

**STATED SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**October 17, 2023  
6:00 p.m.**

**DINNER AND RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

Before conducting formal business, the Session held a reception and dinner to welcome new members, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Old Fellowship Hall. The new members in attendance were as follows:

Ilyssa and Sam Brotherton  
Tony and Bonny Breuer  
Butch Cooper  
Ellen Long, along with her husband, Crawford Long (a current Trinity member)

All of the new members were introduced by session members at their tables. Kristen Hunter introduced Butch Cooper; Rebekah Groover introduced Ellen Long and Crawford Long. Bonnie Holliday introduced Ilyssa and Sam Brotherton, and Cindy Stancil introduced Tony and Bonny Breuer.

All of the session members and the new members affirmed their faith together. Rebekah Groover moved to receive the new members, and her motion was seconded by many. The motion was approved unanimously.

**CALL TO ORDER & DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Rebekah LeMon

The formal business portion of the stated Session meeting for Trinity Presbyterian Church on **October 17, 2023**, was called to order in Old Fellowship Hall at 6:52 pm by the moderator, Rebekah LeMon. The clerk, Bonnie Holliday, confirmed the presence of a quorum.

**DEVOTION**

Catherine Warren

Catherine Warren gave the devotion. She opened by quoting from Matthew, Chapter 6, regarding praying in public and praying in private, and the teaching of The Lord's Prayer. She remembered as a child turning 5 and not wanting to move up from the 3-4 year-old Sunday school class where her mom was the teacher. The five-year-olds were learning The Lord's Prayer, but she had a lot of resistance to it because of its association with leaving her mother's class. When she was older, she lived in Lima, Peru as part of a mission trip. She stayed with a host family whose worship service included The Lord's Prayer and a lengthy "passing of the peace" type ceremony where the congregation gathered in fellowship. She remembered how foreign it felt to her at first, except for The Lord's Prayer. Hearing that prayer in a foreign place gave her the comfort she needed.

**OMNIBUS MOTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

Rebekah LeMon

Rebekah LeMon directed session members to the omnibus motion in the meeting packet which included the meeting agenda, the minutes from the Stated Session Meeting on

September 19, 2023, the financial report, and the statistical report for September 2023. Rebekah made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, and it was unanimously approved.

## **MODERATOR'S REPORT**

Rebekah LeMon

Rebekah began her report with gratitude as always. She thanked Lucy Strong for continually reaching out to visitors in the community and bringing them into the fold as new members. Although we welcomed new members this evening, we will also do a December welcome meeting for new members to get several others in who could not attend this meeting. Rebekah also gave thanks to the finance committee as they have dealt with various challenges recently. Also she thanked those involved with pastoral care and Stephens ministry for their assistance with those in challenged situations and crisis.

Rebekah thanked all who volunteered for the record restriction event at Trinity with the Georgia Justice Project. It was a great success and a joy for those who were able to see an outcome in their process. She mentioned that we need more lawyers to volunteer for events like this.

Rebekah also made note of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, who started their work formally last night. They were trained by the Presbytery and now that this has taken place, we are blocking out the timeline for this process. Rebekah asked for prayers from the session for the APNC so that it becomes clear to us who is being called to this church.

Rebekah informed the session that on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> we will have an event to appreciate the usher team. This is an area where we could really use some help at the church. She encouraged all who could to volunteer and seek out other volunteers.

As it relates to personnel, Trinity has hired Hannah Kershner as the programs coordinator, Janet Martin as the financial operations and database manager, Kevin Lacson as our part-time audio engineer for Sunday mornings and Tyesha Williams as part of the hospitality team.

Rebekah reminded the session that the College of Elders dinner will be held on November 6<sup>th</sup> and the next Session meeting will be on November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.

As it relates to our commitment campaign, we are currently at \$1.4 million, which is 37% toward our goal. We are hoping to get all pledges in sooner so we can complete our budget sooner.

## **CLERK'S REPORT**

Bonnie Holliday

Bonnie began her report by encouraging all of the various members of our committees to make their pledges.

