

Session Notes

by Paul Bergsteinsson, Clerk of Session

March 2011

The Session held its regular monthly meeting in Congregational Hall on the evening of Tuesday, March 8th, moderated by Interim Pastor Dr. James Carter. This meeting continued discussion of many topics considered by the Session at its February meeting.

Elder Laura Getty gave a report to the Session on a proposal to form a new committee to be called the "Joint Budget Management Committee" (JBMC). The recommendation to form such a committee was the result of discussion and collaboration among many church leaders, including Session members, Trustees, a group called the "Strategic Education Task Force (SETF), and Dr. Carter. The Session approved this new committee's creation. The purpose, broadly speaking, is to instill better discipline and create a better process whereby church leadership establishes the church budget. The objectives of the committee are the following:

- Develop a church budget that reflects strategies and priorities set by the Session.
- Employ more formal annual goal setting by the Session as a starting point in budgeting.
- Create timely budgets that incorporate "bottoms up" input from committees, councils, and task forces.
- Draw on the expertise of the Trustees more fully.

Elder Mary Ledwith reported to the Session on the work of the newly formed "Action Group." This group had prepared a project spreadsheet that included all projects that fall under or report to the Session and that come from the congregational study, the work of the Strategic Education Task Force (SETF), or other sources. This spreadsheet contained such information as the originator of projects, the project owner(s), the project's status, and timetables. The value of this information in keeping a comprehensive and up-to-date view of projects and priorities was noted.

The Action Group reported that it would need additional time to prepare its recommendations regarding action plans. The Session authorized and requested that the Actions Group's work continue with reports to be received at both of the next two regular Session meetings.

Trustee Vice President Nancy Wolcott gave an update on financial results so far in 2011, indicating that operating budget results were generally in line with expectations. She also reported briefly on preparations for the sale of the manse at 129 Fishers Road and on efforts to secure financing for the HVAC project.

Bill Black reported on contractor selection for the HVAC project. The following selections had been made: Becker & Frondoff for overall project management; W. S. Cumby for construction management; and Atkin Olshin Schade for architectural services. Mr. Black expressed that the team for the HVAC was confident in the ability of these firms to do a good job on this project.

In other business, Elder Lindsay Johnson gave a report to the Session for the Personnel Committee. The Clerk of Session reported on progress in assembling a team that will undertake a major study regarding church facilities, including manses, pursuant to developing a master plan for all church properties. The Session considered some recent correspondence it had received. Additionally, the Session met briefly in executive session.

Dr. Carter finished the meeting with a Moderator's report, followed by a sharing of joys and concerns and a closing prayer.