

INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SESSION MINUTES
March 16, 2021

The Session convened for a regular meeting at IPC in the Assembly Room in Highland Hall at 5:30pm. Social distancing and mask requirements were followed.

Dr. Steve Goyer opened the meeting with prayer. He expressed joy for his first in-person meeting of Session and thanked the IPC Re-opening Task Force for their continued diligence and guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic. He expressed hope that Session would be able to continue to meet in person.

Dr. Steve Hunt, Clerk, declared that a quorum was present. Dr. Goyer announced that Clerk of Session would transition at this meeting from Steve Hunt to Bev Krannich, subject to approval by the Session later in the meeting. He said that Bev is an elder but not in active service on Session; therefore, she will not vote.

ROLL

Present: Jim Brunstad, John Burton, Jr., Lydia Cheney, Rev. Susan Clayton, Caroline Darby, Alan Drennen, Bryson Edmonds, John Feagin, Jr., Terry Hamilton, Beth Hillhouse, Bill Horton, Sissy King, Amy McCain, Janet Ort, Martha Reeves, Jim Shepherd, Ivy Spencer, Marda Sydnor, George Taylor III, Helen Walthall (Youth Elder), Kate Waters

2020 President of the Congregation: Judy Matthews

Moderator: Dr. Steve Goyer

Clerk: Steve Hunt/Bev Krannich

Staff: Catherine Goudreau, Kathy Leaver, Jeff McLelland, Denise Moore, Rev. David Seamon, Rev. Jay Wilkins

Absent: Tommy Bice, Frank Sutherland

Excused Absences: Scott Adams, Bruce Alexander, Jim Bussian, Bill Casey, Alan Deer, Susan Dukes, Mike Graham, Sr., John Higgins III, J Long IV, Rowena Macnab, Richard Monk III, Kara Scholl, Paul Simmons, Ellen Williams, Emily Wykle

New Elders Present (Class of 2023): Wendell Allen, Aly Butts, Margaret Cobbs, Robert Hill, Matt Lyons, Jeanne Monk, Julie Rediker, Tommy Thomson, Emily Vanlandingham, Kennon Walthall

New Youth Elder Present (Class of 2022): Bibb Albright

New Deacons Present (Class of 2023): Justin Carroll, Ian Dexter, Anna Hartzog, Clarence James, Diane Kopecky, Kate Mather, Susan Murphy, Grace Posey, Jay Turner, Thomas Wells, Katie Woodruff

New Youth Deacon Present (Class of 2022): Ivy Cobbs

Others present: Marsha Harbin, Donna Smith

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting of Session on February 16, 2021, and the minutes of a called meeting of Session on March 11, 2021, were approved by Session without objection.

RESOLUTIONS HONORING MARSHA HARBIN

Dr. Goyer reminded Session that a beloved member of our staff, Marsha Harbin, is retiring at the end of March. Denise Moore said that Marsha has worked at IPC for 35 years and that she cannot imagine how we will manage without her expertise in technology, membership information, and support for the IPC Foundation. Donna Smith, incoming President of the IPC Foundation, commented on Marsha's willingness and ability to assist IPC members and staff with any request, whether or not a part of her official role. She also noted Marsha's contribution to the Grants Committee in reviewing proposals and

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coordinating site visits. Alan Drennen, Treasurer, concurred in the accolades, and read the following resolutions that were unanimously adopted by Session:

Whereas Marsha Harbin has served faithfully in various capacities at Independent Presbyterian Church and its Foundation for 35 years; and

Whereas she has diligently and dependably worked under seven Senior Pastors and twenty or more Presidents of the IPC Foundation (on average a new person for almost every year of Marsha's tenure); and

Whereas she has been helpful to all, updated every member's profile, sent more than 60 thousand contributions statements to members, read over 3 thousand grant requests to the Foundation, scheduled thousands of meetings on the IPC calendar, and did all this and more in a kind, considerate and thoughtful manner (that is not to say that some of us did not hear her complain some about the calendar); and

Resolved, that the Session on behalf of Independent Presbyterian Church recognizes their appreciation to Marsha Harbin:

1. for her dedication and faithful leadership;
2. for the generous and thoughtful manner that she extended to church members, employees and friends of the church on a daily basis;
3. for the great attitude that she brought to work every day and displayed for others to emulate; and
4. for being a stellar role model to other employees by always coming to work on time, for not leaving early, for rarely being out sick, and for always going above and beyond what is necessary to get the job done.