Bonnie reminded everyone of the upcoming presbytery meeting on November 4th. Richard O'Donnell, Trey Reese, Chris Suh, Dean Cleaveland, Rebekah Groover, Helen Slawson, and Catherine Quillian are scheduled to attend. Kenny Kraft will give the devotion at the November session meeting. Bonnie also reminded us that we will be serving communion on November 5th and additional volunteers are needed.

Bonnie read a note from David Carr giving thanks for everyone's support during his family's difficult time. She reported that his daughter Collins is back at home and getting healthier every day.

### ***SPECIAL ORDERS & REPORTS:***

#### **FINANCE**

Richard O'Donnell and Heather Edmiston

Richard O'Donnell began his update with a year-to-date summary.

He then discussed the need for our decision on how to distribute the \$606,000 in unspent budget funds from the 2022 budget year. The Trinity Operating Reserve Policy is that any unspent will be split 50/50 between the Property Reserve and the Mission Reserve funds. However, the Session has allowed deviation from the policy in prior years. We have determined that the expected capital requirement will be \$300,000 a year over the next 3 years. Currently, our property reserve is only \$98,000 and our mission reserve has \$105,000.

Richard O'Donnell and Heather Edmiston, on behalf of the Finance Committee, brought a motion to the session relating to the use of the unspent funds from the 2022 fiscal year budget (\$604,690). The Finance Committee recommended allocating 60% (\$362,814) of the surplus to the Property Reserve Fund, 20% (\$120,938) to the Mission Reserve Fund and 20% (\$120,938) to the newly created Technology Replacement Reserve Fund. This would result in the projected balances of reserve funds of \$225,848 (mission), \$120,938 (technology), and \$461,294 (property).

Drew Timmons inquired about the previous representation that much of the unspent funds are due to understaffing and relate to unspent personnel budget. Why are we not using those funds for personnel needs? There was a lengthy discussion of our personnel needs and why we believe that these funds are better used for increasing our Property, Mission, and Technology Replacement reserves, especially in light of the recently created and funded personnel reserve fund which was funded by our forgiven PPP loan.

Rebekah Groover commented that we need to budget more accurately in the future for personnel and all of our various needs so that we do not have surplus amounts in any aspect of our budget. We need to make sure that our funds are being used where we need them.

Mary Kelly Speed asked if we would have any 2023 surplus and whether we might be able to use that for any ongoing for personnel needs. Rebekah LeMon and Heather Edmiston highlighted that over the past three years, we have distributed/used over \$700,000 to our property reserve fund, and those amounts have been spent down to \$98,480 because there was not a sufficient amount placed into the budget for property expenses. This money needs to be placed back. And we need to be budgeting more appropriately for our property needs.

Jon Balch asked whether there was any policy in place regarding how much to place in reserve for each of the various categories. Richard and Heather indicated that first we must top off operating reserves first for 3 months with any surplus, but there is no specific threshold for reserve accounts. This led to an inquiry of how the finance committee came up with the designated percentages for distribution. The finance committee merely determined that the

most tangible need was the property budget, because of its impact on all of our mission projects.

After discussion, Rebekah presented the motion as made by the Finance Committee. A second was not required. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES**

Dean Cleaveland

Dean Cleaveland addressed the status of CFM. She discussed the efforts to get children fully involved in the church. This includes events like Halloween Bingo (with Tom Owens as the MC) and new worship bags for children in the Sanctuary. She also mentioned the new “Children’s Moment” in 11 am service to read children’s bibles with Elizabeth.

Dean also mentioned that currently our childcare during worship stops at Kindergarten and this is still too young for some families. We are piloting a program for a K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade children worship enrichment program during Sunday service. This would be a volunteer-led program. We are going to try it one time in November and one time in December, obtain feedback and then reassess after the holidays. All volunteers will undergo ministry safe training.

Dean also mentioned the new bookshelves in narthex for children and in the loft. These have “gone viral,” with many sharing these posts on social media.

