needed. This message is meant to help correct that transgression.