

INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
SESSION MINUTES  
REGULAR SESSION MEETING

December 15, 2020

The Session convened via Zoom videoconferencing for a regular Session meeting at 5:30 PM. Videoconferencing was utilized due to social distancing restrictions in place during the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak.

Dr. Steve Goyer opened the meeting with prayer. He commended the members of IPC for their generosity, which has been particularly apparent during this challenging year and this holiday season.

**PRESENTATION – HOLIDAY HOUSE PROJECT**

Paige Albright gave a presentation about this year's Holiday House project which, due to the pandemic, had to become a virtual tour. So far, the video has been viewed about 1500 times. Despite lower ticket prices, this year's tour raised about the same amount of money (\$20,000) as in prior years. These funds are devoted to mission projects of the church every year. Commendation and gratitude were expressed to all of those who participated in this team effort, which included decorating, videography, baking, publicity, and numerous other tasks.

The Clerk declared that a quorum was present.

**Present:** Scott Adams, Tommy Bice, Jim Brunstad, John Burton, Jr., Jim Bussian, Lydia Cheney, Rev. Susan Clayton, Caroline Darby, Alan Deer, Alan Drennen, Susan Dukes, Bryson Edmonds, John Feagin, Jr., Mike Graham, Sr., Terry Hamilton, Beth Hillhouse, Bill Horton, Sissy King, Rowena Macnab, Amy McCain, Richard Monk III, Janet Ort, Martha Reeves, Kara Scholl, Jim Shepherd, Paul Simmons, Ivy Spencer, Marda Sydnor, George Taylor III, Kate Waters, Ellen Williams, Emily Wykle

**President of the Congregation:** Judy Matthews

**Past President of the Congregation:** Penney Hartline

**Moderator:** Dr. Steve Goyer

**Clerk:** Steve Hunt

**Staff:** Catherine Goudreau, Lindsay Jones, Kathy Leaver, Bill McKelvey, Jeff McLelland, Denise Moore, Stacy Pulliam, Rev. David Seamon, Rev. Jay Wilkins

**Absent:** Bruce Alexander, John Higgins III, J Long IV, Frank Sutherland

**Excused Absences:** Bill Casey

**Others:** Paige Albright

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the regular Session meeting of November 17, 2020 were approved by the Session without objection.

**REPORT OF THE CLERK**

The Report of the Clerk was included in the Session packet. Total active membership is 1803 persons, as of November 30. There have been 10 infant baptisms so far this year. In

response to a request for clarification, Denise Moore commented that “dismissed members” are those who have left IPC and have joined a specific church, whereas members who are “deleted from the church roll” are those who have left IPC, but currently have no known church affiliation.

### **APPROVAL OF BAPTISM**

One baptism was presented for approval and was approved by the Session.

### **MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS**

#### **Christian Education**

John Burton reported for the Christian Education ministry team. John presented for Session approval the following curriculum proposals:

1. *The Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven*, by Amy-Jill Levine, for use by Grace Groups - spring 2021.

2. *The Holy Land Revealed* – with selected lectures from this Teaching Company course to be used in the Wonder Years class in the winter/spring terms of 2021, with leaders Larry Krannich and Matt Hunter.

These two proposals were approved by the Session without objection.

A full report from the Christian Education ministry team was distributed to Session members prior to the Session meeting.

#### **Community Ministries**

Bryson Edmonds reported for the Community Ministries ministry team. Human Resources has approved and charged a **search committee** for the Assistant Director of Community Ministries position.

Bryson presented the following motion:

**MOTION:** The food pantry at IPC will be named the **Pat and Gayle Pelham Food Pantry**, to honor these two long-term supporters of the food pantry mission at IPC.

The motion was passed by the Session unanimously.

Rev. Susan Clayton commented on several ongoing ministries. In particular, **Christmas stockings** have been filled with gifts for 165 children who are graduates of the Summer Learning Program or siblings of those graduates. The stockings were able to be filled due to the assistance of many IPC members. They will be ready for distribution shortly.

A full report from the Community Ministries ministry team was distributed to Session members prior to the Session meeting.

## Congregational Care

Beth Hillhouse reported for the Congregational Care ministry team. Within the last month, 405 church families have been touched by the team, with **phone calls, goody bags, meals, and cookies for college students** who have come home.

The **knitting ministry** is still meeting to produce beautiful prayer shawls. They will deliver a prayer shawl to anyone who is reported to be in need of one.

## Finance

Alan Drennen reported for the Finance ministry team. The operating statement and balance sheet for November 2020 were included in the Session packet. **Receipts** are \$530,952 above budget. **Designated gifts** are \$24,009 ahead of budget for the month of November and \$213,967 ahead of budget for the year to date. **Expenses** are \$252,086 over budget. This yields a year-to-date surplus of \$278,866.

The **forgiveness application for the PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loan** was submitted in November. If forgiveness of this loan is approved, we should have a one-time opportunity to financially boost certain areas, including social services, support for staff during the COVID-19 era, and the contingency fund.