After Dean finished her comments, Rebekah mentioned that Trinity will be restarting our acolyte program. This will allow children in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> to volunteer to assist with by bringing the light of Christ into the worship service. There will be a sign-up genius to assist with this. She also indicated that for the first time, Trinity will be sending pledge cards to all of Trinity’s children members so to allow them to feel connected with the commitment campaign.

## **OPEN FORUM**

During open forum, Jay Harris mentioned the birth of his granddaughter, which was applauded by the remaining session members. Catherine Warren mentioned impact grant applications for needy organizations.

Session was reminded of the upcoming Kitrell Lecture on Nov 16<sup>th</sup> with Arthur Brooks. Sign-ups for this event are now available. Also upcoming is the Trinity Preschool sip and shop – Thursday October 26<sup>th</sup> 4-8 and Friday October 27<sup>th</sup> from 9-2. This is a good opportunity for some early Christmas shopping and a good way to encourage participation from non-members.

Cindy Stancil referenced the need and opportunity for new Stephens ministers. There will be an information session on November 5<sup>th</sup> for those who are interested in this.

## PRAYER AND DEPARTING BLESSINGS

Rebekah LeMon

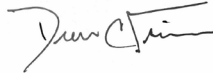
Rebekah offered a prayer for the Jewish community regarding unity. There was discussion of being intentionally communicative with the Jewish community about ongoing events.

Mary Kelly moved to close the session meeting and Cindy Stancil seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonnie Holliday  
Clerk



Drew Timmons  
Assistant Clerk

UPCOMING DATES		
Churchwide BINGO	October 27, 2023	Costumes encouraged!
Commitment Sunday	October 29, 2023	
Presbytery Meeting	November 4, 2023	Attending commissioners: Richard O'Donnell, Trey Reese, Chris Suh, Dean Cleaveland, Rebekah Groover, Helen Slawson, Catherine Quillian.
All Saints Day, with Communion	November 5, 2023	
College of Elders Dinner/State of the Church	November 6, 2023 (Please RSVP!)	
Baptisms	November 12, 2023	Rex Newell Stewart, son of Catherine and Peter Stewart
Session Meeting	November 14, 2023	
Kitrell Lecture	November 16, 2023	Arthur Brooks speaking
Baptisms	November 26, 2023	Wesley James White, son of Michael and Ali White

Trinity Presbyterian Church Session In-person Attendance (In Bold), October 17, 2023:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Roxanna Erwin</b>	<b>Reid Willingham</b>	<b>Karen Bain</b>
<b>Ginny Hobbs</b>	Kenny Kraft	<b>Jon Balch</b>
<b>Bonnie Holiday –Clerk</b>	<b>Kristin Hunter</b>	<b>Dean Cleaveland</b>
<b>Richard O’Donnell</b>	Tom Owens	<b>Rebekah Groover</b>
Trey Reese	<b>Martha Craft</b>	<b>Jay Harris</b>
Lane Rhoden	<b>Drew Timmons -Asst. Clerk</b>	<b>Paige Keller</b>
<b>Allen Spetnagel</b>	<b>Meredith Daniel</b>	<b>Nick Leet</b>
<b>Cindy Stancil</b>	Allen Moseley	<b>Jon McRae</b>
<b>Adair White</b>	Chris Suh	<b>Mary Kelly Speed</b>
Neal Williams	Lindsey Greene	<b>Catherine Warren</b>
		<b>Catherine Quillian (youth)</b>
		<b>Helen Slawson (youth)</b>
<b>Staff Attendees:</b>	<b>Other Attendees:</b>	<b>Guests</b>
<b>Rebekah LeMon-Moderator</b>		<b>Ilyssa and Sam Brotherton</b>
<b>Elizabeth Davis</b>		<b>Tony and Bonny Breuer</b>
<b>Heather Edmiston</b>		<b>Butch Cooper</b>
<b>Lucy Strong</b>		<b>Ellen and Crawford Long</b>