

Session Summary

June 25, 2019

Following are **highlights** of the June 25, 2019 Session Meeting. *For further clarification and/or questions, please feel free to contact one of the elders listed at the end of this summary.*

Pastor Raymond Hylton opened our meeting in prayer.

Devotion and Prayer as a Session

Pastor Hylton led a study of Acts 16:1-34. Though the early church began under duress with the stoning of Stephen and persecution of the church in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit led the church then and continues to work powerfully through the church now. Paul invited Timothy to join him and we, too, are encouraged to look for and invite the next young man or woman God is calling to serve. As we enter a time of strategic planning, we need to be prepared for God to close some doors because God has other plans for us, just as God had other plans for sending the disciples to preach the Gospel when God led them to Lydia of Thyatira. She opened her heart to listen, and as a result, her entire family was baptized and another church was established there. The relevance of this reading from Acts is to be open to God's leading as a church and to expect setbacks, ambiguity, problems and difficulty. We want everything to go smoothly, but even a wrong turn is okay. It means we change direction.

Pastors' Reports

Rotary has requested a family in our church to host an international student for several segments of a year-long stay. The family needs to live in Evanston because the student will attend ETHS. It was suggested that specific families be asked rather than a church-wide request. Rotary will provide training for the host family.

A vesper service will be held on July 21 for refugee families.

Gracie and Sarah Chen will be baptized on Sunday, July 14.

The group from First Pres who traveled to Israel/Palestine met with the Christmas Lutheran Church elders in Bethlehem. The church on the West Bank has declining membership and are experiencing common problems among churches; i.e. engaging young adults is difficult and parking is a problem. Pastor Munther Isaac of Christmas Lutheran said sometimes they feel forgotten because the church in Egypt is growing tremendously and they are not.

2020 Budget Process

Clark Robinson, Treasurer, was present to give an overview and explanation of the budget. He also explained that Session will be involved more directly in developing the budget for 2020. Staff and elders from the Councils will meet on July 16 to begin the process. Each Council will be expected to provide the following:

- Narrative of the Council's priorities
- Programs to achieve these priorities
- Cost of the programs

Strategic Plan – Unicameral Proposal

Jon Phillips from the Design Team gave an overview of the Second Reading of the Unicameral Report which answered questions and concerns raised during the First Reading of the Report.

We currently have a bicameral system: a Board of Trustees who oversees the financial and legal matters of First Pres through the Society (a legal entity vested with the legal standing to conduct business on behalf of the church) and Session who oversees the spiritual life and governance of the church. A unicameral system means the Board of Trustees will no longer be a separate board. Instead, the president and treasurer of the Society will be elders on Session with particular responsibilities for legal and financial matters. A new council will be created, the Resource Steward Council (RSC), and on this council will be the president, vice-President, treasurer, and secretary of the Society along with others who have an expertise in finance and law.

This is a significant systemic change. Having sitting church elders serve as president and treasurer of the Society and participating fully in overall governance is a significant change. At the same time, the proposed Resource Steward Council will manage many of the day-to-day functions of the current Board of Trustees without requiring a 3-year-term, with the exception of Society officers who shall continue to serve for 3 years.

Discussion followed Mr. Phillips' presentation. Several points were raised regarding ongoing communication and transparency with the congregation.

The motion was made and seconded to approve a change from bicameral to unicameral governance effective January 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

A second motion was made and seconded that a team of representatives be appointed by Session to create a detailed transition plan and timelines to manage the change. The motion carried unanimously.

The transition plan would include the following:

- The Nominating Committee can begin deliberation on elders that should serve as president and treasurer of the Society and lead the RSC.
- The recommended budget process, fully involving the ministry councils in deliberations, can be implemented.
- Elders can begin working with their assigned ministry councils that are going to be adapted as recommended to write a more detailed narrative description of their new and existing functions.
- The existing group of assigned elders can continue to work on a detailed transition plan.
- The Leadership Taskforce can contact some of the churches that participated in the governance survey to gain an understanding of their best practices for unicameral governance.
- Work should begin as soon as possible on making the necessary revisions to the by-laws and create two separate by-laws for the Society and the church.

A third motion was made and seconded that the number of elders on session be reduced from 18 to 12 beginning in 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

Karen Shaw and Tim Minich from the Design Team will be present at the July Session meeting to discuss the question, "How do we define ministry in our church?"

Other questions are

Where do we want to put our effort?

What impacts the BHAGs? (Big Hairy Audacious Goals)

How do these ministries promote our goals and lead to our BHAGs?

Where are we putting our staff and volunteer hours in our church?

Goals of the Strategic Plan

Various questions and concerns about the goals were expressed:

- The goals are about numbers not about service.
- When looking at the goals, how are they fulfilling our mission?

Pastor Hylton reminded us to keep in mind that every goal means growing as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The motion was made and seconded to adopt these goals for our congregation. The motion carried.

The Session then went into executive session to discuss staffing needs.

Joys and Concerns

Prayer was offered for Katie Duke and her father who has pneumonia, and for Dave Ivaska and family whose brother passed away.

Sonia Bodi, Clerk of Session, pro tem

2019 Session

Ordained Pastors

Rev. Dr. Raymond Hylton, *Senior Pastor and Moderator of Session*

Rev. Henry Coates, *Designated Associate Pastor*

Ruling Elders

LeRoy Klemm, *Clerk of Session*

Daniel Allen, *Children's Ministry Council*

Bob Bastian, *The Counseling Center Board*

Sonia Bodi, *Worship Ministry Council, Chicago Presbytery Commissioner*

Bryan Carmody, *Worship Ministry Council*

Dwayne Dobschuetz, *Youth Ministry Council, Stewardship Committee*

Katie Duke, *Pastoral Care Ministry Council*

Susan Hood, *Youth Ministry Council*

Laura Jones, *Pastoral Care Ministry Council*

Kim Klamm, *Personnel Ministry Council, Budget Committee*

Rosemary Mauck, *Evangelism & Membership Development Ministry Council, Nominating Committee*

Matt McLeod, *Adult Discipleship Ministry Council, Nominating Committee*

Hugh Parry, *Personnel Ministry Council*

Dan Shiau, *Adult Discipleship Ministry Council*

Barb Smith, *Evangelism & Membership Development Ministry Council, Chicago Presbytery Commissioner*

Marge Stromberg, *Children's Ministry Council, Chicago Presbytery Commissioner*

Dick Warnecke, *Mission Ministry Council*

Sharyn Wilson Woods, *Mission Ministry Council, Chicago Presbytery Commissioner*