

Session Notes

by Paul Bergsteinsson, Clerk of Session

November 2011

The Session held its regular monthly meeting in Congregational Hall on the evening of November 8th, moderated by Interim Pastor Dr. James L. Carter. Reports at this meeting touched on business issues as well the spiritual side of church life.

Trustee and church Treasurer Keith Brinks gave an encouraging report regarding year to date financial results for the church. Income has exceeded the budget plan through the end of September and expenses are running \$100,000 under budget. It appears at this point that there will be a surplus for the full calendar year. The Trustees' single point estimate is that this surplus will be approximately \$125,000. Keith also reported on the beginning of church use of the line of credit established with Bryn Mawr Trust. This borrowing facility, arranged earlier in the year, is being used to fund heating and air conditioning renovations. It will be paid off with member contributions that are received by the Forward in Faith Capital Campaign.

Trustee George Henisee's gave a report on the planning and activity of the Forward in Faith Capital Campaign. This campaign will have its formal launch in February, 2012. George's presentation covered planning aspects of the campaign as well as some early work with potential larger donors and with church officers on their participation in this campaign. The Deacons, Trustees, and Session are being asked to consider and make their pledges to this campaign before the formal part of the campaign begins and in conjunction with their pledges to the 2012 stewardship campaign. George Henisee and Elder Steve Udicious, representing the 2012 stewardship campaign, thanked the members of Session for their support of both of these campaigns.

Reverend Kellen Smith gave a presentation on Youth activities in this program year. He spoke of the importance of welcoming relationships and emphasized a programmatic theme of "living into our calling as followers of Christ." He noted key upcoming events, including SWELL services and the fellowship of the Pancake Breakfast in Congregational Hall on Thanksgiving morning. He asked all to pray for our youth and for the Youth Ministry program.

Reverend Sherri Hausser, Elder Carol Cobb-Nettleton, and church member Judy Frazier gave a report on the mission trip to Appalachia sponsored by the Worldwide Ministry Council. This early November trip was described by Reverend Hausser as an "accompanying" trip – one in which the purpose was not so much to serve a

community as to listen and share so as to learn about individual and community concerns. Many community needs for this region were recounted, as well as relationships that were built. Judy Frazier expressed heartfelt appreciation to those who had organized this event.

Elder Bob Holmes gave a brief monthly update report on the work of the Session Priorities Committee. This committee's goal is to assist the Session by providing research, analysis and recommendations that will help in setting directions and priorities for the Session as we go through 2012 and establish plans into future years. This committee is getting heavily into the research phase of its work, with conclusions and recommendations to come in several months.

In grant making decisions, the Session affirmed its support again in 2011 for the Covenant Network of Presbyterians by providing it with a \$5,000 grant. Elder Carol Cobb-Nettleton remarked to the Session on the work of the Covenant Network. This advocacy organization, now in its thirteenth year, has worked toward a goal of the Presbyterian Church (USA) becoming a hospitable and fully inclusive church, particularly as regards issues of ordination standards and sexuality, while also working for the unity of the church. The Session approved a \$5,000 payment to the Bryn Mawr Film Institute (BMFI). This payment represented the last one in the fulfillment of a pledge made by the Session to BMFI in 2003.

In closing remarks, Dr. Carter gave personal observations regarding the strength of the leadership of the church. He noted the awareness and understanding that the Pastor Nominating Committee has developed of our church and its many facets. He expressed thankfulness to the Session for the support given by many to him and his wife, Marty, as she continues to progress through her recovery.

The last portion of this meeting included a sharing of thoughts and observations on the process of Session meetings, with emphasis on ideas that might yield improvements.