

Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church
Austin, TX

The stated monthly **Session meeting** was held on Tuesday, **January 25, 2011**, in Room 200 at the church.

Members present:

Rev. Dr. Peter Barnes	Nick Dunn	Helen Marrow	Kerry Pollard
Rev. Dr. Carol Friesen	Vicki Gabriel	Liza Martin	Sheryl Streder-Becker
Rev. Dr. Jim Bankhead	Phil Haag	Ray Mashburn	Wally Warrenburg
Drew Beckley	Barbara Humphrey	Jim McBride	Sarah Wehner
Mike Douglas	Jim Johnson	Mary Mills	Weldon Whiteside
	Jim Little	Dennis Pauling	Fred Wilder

Members excused: Rev. Peter Haas, Jarrett Anderson, John Hurst, Rick Milvenan, and Mike Ward

Guest: Bud Reynolds

Dr. Barnes called the meeting to order and Elder Fred Wilder shared a devotion. He said that many times when rereading scripture, new meaning and understanding comes from it, but oftentimes not being able to understand leads to frustration. But he said that the essence of faith is simple: "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." In Matthew 18, Jesus tells us to change and become like little children as they are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus entered the world as an infant and everything he did was first done as a child. The eagerness to believe, the readiness to receive, and the willingness to love all typify children and that is what is asked of all of us. He ended with a prayer by Eugene Peterson.

Approval and Reception of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the [November 30, 2010](#), Stated meeting, the [December 22, 2010](#), email approval for calling a Congregational meeting, and the [January 9, 2011](#), Congregational meeting. Additional motions were made and seconded to accept and receive the minutes of the Session division meetings. Corrections were noted on the November minutes and the motions carried.

Communications and Matters of Record:

A motion was made and seconded to receive and approve the Membership Report and the related information concerning membership as follows:

Motion: To approve the Membership Report of [January 18, 2011](#), and the motions related to membership.

1. Baptisms

- a. Chappell Matthew Johnson, son of Michelle and Clayton Johnson
- b. Carter William Tursam, son of Natalie and Shannon Tursam

2. Transfer from the membership roll:

- a. Letter from Hillsborough Presbyterian Church, Hillsborough, NC, requesting letter of transfer from WHPC for Elizabeth Binford Bartow and James Wade Davis

3. Remove from the membership roll:

- a. Letter from William and Marilyn Hartman dated October 13, 2010, requesting removal from the church rolls.

4. Clerk's Report

- a. Sign-up for Session, 4th Tuesday devotionals
- b. Motion: To move the November Stated meeting from the 4th to the 5th Tuesday because of the Thanksgiving holiday
- c. Reading Scripture- from the PCUSA website
- d. Motion: Call the Annual Meeting of the Congregation for Sunday, June 5, 2011, for the purpose of:
 1. Presenting the Annual Report
 2. Approval of the Pastor's Terms of Call
 3. Approval of amendments to the WHPC Bylaws

The motions carried.

Financial Report: Elder Wally Warrenburg presented a financial report for December and the year 2010. He also reported that the church ended the year with a surplus and outlined its distribution and other year-end account transfers. He made a motion as follows:

Motion: To Approve:

- a. **The transfer of \$30,499.61 from the Operating Budget to Missions Reserve**
- b. **The transfer of \$50,852.15 Operating Surplus to the General Reserve**
- c. **The transfer of \$93,543.37 Operating Reserve to the General Reserve**
- d. **The transfer of \$375.00 Memorial Fund to the General Reserve**
- e. **The transfer of \$365.66 Gwen David Fund to the General Reserve**
- f. **The transfer of \$50,183.63 from the General Reserve to the Mortgage Pay Off**
- g. **The transfer of \$49,053.10 from the General Reserve to the Facilities Reserve**

The motion carried.

Old Business:

1. **Stewardship Report.** Dr. Barnes reported that 61 new pledges were received for 2011, but 52 families who pledged last year had yet to pledge this year. A final communication will ask that the pledge card be returned even if a financial commitment cannot not be made. Based on current projections, total anticipated income for the year is projected to be \$168,000 below the Asking Budget amount. The Finance Committee recommended that the Budget Committee reconvene to make the necessary adjustments to balance the budget. The Session was asked to approve a total budget of \$3,082,000 and allow the Budget Committee to make the modifications to balance. After discussing general options for expense reduction and additional revenue sources, it was decided that all elders would be notified of the date of the budget meeting and would be invited to attend. The Budget Committee will come back to Session for approval of a balanced budget in February.

New Business:

1. **WHPC Foundation Board.** A current list of members and references to the Foundation by-laws was included in the Session packet. Elder Sarah Wehner made the following motion to elect a new member to the Board.

