

**MINUTES OF SESSION
FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FAYETTEVILLE, AR
Sunday, February 10, 2008**

A Stated Session meeting of First United Presbyterian Church of Fayetteville, AR was held in the Library and was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Elders Present: Dennis Bailey, Ted Belden, Dennis Brewer, June Davis, Eric Ervin, Barbara George, Nell Griffin, Sara Koenig, Roger Koeppe, Frank Millet, Itrel Monroe, James Moore, George "Bo" Morton", Michelle Price, Steve Sisco, Jim Schneringer, Anna Stitt, Nancy Waite, Diane Warren, Ron Woodruff

Elders Excused: Lyle Gohn, Carol Hart, Jane Steinkraus and Doug Wright

Elders Absent:

Teaching Elders Present: Rev. Stewart Smith, Moderator, Rev. Josh Leu, Rev. Lee Power and Rev. Dr. Maury Roberts

Others Present: Laurie Reh, Clerk of Session, Lorraine Brewer, LRP member and Lisa Higgins, Church Accountant

A quorum was declared present. Rev. Stewart Smith, Moderator, called the meeting to order, asked that joys and concerns to be shared and opened the meeting in prayer.

Devotional and Opening Prayer

Elder Monroe led the session in the opening devotional by reading from the 19th chapter of 1st Kings and followed with prayer.

Adoption of the Agenda

A motion was made and seconded *to approve the agenda as presented*. A building request was added under new business as was a request from First School regarding a broken geoclimber, which needed to be replaced. With no further changes, *the agenda was approved*.

Elder Eric Ervin, Class of 2008 (newly elected), gave an overview of his background, career work and skills in order for the session to become better acquainted with him and to address his assignment to a committee. A motion was made and seconded *to invite Elder Eric Ervin to serve on the Stewardship Committee* and the *motion passed*.

Special Reports/Presentations

Long Range Planning Committee Report

Elder Schneringer and Lorraine Brewer, representing the Long Range Planning Committee, re-introduced the session-approved strategic plan, mission statement, key

goals and strategic choices.

A handout highlighting the art of long-range strategic planning was distributed and received. The following objectives were highlighted:

First United Presbyterian Church is a community of faith committed to:

1. **WORSHIP** that is profound, transformative, and vibrant.
2. **FELLOWSHIP** that welcomes, nurtures, and draws us into a caring community.
3. **SPIRITUAL GROWTH** and **EDUCATION** that sustains hope, cultivates wonder, and develops a joyful and genuine faith grounded in scripture.
4. **STEWARDSHIP** of God's gifts that is enthusiastic, wise, and faithful.
5. **SERVICE** through which God sends us to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
6. **LEADERSHIP** that enables each of our members to serve God as we fulfill First United Presbyterian Church's mission.

Next, the *Strategic Choices of the Long Range Planning Ministry of First United Presbyterian Church* (revised on November 19, 2006 and used during Work Group discussions at the Session Retreat on September 30, 2006) were distributed and received:

FOCUS on our CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

- Build stronger congregational support for youth and children
- Increase funding and support for youth and children's ministry

FOCUS on SMALL GROUPS:

- Enhance family fellowship opportunities
- Increase fellowship and Bible study opportunities
- Expand *Table for 8* to include additional approaches

FOCUS on HANDS-ON MISSION:

- Enhance mission involvement locally and globally
- Increase the use of our church campus
- Increase our church's presence in the community

FOCUS on COMMUNICATION:

- Improve intra-church communication through updates on website
- Recognize and support community involvement of our members
- Increase publicity (both intra-FUPC and in community)
- Renew monthly *FOCUS*

Discussion followed. A motion was made and seconded *to reaffirm the strategic choices of the LRP Committee, to incorporate these goals into committee work and to pledge support in every way possible.* Discussion followed and *the motion passed.*

A handout highlighting the proposed vision and mission statements was

distributed and received. The Mission Statement is: First United Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas is called to be a light on the hill, we boldly proclaim and serve Christ, the Hope of our changing world.

The proposed vision statement, as follows, was presented:

First United Presbyterian Church is a dynamic community of faith visibly modeling a deep commitment to proclaiming Christ as we lovingly support growth in discipleship and faithfully engage in service to others.

On behalf of the Long Range Planning Committee, Elder Schneringer moved *to approve the proposed vision statement*. Discussion followed. A substitute motion *to postpone approval of the vision statement, for the purpose of possible clarification of wording, to the May stated session meeting, after arrival of the new Interim Pastor and completion of the Healthy Congregations program led by Rev. Dr. Bill Branch* was made and discussion followed.