The **preliminary budget for 2021** assumes that giving will be the same in 2021 as it was in 2020. The budget tentatively includes several additional expenses, including the restoration of a \$25,000 contribution to the Presbytery, a contribution of \$75,000 to the contingency fund, higher expenditures for security, and slightly higher expenditures for insurance. A final budget will be distributed to Session members prior to the January Session meeting.

Alan gave an update on **pledges for 2021**. Thus far, the church has received 344 pledges which total \$2,253,000. Last year, the final pledge figures included 450 pledges totaling \$2,700,000. In January, the stewardship committee will be contacting people who have not yet responded to the pledge appeal. Of the pledges which have been received so far, 121 are increased, 160 are the same, and 60 are decreased, compared with 2020 amounts.

## Human Resources

Penney Hartline reported for the Human Resources ministry team. An updated **job description for IPC Youth Director** has been approved. The job description and search committee for the **Assistant Community Ministries Director position** have been approved.

A small **bonus payment** has been approved **for support staff**, including day school teachers.

## House and Properties

Mike Graham reported for the House and Properties ministry team. Mike commented on the **recent COVID-19 data**, which show rising case numbers and hospitalizations. The Reopening Task Force recommended that the church revert to phase 1 of the reopening sequence, which includes suspension of in-person worship services. The Day School closed one week earlier than scheduled, after 3 cases of COVID-19 occurred in teachers.

The large willow tree by the labyrinth is no longer viable and will be removed.

There was an isolated incident of a car break-in near the church recently, with the theft of a purse, but no physical harm to any individual. A **security subcommittee** has been formed and has met with our security consultant. Additional security cameras will be

installed next year and the security detail will be doubled during the school day. It was recommended that the blessing boxes be moved 35 feet to the right, so that they are not in the walkway where children are entering and exiting the Day School.

Jim Shepherd reported on planning for **expansion of the columbarium**. The garden committee, led by Karen Chapman, has developed some preliminary ideas for this expansion.

Mike presented the following motion:

**MOTION:** The Session approves the expenditure of \$15,000 for phase I architectural work for the expansion of the columbarium. Andrew Hicks of ArchitectureWorks, LLP has been selected to oversee this work.

Alan Drennen commented that the columbarium fund already has sufficient funds to cover this expenditure, due to prior deposits into the fund.

The motion was passed by the Session without objection.

The total cost of the columbarium expansion is estimated to be around \$450,000, which will be paid for over time by the sale of niches in the space. Currently, the cost of a single niche is \$3,600 and the cost of a double niche is \$4,200.

### **Music and Fine Arts**

Kate Waters reported for the Music and Fine Arts ministry team. She revealed that an organ stop (the **Pedal Mixture**) which was included in the original specification of the Joseph W. Schreiber Memorial Pipe Organ at IPC was not originally built due to budget constraints. The Dobson organ building firm has agreed to reduce the original cost of this stop and a generous donation has been received to cover its cost. Kate presented the following motion:

**MOTION:** The Session approves the construction of the Pedal Mixture stop on the Joseph W. Schreiber Memorial Pipe Organ at IPC, with the cost of \$22,000 to be paid by a donor.

The motion was approved by the Session unanimously.

Dr. Goyer commended the **IPC choir** for their recent **Christmas concert**, which included orchestral members of the Alabama Symphony. The concert had to be presented virtually, as a live-streamed event, due to the pandemic. The program was described as beautiful and inspirational. Over 750 views of the concert have been recorded on YouTube and Facebook so far.

### **Worship**

Marda Sydnor reported for the Worship ministry team. The team concurred with the **shift back to online worship only**, with suspension of in-person worship services due to rising COVID-19 cases. Marda expressed the consensus opinion of the ministry team members that suspending in-person worship is, in effect, doing our part in *helping* the community by *not* being together. We are hopeful that the COVID-19 vaccines will enable

us to resume in-person worship soon. Marda complimented all of those who are involved in producing the live-streamed worship services.

### **Pastor Nominating Committee / Congregational Survey**

Dr. Goyer stated that the report from the congregational survey could not be presented to the Session on the originally-scheduled date, but this presentation will likely occur during the January or February Session meeting.

Dr. Goyer reported that the Pastor Nominating Committee has identified several individuals who are strong candidates and has made several visits. A report from the PNC should be presented at the January 2021 Session meeting.

### **IPC Hiking Group**

Rowena Macnab reported that a hiking group has been organized at IPC and has been conducting monthly hikes, usually on Saturdays. Members are encouraged to sign up.

### **IPC member generosity and new IPC Foundation funds**

Denise Moore reported that a generous donor has provided funds to create a **new IPC Foundation fund** to support community ministries, facilities, and preschool for children who are considered at-risk. The same donor is also contributing additional funds directly to the church to assist with community ministries and facilities.

A **second new fund** will also probably be created in the IPC Foundation by the end of 2020.

Prayer requests were solicited, after which Rev. Susan Clayton closed the meeting with prayer.

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Dr. Stephen Goyer, Moderator

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Steve Hunt, Clerk