Motion: That Session elect Roger J. (Rocky) Engemoen as a member of the WHPC Foundation Board

The motion carried.

2. **Personnel Report.** Personnel Committee Chair, Elder Ray Mashburn, reported on the hiring of two employees. Jason Johnson joined the church staff on January 15th as the Director of Contemporary Worship. He previously served on the WHPC Youth staff from 2004-2007. His position is for 20 hours a week and he will also work with the Youth department. Bill Laughlin will join the staff on April 15th as the WHPC Business Administrator. His arrival will allow Bud Reynolds to work on special projects for the church as Special Assistant to the Senior Pastor. Bud has already begun a new assignment as the point person for the implementation team for the Next Steps Task Force initiatives.

3. **Denominational Relations**

- A. A thank you letter from Presbyterian Coalition was included in the Session packet.
- B. **Upcoming Mission Presbytery Meetings.** Denomination Relations Chair, Elder Jim Johnson reported that the 2011 Presbytery meetings will be held March 4-5 at Trinity Presbyterian Church in San Antonio, June 18-19 at Schreiner University in Kerrville, and October 28-29 at First Presbyterian Church in Victoria. He emphasized that the first two meetings will be especially important as the proposed amendments to the Fidelity and Chastity clause and changes to the Confession of Faith and Book of Order will be considered and voted upon. Several churches in the Austin area are gathering on February 12 at Covenant Presbyterian for an information and training session in preparation for the meetings. Elder Johnson said that the Denomination Relations Committee would prefer to commission the same 13 representatives to attend all three meetings this year.
- C. **Slate of Commissioners.** Elder Jim Johnson said that the Denomination Relations Committee (DRC) hoped to have a full slate of elders ready to present at the meeting for Session approval, but that there are still several slots to fill. He presented the following motion:

Motion: The Denomination Relations Committee requests that the Session Moderator and Clerk allow the DRC to select the Commissioners for the 2011 Presbytery Meetings.

The members of the DRC are Elder Jim Johnson, Elder Phil Haag, Elder Wally Warrenburg, Paul Gamel, Phil Barnes, and Amy Hanschen. The justification for having a set slate is that it is in the best interest of WHPC to have well informed commissioners at the meetings. Elder Johnson added that it is important to equip the commissioners for the upcoming votes as they represent significant theological issues facing our denomination.

The motion carried.

D. What Lies Ahead. Dr. Barnes distributed four documents and gave a brief overview of each of them. Three were articles that addressed the changing landscape of the Presbyterian denomination and of the need to find a new way forward. Dr. Barnes said that “business as usual” would no longer be acceptable and that no amount of dialogue would change the fact that the church is divided and has developed two fundamentally different theologies. In order to find a way to honor the history and preserve the commonality of the denomination, Dr. Barnes outlined three proposals that are under consideration and could possibly be put in place in the future:

1. Form an Association or Fellowship that would offer renewal and support within the current denominational structure
2. Create a Fellowship that is connected to, but not a complete part of, the PCUSA. This association would have minimal layers of bureaucracy and be comprised of churches that are in fellowship together, much like the Willow Creek Association, but with more structure and accountability and some denomination-like functions.
3. Acknowledge that we are a divided church and actually divide into separate entities, with some shared resources, but with separate cultures and approaches while still both remaining in the PCUSA. Under this proposal, recommendations would be given to the General Assembly on division and consolidation of Presbyteries based not on geographical, but rather on a theological basis.

The fourth document was a draft letter written by a group of PCUSA pastors which outlines the current issues facing and dividing the denomination, a proposal to consider, and an invitation to other pastors and elders to join them in their efforts. Dr. Barnes said that the letter is still in process and will be sent out at a later date. He added that it was important for WHPC elders to be aware and up to date on what is happening in our denomination. He also said he planned to sign the letter and if any elders had concerns they should contact him.

E. Board of Pensions Update. An issue brought forward at General Assembly concerns a proposal for Presbyterian churches to provide benefits for same sex partners of staff members. A study group, led by John Huffman, formerly of St. Andrew’s in Newport Beach, CA, has been formed to review the proposal. Consideration and voting has been postponed until January, 2012, when the study group reports its findings. It is expected

that many churches will choose to opt out of supporting the proposal and will elect to have their resources redirected to other non-controversial alternatives. The Board of Pensions is not obligated to take action on this proposal, but has chosen to not only because of the issue, but also because it is felt that the process followed thus far has not been well thought out.

- 4. Next Steps Implementation Team Report.** Because of the late hour, this report was postponed until the 2nd Tuesday meeting on February 8th.

Division Reports: None

Pastor Reports: None

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and it ended with prayer at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Wehner
Clerk of Session