The moderator inquired if session concurred that the substitute motion that would now become the main motion. Following a hand vote, *the motion failed*. A motion was made and seconded *to call the question and the motion passed*. The session returned to the main motion and *the motion passed*.

Church Financial Review

At 7:00 p.m., Lisa Higgins, church treasurer, presented an overview on the management of church finances. The monthly financial statement for January was distributed and received. Discussion followed in regard to renaming the *restricted funds* to instead be identified as *session-designated funds*. The need to obtain session approval for designation of Memorial Gifts was clarified. In the interest of full disclosure and open communication regarding expenditure of church funds, it was agreed by consensus that *allocations from the Memorial Gifts line item would be approved by and reported to the session*.

With the church treasurer present, discussion followed on Action Item's #5 & 6 as follows:

5. **Action Item from Trustees/Endowment Committee:** Take action to allow the re-direction of earned income from the Endowment Fund to assist the Church in meeting the 2008 operating budget.

NOTE: Item #1 requires an affirmative vote at two separate Session meetings for passage. Item #2 (below) cannot be implemented unless and until Item #1 passes.

6. **Action Item from Trustees/Endowment Committee:** To accept an offer from the Trustees/Endowment Committee for an interest-free loan up to a maximum of \$200,000, as needed to meet the needs of the 2008 operating budget. This loan shall be repaid to the Endowment within five (5) years.

A proposed plan to utilize interest from the church's endowment fund in order to pay off the current debt amount was discussed at length. The Trustees are aware that having both a severance package and an interim minister salary package in the annual budget at \$112,859 each would likely not be a recurring situation. Lisa reported to session that she has been setting aside funds, starting in 2005, which now total \$180,000 and that it is these funds that are now being offered to help meet the current expenses of the church.

A lengthy discussion followed. Concern was expressed that full disclosure of this process was not being followed. Lisa stated that sessions of the past had approved that all interest income be used to pay off the building fund principal and that any undesignated gifts would go toward paying down the building debt. She also stated that the budgetary problems weren't created by the trustees or the endowment committee. Discussion followed regarding the purpose and function of the endowment fund to support the ministry of the church. The session then thanked Lisa for reviewing the church finances.

The session returned to the business of the stated agenda.

Approval of the Consent Agenda Consent Agenda

1. **ACTION ITEMS from the Clerk of Session:** Approval of the following update of the church rolls is requested.

Update of Church Rolls:

Transfer of Membership:

Myra Rice to First Presbyterian Church, Rogers, Arkansas

Add to the Inactive Membership List

Stacey (Grigg) Holt

2. **Action Item from Belonging and Evangelism:** The Belonging and Evangelism Ministry proposes that the Session approve the establishment of an Editor/Coordinator of the Church newsletter--the Focus. The Editor will work with the Administrative Assistant to make this an even better tool to promote communication throughout the church. The ministry recommends that Ken Mays fill this volunteer position.
3. **Memorial Gifts Committee Action Item:** Session-appointment of Elder Barbara George for 2009 is needed to officially complete the Memorial Gifts Committee membership. She will serve with Barbara Verdery, Class of 2008, moderator and Dick Forsythe, Class of 2010.
4. **Action Item from the Clerk of Session:** request approval for Carla Romere (webmaster) to remove 2006 minutes from the church website and keep all 2007

minutes active.

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7. **Action Item from Memorial Gifts Committee:** The Memorial Gifts Committee requests approval up to \$600.00 from the restricted Memorial & Honorarium Fund #02351 in order to purchase a new screen and remote for laptop presentations.

Action Item's #2, 5, 6 and 7 were lifted for further discussion. A motion was made and seconded *to approve Action Items #1, 3 and 4 and the motion passed*. Lifted Action Item #2 was discussed for further clarification and *the motion passed*. Lifted Action Item #7 was discussed for further clarification. With no further discussion, *Action Item #7 was approved and the motion passed*.

The motion in lifted Action Item #5, having been discussed at length under the treasurer's presentation, was *approved and the motion passed*. Lifted Action Item #6 required a second vote of the session at the next stated meeting. A motion was made and seconded *to place Action Item's Item #5 and #6 on the March agenda and the motion passed*.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made and seconded *to approve minutes of the stated Session meeting of January 12, 2008; the called Session meeting of January 20, 2008; the Congregational meeting of January 27, 2008 and the called Session meeting of January 27, 2008 and the motion passed*.

