

Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church
Austin, TX

The stated monthly **Session meeting** was held on Tuesday, **March 22, 2011**, in Room 200 at the church.

Members present:

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

Guests: Rev. Dr. Jim Bankhead, Paul Gamel

Members excused: Rev. Peter Haas, Jarrett Anderson, Phil Haag, and Mike Ward

Dr. Barnes called the meeting to order and Elder Jim Johnson gave shared a devotion and opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval and Reception of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the [February 22, 2011](#) Stated meeting. Additional motions were made and seconded to accept and receive the minutes of the Session division meetings.

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 [March 14, 2011](#), and the motions related to membership.

1. Baptisms:

- a. Isabell Michaeo and Sofia Michaeo, fraternal twin daughters of Stephanie Craft and Marco Micheo
- b. Susie and Grace Collingwood

2. Transfer of membership:

- a. Margaret Barr to Saratoga Presbyterian Church

3. Clerk's Report

- a. Signup for Elders in Worship, May-August, 2011

The motions carried.

Financial Report: A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial reports for February, 2011. Elder Wally Warrenburg reported that February receipts were below plan, but because of higher receipts in January, year-to-date revenue is even with plan. Expenses for the

month and for the year-to-date were below plan, so the church has begun the year in a healthy position.

Elder Warrenburg gave a report on the 2011 budget. After the review in January, the Session gave the Committee a directive to restore budget funds where possible to the Youth Ministry department and to the Community Division. He reported that additional funds were redirected to both areas by delaying a new personnel hire and by using designated gifts to Mission as the first dollar spent in the division.

The motion to accept the report carried.

Old Business:

1. Denominational Relations Committee Report and Report on the March 4-5, 2011 Mission Presbytery meeting. Committee Chair, Paul Gamel, shared his observations on the March Presbytery meeting and spoke about the presbytery vote that approved amending the Book of Order as it relates to ordination standards.

He began his report by announcing that Chris Knepp was examined and will be ordained at WHPC on April 10, 2011. Andy Dearman will be the guest preacher at his ordination service. Former WHPC Associate Pastor, Clint Regan, was approved and designated Senior Pastor at Wimberley Presbyterian Church. Jason Webster, who as a seminary student was under the care of WHPC, was approved for future ordination and the presbytery voted to waive the requirement that he have a college degree because of his outstanding performance in seminary. John Knox Ranch was approved as a non-profit organization.

Fifteen amendments to the Book of Order were also approved. Fourteen were administrative, but the fifteenth concerned the amendment of section G-6.106b as it relates to the church and its officers. The amendment proposed to strike the fidelity and chastity clause as standards for ordination of pastors and church officers that was approved earlier at a previous General Assembly. Presbyteries are now in the process of voting on the amendment. By secret ballot, Mission Presbytery commissioners approved the amendment by a vote of 201/194 with 3 abstentions.

Paul said that as the second largest church in the presbytery, our participation and active involvement in amendment process going forward is crucial. Explaining the ramifications if the amendment is approved by a majority of presbyteries, he said that if passed, local churches and presbyteries would be able to independently establish their own set of ordination standards for pastors and officers and that a set standard within the denomination would no longer exist. He said it is important to understand where we stand now and what the implications will be for our denomination, presbytery, and local church if the amendment passes nationwide.

Dr. Barnes distributed a document outlining the five views of homosexual practice in the Christian church. The views ranged from considering homosexuality an abomination to believing that it was a matter of freedom in Christ. Dr. Barnes said that the pro-ordination of practicing homosexuals agenda has gone from tolerance (in the 70's and 80's) to acceptance and will end in endorsement. Assuming that the amendment passes nationally, which it appears that it will, Dr. Barnes addressed the question of how WHPC should act going forward. He said that there are a number of options to consider, including redoubling our efforts within presbytery, joining forces for collaboration and voting with other like-minded churches, or developing

alternative approaches to our organizational structure. The Denominational Relations Committee was asked to bring information to the next meeting about other churches and possible partners for jointly petitioning Presbytery. Questions were posed about some of the more specific implications of making changes to our current presbytery structure and also about ways WHPC could proceed at this point. Dr. Barnes asked for prayer for what the Lord has in store for us.

2. Next Steps Implementation. Bud Reynolds was unable to attend the meeting, but sent the following memo to Session:

Date: March 22, 2011

RE: Next Steps

1. I have drafted a memo summarizing the last Session discussion on Small Groups; I am waiting for a discussion with Peter Haas prior to releasing it. I was out of town for a few days; Peter is now out of town. I anticipate that memo being released once Peter returns.
2. We are planning a meeting of the implementation Teams responsible for initiative #1 and its sub-parts on April 13 in order to ensure all the teams understand where each of the teams is heading.
3. I anticipate further Session discussion on the topic of Membership hopefully at the next first Tuesday meeting.
4. We are planning a major portion of the Officer/Staff retreat to be about Next Steps.

Thank you for the support Session has given this project.

Dr. Barnes reminded the Session of the retreat at Austin Presbyterian Seminary on April 30 and May 1 and said that there would be more discussion on the Next Steps at the meeting.

New Business:

1. **Motion: That Session approve the appointment of the 2011 Administrative Commission of Phil Barnes, Paul Gamel, Jim Johnson, Rick Milvenan, and Sarah Wehner, for the purpose of Reading the Examinations of the officers-elect and acting on behalf of the Session in determining their readiness to serve**

The motion carried.

Division Reports: None

Pastor Reports:

Carol Friesen announced a concert sponsored by Empact Africa at Nutty Brown Café on Wednesday, March 23, at 6:30 p.m.

Peter Barnes shared a story of new connections and relationships that have been fostered at WHPC.

With no further business to discuss, Carol Friesen closed the meeting in prayer and the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Wehner
Clerk of Session