Session update: April 2025

Jane Masters attended the April meeting of Session, as the representative for Deacons.

The meeting's opening prayer and devotion was on verses 6-7 of Philippians, Chapter 4:

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life. (This version is from *The Message*, a contemporary paraphrase of the Bible created by Eugene H. Peterson, designed to make the text more accessible and relatable to modern readers.)

Session noted with regret that Norma Treichler passed away on March 24.

Rev. Kinney reported that work on a manual of operations (required by Presbytery), will commence this summer, including committee descriptions and the creation or revision of policies and procedures.

Rev. Kinney has created a nine-member prayer team to pray for the work of the church, its staff and leadership, and issues that arise in the life of the church. It is wonderful to have a group of people praying for us.

The Strategic Mission Steering Committee has been meeting twice monthly since February 2023 to find positive, community-impacting partnerships and missional uses for our building and land that also support the church's short- and long-term financial sustainability. Session approved the Committee's request for reaffirmation of the Strategic Mission Steering Committee as the authorized and Session-designated body to collaborate with Foundry Commercial and the Presbyterian Foundation to conduct a Call for Offers process and bring back a single recommendation for redevelopment to Session, the FPCB congregation, and the Presbytery.

Session approved the Personnel Committee motion to approve Rev. Cynthia Simmons (ret) as the Parish Associate for Pastoral Care, and to reaffirm Rev. Dr. Richard Smith (ret), Rev. Dr. Ginny Smith (ret), and Rev. Dr. Steve Simmons (ret) as Parish Associates.

Session approved a sabbatical for Rev. Lindsey Altvater Clifton from June 2, 2025 to July 7, 2025.

Session accepted with thanks and blessing the resignation of Rev. Suzanne Trump, whose last day in faithful service to our church community will be May 30, 2025.

Session approved the Worship Committee's motion to begin the summer worship schedule of one combined service at 10:00 a.m. starting Memorial Day weekend, May 25, and continuing at least through Labor Day (Sunday, Aug. 31). The decision on exactly when to return to two services will be made by the Senior Pastor and Worship Committee chair depending on the weather forecasts.

Session approved the use of the Sanctuary by Music Showcase Festivals for high school choir presentations on May 9 and 16 (this has been an ongoing relationship). There will be a daily walk-through inspection of the sanctuary at the close of activities. The motion carried

PARISH ASSOCIATE FOR PASTORAL CARE – A Position Description

Rationale: Currently, pastoral care at First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem is provided in a number of ways by pastors, Deacons, Stephen Ministers, former Deacons who still carry out visits with church members, and K-Groups. What is needed is a way to coordinate the efforts of and improve communication between the various providers of pastoral care in the congregation.

Purpose: To serve as the central person for coordination, communication, and support between the pastoral care providers at First Presbyterian Church.

Functions:
Establish connections with each group of care providers, learning what each group does and to whom they minister.

Provide support for each group of care providers through attendance at Deacons meetings, arranging for periodic meetings of the former "resting" Deacons who still carry out visits, and keeping in touch with the Stephen Ministers as well as our Spiritual Directors.

Serve as the contact person for each group of caregivers (pastors, Deacons, Stephen Ministers, K-Group Coordinators) and prepare a weekly Pastoral Care Report to share summarizing the care given by each group and what kind of follow-up may be needed. This report will be shared with the pastors and information can then be entered into the church's database documenting the activities of each group.

Serve as the liaison between the care giving groups and the pastoral staff, arranging for pastors to call in the hospitals as necessary.

With the pastoral staff, arrange for on-call coverage by a pastor Thursday night through Monday morning each week.

Arrange for training events for care providers as may be appropriate.

Term: One year, renewable annually with the consent of the Session and the Parish Associate.

Compensation: This is a non-compensated position.

Approved by Deacons: 4/28/2025
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