Further Resolved, that the Session honors Marsha Harbin for her loyalty and steadfast dedication to Independent Presbyterian Church and Foundation, its members and holds her up to the congregation and to the community at large as a model servant to Christ and to the church through her work, her friendship, her faithfulness and her devotion.

Denise Moore presented Marsha with a decorative copy of the resolutions. Marsha expressed her appreciation for the tribute and her gratitude for the friendships and professional growth she has experienced at IPC.

EXAMINATION OF OFFICERS

Dr. Goyer asked all new elders and deacons elected at the congregational meeting on February 14, 2021 to meet with current elders in small groups to share their faith journeys. Following the discussions, a motion was duly made, seconded, and unanimously approved to accept the new officers present at the meeting, and to move forward with ordination and installation at the worship services on March 21, 2021.

The newly elected officers not present will be examined and installed/ordained at a later date and those present who cannot attend a service on March 21 will be installed/ordained at a future 5pm worship service.

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ELECTION OF CLERK OF SESSION AND TREASURER

The Session unanimously approved the **election** of **Beverley Krannich** as Clerk of Session and **Paul Simmons** as Treasurer of IPC for the remainder of the 2021 calendar year and until the election of their successors.

REPORT OF THE CLERK

Ms. Krannich said that the Clerk's Report to Session dated March 1, 2021, was included in the materials distributed in advance of the meeting (the "Session packet"). Total **active membership is 1,786** as of February 28, 2021. Attendance for Sunday morning classes and Grace Groups was also included in the Session packet.

PRESBYTERY REPORT

Steve Hunt reported on the February 18, 2021 meeting of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. **Debbie Feagin**, member of IPC, was installed as the new Moderator. Special reports were made on the **Presbytery mission in Wilcox County** and on **Project Empathy** (a partnership between our Presbytery and RIP Medical Debt, Inc.) which has raised over \$84,000 for the medical debt relief of individuals living in the Black Belt. Each dollar raised will erase \$100 of medical debt.

Steve Hunt urged Elders to respond to the Presbytery's visioning questions included in the Session packet, and to submit them to him prior to the deadline of March 22. He also encouraged Elders to attend one of the remaining 2021 meetings of Presbytery on May 20, August 19, or November 18.

APPROVAL OF BAPTISM

The baptism of **William Burr Weatherly, III**, born on September 22, 2020, to take place at the 11o'clock service on March 21, 2021, was approved by the Session.

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

Faith Formation

Mr. John Burton reported for the newly named Faith Formation ministry team (previously called the Christian Education ministry team). He presented for Session approval the following curriculum proposals to be used in Kay Roller's new **Faith Filled Beginnings** class for mothers of teens and college-aged children, to be offered on one evening during the week:

1. *The Wonder Years: 40 women Over 40 on Aging, Faith, Beauty, and Strength* by Leslie Leyland.
2. *Fledge: Launching Your Kids without Losing Your Mind* by Brenda Yoder.

The proposed materials were approved by Session without objection.

A full report from the Faith Formation ministry team was included in the Session packet.

Finance

Mr. Alan Drennen reported for the Finance ministry team. He referred Session members to the summary financial information included in the Session packet. He said that our net income from operations for the year-to-date period ended February 28, 2021 is approximately **\$142,000 ahead of budget** due to an increase of \$65,000 in pledges and designated gifts and a decrease of \$77,000 in the budgeted disbursements.

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Mr. Drennen reported that IPC is eligible to apply for a **second Paycheck Protection Program Loan (“PPP 2 loan”)** offered by the Small Business Administration as a part of federal coronavirus relief. IPC received a loan in 2020, which was forgiven under the terms of the relief regulations. He said that although IPC is technically eligible, the Finance team recommends that IPC not apply for a PPP 2 loan. Following a discussion, the Session approved the following motion by a majority vote (with three Elders voting against the motion):

Motion: Resolved, that IPC will not apply for a PPP 2 Loan in 2021.

