

## **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS**

### **MARCH - MAY 2021**

- Starting in April, Session discontinued meeting twice monthly and returned to their pre-Covid schedule of monthly meetings.
- Session accepted, with much regret, the retirement of Andrea Barbehenn, long-term director of the Preschool and Extended Day Care program at FPCB, effective June 30, 2021. In response, a Preschool Mission Study Group was formed and began meeting in January to evaluate all aspects of the preschool program and make recommendations for the future. The study group prepared several documents partly intended to guide the search for a new director. They included Recommendations for Preschool, Director qualifications, a draft mission/vision and guiding principles statement and a draft of position guidelines for a Director of the Preschool [job description].
- Session approved the formation of a Preschool Director Search Committee consisting of Kim Miner, Becky Gorton, Ginny Dagnall, Sarah Baer, Elizabeth Conard, Don Robertson, J..C Austin and Al Philpotts (ex-officio).
- Session approved the hiring of Laura Hawk to replace Andie Barbehenn as Preschool Director, effective July 1, on the enthusiastic recommendation of the search committee. They also expressed their appreciation to the search committee members.
- Session approved the formation of an ad hoc committee to celebrate Andie's retirement after 35 years of service. The committee members are Joanne Turcotte, Al Philpotts and Kari Keyock.
- With thanks, Session approved disbanding the study group. Members were Becky Gorton and Elizabeth Conard (co-chairs), Leslie Pohl, George Campbell, Sarah Baer (parent), Ginny Dagnall (teacher), Carol Burns, Susan Farber and J.C. Austin.
- Session, on the recommendation of the Worship Committee, approved the planting of a memorial tree for those who died as result of COVID-19 during the past year.
- Session welcomed The Rev. Lindsey Altvater Clifton to their meetings and the church in early March.
- Session invited Belle Marks, chair of the Building Reopening Task Force, which is charged with evaluating the COVID-19 epidemic and its

implications for the church, to update Session on their current recommendations and thoughts for the future, particularly reopening for in person worship. June 20 was approved for a return to in person worship with some restrictions, such as a mask requirement.

- Session approved the task force's recommendations for four phases of guidelines related to church/building opening. As of June 20, we are in Phase 3. Phase 4 makes masks optional. Modifications to certain components of the worship service such as Communion, offerings and "Passing of the Peace" will be required in each stage.
- Following training and meeting with an Administrative Commission (Al Philpotts, Phil Clouser, Kristen Benway and Phyllis Walker) for examination and approval, new Session members were installed March 28: Kim Miner, Steve Samuelson, Joanne Turcotte and Kari Keyock, along with a new Deacon, Jane Masters.
- Polly Beste, Don Masters and Elizabeth Conard completed their terms of Service as Elders. Session, on behalf of the Congregation, expressed their appreciation for their hard work, input, and time commitment to the church.
- Session approved a change in the policy that partial refunds are granted to individuals who have purchased interment spaces if they wish to relinquish their space. Other options are available with approval: donating space back as a charitable deduction or transferring ownership with prior approval.
- At the request of the Worship Committee, Session approved changing the Traditional Service time from 11:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. in the fall. The request was made to allow additional time for the tech teams, Pastors and David Macbeth to prepare between the Contemporary and Traditional services.
- Session appointed JoAnne Turcotte as Session representative to the Preschool Advisory Board, replacing Elizabeth Conard, who is no longer a member of Session.
- Session approved hosting the Lehigh Presbytery Installation Service for Rev. Clifton as Associate Pastor on September 12, 2021.
- Mark Ferguson, chair of the Mission Committee, informed Session that the committee feels their focus should be more relational than financial. In helping Session to discern future mission actions, both Mark and Lindsey Clifton recommended Session members read a book the Mission committee has read – *Neighborhood Church: Transforming Your Congregation into a*

*Powerhouse for Mission.* Session will be reading/discussing the book during the summer.

- On the recommendation of the Discipleship Committee, Session approved a dedicated Faith Formation Hour between Sunday services for children and adults. They also approved the resumption of child care on Sunday mornings.
- On the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, Session approved two additional holiday for staff – the Monday following Easter and Juneteenth.
- With Session's approval, the Preschool Task Force was disbanded because it has met its goals. Appreciation was expressed to members Becky Gorton and Elizabeth Conard (co-chairs), Leslie Pohl, Sue Farber, Andie Barbehenn, J.C. Austin, George Campbell, Carol Burns and Sarah Baer.
- The resignation of Marianne Zarillo as Business Manager was accepted with regret. She has her own business and the time requirements made it difficult to fulfill. During an interim period, Marianne will continue to work 10-15 hours a week.
- The Congregational Life committee has planned several events for the summer including a Trivia Night this Friday evening (June 25).
- The Deacons are continuing to make phone calls to church members, particularly those unable to get out and are preparing meals as needed. If you are interested in meal prep, let Jeff Csatari know.