

Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church
Austin, TX

The stated monthly **Session meeting** was held on Tuesday, **June 28, 2011**, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 200 at the church.

Members present:

Rev. Dr. Peter Barnes	Phil Haag	Jim Little	Julie Smith
Rev. Dr. Carol Friesen	Betty Hood	Liza Martin	Sheryl Streder-Becker
Rev. Peter Haas	Barbara Humphrey	Ray Mashburn	Mike Ussery
Alex Alleman	Jim Johnson	Mary Mills	Mike Ward
Mike Douglas	Laurence Ligon	Dennis Pauling	Weldon Whiteside

Clerk: Sarah Wehner

Guests: WHPC Business Manager, Bill Laughlin, Susan Whiteside, and Marie Baker and The Rev. Karen Grief, representatives from Mission Presbytery Committee on Ministry.

Members excused: Drew Beckley, Rick Milvenan, Wally Warrenburg, and Fred Wilder

Dr. Barnes called the meeting to order and Elder Barbara Humphrey opened with a devotion and prayer.

Approval and Reception of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the [May 24, 2011](#) Stated meeting the [June 8, 2011](#) Called meeting, and the [June 12, 2011](#) Congregational 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 [June 20, 2011](#), and the motions related to membership.

1. Baptisms:

a. Randal Ellis Ford, son of Lauren and Randal Ford

2. Motions related to membership:

a. Return to active membership: Mary Katherine and Stephen Stout

b. Request for transfer of membership from Toni Kenady to Wimberley Presbyterian Church

The motions carried.

Report from the Session Clerk

1. Mission Presbytery review of WHPC's 2010 Session Minutes. They were approved without exception.

2. Reminder of the two called meetings on Tuesday, July 5 and Tuesday, August 2, at 7:00 p.m. regarding the 10A denominational matters and Next Steps Task Force Implementation.

Financial Report: A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial reports for May, 2011. Business Manager Bill Laughlin reported that income for the year is on target and expenses continue to run below plan.

The 2012 budget process is underway and divisions have received their planning packets. The divisions will work over the summer so that a preliminary budget can be approved at the August business meeting.

The motion to accept the financial report carried.

Special Business: Triennial Visit. Dr. Barnes introduced Marie Baker and The Rev. Karen Grief, representatives of the Mission Presbytery Committee on Ministry. They joined the meeting to hear about the missions and ministries of WHPC and to share opportunities to participate in the work of the presbytery and larger church. Various members of Session enthusiastically reported on these things and answered the questions of our guests. Dr. Barnes expressed his appreciation for their visit, and Dr. Carol Friesen offered prayer.

Old Business:

1. **Next Steps Implementation Report.** This report was postponed to the July 5, 2011 meeting.

2. **Report on the 2011 Stewardship Campaign.** Elder Mike Ward said that although the committee expects the campaign to be fiscally challenging this year, the message will be that building and strengthening our community is about more than just writing a check. He said that there will be highlights of the many ministries and mission outreach opportunities of the church with the hope that the congregation will become excited and encouraged to become involved in them. The committee plans to network with various communities and small groups within the church as part of the campaign effort. There were suggestions from the elders to move away from "Commitment Sunday" and to make stewardship a more year-round effort with ongoing opportunities to give again or give more. Others agreed and thought that stewardship sermon messages and devotionals should be delivered throughout the year. Dr. Barnes thanked Mike and the committee for their willingness to do whatever it will take to make this campaign successful and said that the Session would support and help them achieve their goals. Mike asked the Session for prayer to let the Lord direct amid distractions.

3. **Ratification of the email poll to conduct communion on June 21, 2011 during the Tuesday Morning Men's Group held at WHPC.** A motion was made and seconded to ratify the communion. Dr. Barnes noted that a motion for a new ratification process would follow later in the meeting.