Human Resources

Mr. George Taylor reported for the Human Resources ministry team. He noted that **Rev. Jay Wilkins has submitted his resignation** as Interim Associate Pastor, Congregational Care, effective April 30, 2021, resulting in an open position. Rev. Susan Clayton has led Community Ministries for 20 years, and since the fall 2020 reorganization, has assumed significant additional responsibilities in adult education (now adult faith formation) and congregational care. Following a period of discernment and discussion with Dr. Goyer and the HR Team, **Rev. Clayton has requested that her call be restructured to focus on congregational care and adult faith formation.** To be effective, she would like to relinquish her leadership role in community ministries. Mr. Taylor said that consistent with this change, the current search for an Assistant Director of Community Ministries would be modified to seek instead a lay Director of Community Ministries. Mr. Taylor reported that these proposed changes were approved by the HR ministry team. The following motions were approved unanimously by the Session:

Motion: Effective April 30, 2021, Rev. Susan Clayton’s position will change from Associate Pastor, Adult and Community Ministries to Associate Pastor, Congregational Care and Adult Faith Formation.

Motion: The search committee for the Assistant Director of Community Ministries shall modify its search to seek a candidate for Director of Community Ministries.

Mr. Taylor reported that Emily Vanlandingham, Chair of the Search Committee for Director of Youth Ministry (now titled **Director of Youth Faith Formation**), met with the HR ministry team to recommend an offer to an outstanding candidate, **J. D. Tyler**, a Samford University graduate and second-year student at Princeton Theological Seminary. The HR ministry team enthusiastically approved the offer and supports working with J.D. to ensure that he can take the position and complete seminary. In response to a question, George Taylor said that it is not known whether Mr. Tyler will be required to return to in-person classes at Princeton, but in that event, the HR Team will develop a plan to ensure the leadership of youth faith formation and accommodate his absence. The following motion was approved unanimously by the Session:

Motion: The offer of employment to Mr. J. D. Tyler as Director of Youth Faith Formation, on the terms presented at this meeting, is approved.

Dr. Goyer announced that **David Seamon** who has been acting under Presbytery rules in a temporary role as associate pastor **has passed his ordination exams and completed all of the Presbytery requirements** to be ordained and installed as a pastor in a PCUSA church. Our Presbytery recommends that IPC elect a pastor nominating committee to consider formally extending a call to Rev. Seamon and recommending his ordination and installation at IPC. It is proposed that the IPC Representative Nominating Committee select nominees to serve on the PNC and that a Congregational Meeting be called for March 28, 2021 to approve the PNC nominees.

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The following **Call to Special Meeting** was unanimously approved by Session:

A special meeting of the congregation of Independent Presbyterian Church is hereby called for Sunday, March 28, 2021, to be convened with the opening prayer at the 11a.m. worship service in the sanctuary. The business meeting will begin immediately following the worship service.

The purpose of the meeting is to approve the election of members of a pastor nominating committee to consider the call of Rev. David Seamon to the position of Associate Pastor – Faith Formation.

No other business shall be transacted at this meeting.

By order of the Session,

Dr. Stephen Goyer, Moderator

Beverley T. Krannich, Clerk

APPRECIATION TO OFFICERS

Dr. Goyer expressed his extreme gratitude to Judy Matthews, President of the Congregation, Penney Hartline, Past President, George Taylor, Vice President, Steve Hunt, Clerk, and Alan Drennen, Treasurer, for their generous support and hard work over the past year of unprecedented challenge. He also recognized each of the elders and deacons in the class of 2020 who are rolling off Session and the Deacon Board. He presented a gift of the following books to each officer in the class of 2020: *Beginning the Day* by Henry M. Edmonds, *Forward in Faith* by Cathy C. Adams and Marvin Y. Whiting, and *An Enduring Ministry* by Marvin Y. Whiting with the assistance of Linda J. Nelson.

PASTORAL CARE

Rev. Susan Clayton reported on a number of IPC members who were in the hospital or recovering from illness or surgery. She also commented on the recent death of long-time member, Reb Beck.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Goyer thanked Rev. Jay Wilkins for his many contributions during this challenging time, including his support of the Deacons' work to renovate their role and his excellent leadership in pastoral care and worship. He said that Jay plans to continue to be a part of the IPC faith community.

Dr. Goyer said that the next meeting of Session would be April 20, 2021.

Dr. Wilkins closed the meeting with a prayer.

Dr. Stephen Goyer, Moderator

Beverley T. Krannich, Clerk