

## *Session Notes*

*by Paul Bergsteinsson, Clerk of Session*

### **September 2011**

The Session held its first regular meeting of the new program year in Congregational Hall on the evening of September 13<sup>th</sup>. Interim Pastor Dr. James Carter opened the meeting with a welcome and with remarks on how good it felt to be returning here following a break for the month of August.

The report at this meeting from the Trustees included an update on the progress of the project to replace heating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems for much of the church campus. Bill Black reported that it had been a remarkable and eventful summer, with substantial progress having been achieved in line with expectations. He noted that most all of the work in the Education Building had been completed, with remaining portions expected to be completed later in the month. The work progress on the Chapel should enable it to return to use beginning late in October. Bill expressed appreciation to staff and lay leaders who have worked diligently to bring this project forward successfully.

Peggy Gregg, Elder and member of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), came to this Session meeting to give a report on the progress of the committee. She outlined the many accomplishments of the PNC to date and indicated that the PNC was in the process of reviewing Pastor Information Forms (PIFs) on potential candidates to become Pastor – Head of Staff at BMPC. The PNC will be conducting additional interviewing and search efforts to identify strong candidates from throughout the country. In advance of this meeting, the PNC sent a letter to the Session outlining the value and importance that the PNC placed on the Session's ongoing efforts regarding church staffing and budgets. Peggy Gregg explained that the PNC's perspective here built on its perceptions on what may make for the best environment for a new incoming Pastor and, therefore, a good transition to and beginning of his or her ministry here.

The Session received reports from George Henisee, Chair of the Forward in Faith capital campaign, and Brad Baturka, Chair of the Stewardship Committee. Brad Baturka introduced the theme of the upcoming 2012 stewardship campaign, which will be titled "Stewardship Stories – Why We Give." He outlined the many facets of this campaign, which will include communications to groups throughout the church. Brad shared with the Session a story about stewardship in his family and spoke of his fervent hope and goal that we continue last year's trend of an increase in the number of pledges and in the average size of pledges.

Both Brad and George described how and when church officers, who include Deacons, Elders, Trustees, and members of the BMPC Foundation Board, would be solicited for both the stewardship and capital campaigns. Church officers will be asked to complete their pledges before the beginning of November with respect to both campaigns.

Lindsay Johnson, Chair of the Personnel Committee, gave a report on the work of this committee since the Session last met in July. A major portion of her report consisted of information and recommendations regarding the staffing plan and personnel budget for 2012. She indicated that work had been done to reduce this budget as much as possible in relation to the budget for the current year. If it is deemed that additional savings beyond those presented might be needed in 2012, she said that the Personnel Committee believed such reductions would need to reflect careful consideration of priorities with respect to ministries and programs of the church. She remarked in this regard that such steps would logically build on the work of the newly formed Session Priorities Committee. Session members discussed the budget from several perspectives. Elder Johnson said that this report on the Personnel budget was also being forwarded to the Joint Budget Management Committee as it continues its work on the 2012 church budget.

During the Personnel Committee report the Session with enthusiasm and unanimity approved a motion expressing its appreciation to Reverend Sherri Hausser on the 10-year anniversary of her service as Associate Pastor at BMPC. This motion spoke of her commitment to mission and outreach, to deepening of Christian knowledge and faith through education, and to growth through study and personal reflection.

Elder Bob Holmes reported on the formation of the Session Priorities Committee, whose purpose is to prepare information and recommendations to assist the Session in planning and setting priorities and directions for the church for 2012 and 2013. The intent is that this committee will report regularly to the Session. The members of this committee are Bob Holmes (Chair), Joan Bergsteinsson Dave Callans, Pam Fernley, John Frazier, Bob Guthrie, John Schneider, and Courtenay Willcox.

In other reporting, Reverend Smith shared a video on the Youth experience at Camp Kirkwood and described programs and goals for Youth Ministry in the coming program year. Deacon's Liaison Jim Bennett outlined a new program initiated by the Deacons to contact all church members to assure we have up to date information on our members and are aware of member needs that may exist, such as for a pastoral call.

Elder Susan Joseph reported on the Presbytery meeting held on July 26<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting Dr. Brent Eelman, Pastor of Abington Presbyterian Church, was elected to

serve as Moderator of the Presbytery in 2012 and Elder Courtenay Willcox from BMPC was elected to serve as Vice Moderator. The Clerk reported that BMPC's Session records for 2010 had been inspected by the Presbytery's Session Records Committee in July and had been approved without exception.