4. **Denomination Relations Committee Report.**

Presbytery Report: Elder Jim Johnson said that eleven commissioners and three pastors attended the meeting at Schriener University in Kerrville June 17-18. He reported that

two amendments to the Constitution were debated and voted upon. The first was to change the current form of government (nFOG) and the second was a proposed amendment to the Belhar Confession. Although the presbytery struggled with passage of a new form of government, the amendments passed and will take effect in July. The proposal of the Belhar Confession was unable to garner a two-thirds majority and failed.

The proposal for a presbytery overlay was discussed in a workshop session and was well attended. Elder Johnson reported that there was not much of an opportunity for expressions of concern and that a group of elders and pastors plan to set up a meeting with Rob Mueller, the Interim Moderator of Presbytery for a fuller discussion. Dr. Barnes added that thirteen churches are interested in participating in a conversation on how to live together or apart after the passage of 10A.

Briefing Report: Elder Jim Johnson prepared an extensive report on the State of Texas real estate laws as they apply to the ownership and control of the real property of the congregation of WHPC. In his oral report he stated that he didn't feel that the issue of ownership and control was clear cut and that WHPC should avoid litigation if at all possible. He said that the state of Texas takes two approaches when it comes to ownership of property: neutral principles and church related principles. Neutral principles consider the owner of a property to be the one named on the deed. Church related principles look to the denominational authority for determination of ownership. Dr. Barnes said that it is not clear based on the documents we hold that we could win a court case. He thanked Jim and praised his efforts in establishing legal clarity.

Update from the Preferred Path Team: Elder Phil Haag and Kerry Pollard reported that five elders have been trained to assist the Preferred Path Ministry Team in town hall and one-on-one meetings with members of the congregation. Kerry said that 70 members attended the June town hall meeting and that the forums in July would offer childcare to allow parents with young children to attend and offer input. He added that most of the questions have had to do with information and options on retaining WHPC church property, concern over the decision making process, and feelings that scripture is being taken out of context to support specific positions on the 10A issue. Kerry said that members have expressed appreciation for the forums and for the elders who have attended the meetings to listen. On July 31, meetings will be held at 9:30 and 11:00 to offer another opportunity for the congregation to ask questions and offer comments. He added that Karl Slaikeu was working with the presbytery and with Interim Moderator, Rob Mueller.

Communications Team Report: Susan Whiteside attended the meeting on behalf of the Communications Team and brought information prepared by the team to share with the Session. The first was a communications plan for relaying information about denominational issues. The plan included key messages about education and unconditional love and outlined the tactics that the Preferred Path Ministry and Communications Team will employ in responding and reporting to the congregation. The second handout contained messages relayed through the website of support, encouragement, and concern. Dr. Barnes thanked Susan for her commitment to WHPC church members and to the Session.

New Business:

1. Motions from the Mission Division. Dr. Carol Friesen offered the following motions on behalf of the Mission Division:

Motion: That Session approves moving the Financial Stewardship Committee from the Mission Division to direct reporting to the Session.

and

Motion: That Session approves the move of the Denominational Relations Committee from the Mission Division to the Support Division.

The motions carried. **(POST MINUTE APPROVAL FILE NOTE:** The above two motions are actually reversed in the intent. Financial Stewardship moved to under the Support Division and Denominational Relations moved to direct reporting to the Session. See August 30, 2011 Session Minutes for the correction.)

The following motion was made by the Clerk:

- 2. Motion : That Session approves the 2009-2011 Form of Government as amended, of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order, as its transitional manual effective July 10, 2011, until such time as new policies and procedures are developed and adopted by the Session and Congregation as needed.**

The motion was amended to read:

Motion: That Session approves the 2009-2011 Form of Government as amended, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order as *it applies to governance of the local church*, as its transitional manual effective July 10, 2011, until such time as new policies and procedures are developed and adopted by the Session and Congregation as needed.

The motion carried.

- 3. Motion: That Session authorize the Senior Pastor and the Moderator of the Worship Division to approve ad hoc requests for the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper on behalf of the Session in between meetings of the Session.**

The motion carried.

Division Reports: None

Pastor Reports: None

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.
Rev. Dr. Carol Friesen closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Wehner
Clerk of Session