Clerk of Session Report

A written report was included in the session packet and received. The minutes of the January 20, 2008 moderator meeting were emailed and received.

Correspondence Received

Clare Kelly, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Arkansas sent a letter with instructions in order for the 2007 Statistical Report to be completed by February 20, 2008.

Stacey M. (Grigg) Holt requested that the session place her membership as inactive.

As requested, the clerk shared letters written to the session by church members Marilyn McLaughlin and Helen Jablonski.

Letters of appreciation were received following donations made by First, Fayetteville from:

- ~ The Reverend Jesus Jesse Gonzalez, on behalf of the congregation of Comunicad Presbiteriana Hispana and the NWA Hispanic New Church Development Commission
- ~Crystal Vickmark, Executive Director of CASA of Northwest Arkansas
- ~Walter Roettger, President of Lyon College;
- ~ David Dearing, CEO of Goodland Academy, Hugo, Oklahoma
- ~John Taylor, President of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc.
- ~ Evergreen Foundation

The clerk reminded session that a new session picture is needed for the church website. It was agreed to wait until the new Interim Pastor had arrived.

Church Treasurer's Report

The monthly Budgeted Financial Statement was included in the session packet and received. Elder Sisco reported that pledges are starting to come in more regularly now.

Pastor's Reports

Rev. Lee Power stated how pleased she has been with the response of the congregation and the offers of help received thus far. Rev. Maury Roberts requested approval to give a Minute for Mission on February 17th in order to introduce the Rev. Groggin, military chaplain from Washington D.C., who has worked closely with Rev. Roberts during his term as Chaplain. Rev. Josh Leu reported he has enjoyed working full time and that Rev. Power has led the church with grace and dignity. He stated that she is doing a great job as head of staff and expressed his personal appreciation for the opportunity to work here. Rev. Leu then announced his plans to seek a church position that will allow him to serve as either an Associate or Senior pastor.

Committee Reports

Belonging and Evangelism

A written report was emailed in advance to the session and received. Elder Moore requested an amount was incorrectly stated in the minutes and asked that it be removed from the last paragraph.

Butterfield Trail Village (BTV)

Elder Belden, as liaison to BTV and moderator of the Nominating Committee, has continued to seek clarification as to BTV nominees and the role of the session in their appointment.

Christian Education

A written report was distributed by Elder Price, which contained two action items from the committee:

Action Item from Christian Education: *Session approves monetary donations be asked for the new playground renovation.* Discussion followed regarding concern over asking the congregation to give donations. It was noted that the playground renovation plan received a significant cut in the proposed 2008 church budget but that the playground area is still not a safe place to play. The request is not to fund raise but to seek permission to publicize plans for the playground renovation. \$25,000 was requested in the 2008 budget and not funded; the total amount needed is \$74,000. With no further discussion, *the CE Action Item passed.*

ACTION ITEM 2: *Session approve for donations to be asked for Vacation Bible School, i.e. supplies, food, monetary, etc.* Discussion followed and *the motion passed.*

The CE committee reported that First School has agreed to close the week of Vacation Bible School.

Deacons

A written report was included in the session packet and received.

Fellowship

The written report was emailed in January, following the committee's meeting.

First School

There was no written report.

Rev. Power reported that the geoclimber had been broken. She also reported that skate boarders were now using our property. A motion was made and seconded *that First School be allowed to ask parents to each buy a piece of the geoclimber in order to replace it.* Discussion followed regarding the question of this being a First School or church property expense. *The motion was withdrawn.* A motion was made and seconded *to forward this request to the Properties Committee and the motion passed.*

Forum Planning Committee

There was no written report. Elder George announced that three parenting sessions are now being offered currently by Dr. Dee Austin of the Center for Effective Parenting. Upcoming presentations will include Jeff Shannon who will speak about architecture and John Dixon's brother, who is now serving as a missionary in Africa.

Hi-Acres Committee

There was no written report. Elder Belden reported he recently visited with Mrs. Stalker.

Kitchen Hospitality

A written report was emailed in advance to the session and received. Elder Koenig reported the committee met recently, that a meal is being provided for the parenting classes and that the committee will work with Worship and Music on the Maundy Thursday event.

Long Range Planning

A written report was emailed in advance to the session and received.

Memorial Gifts Committee

There was no written report. Two action items were approved on the consent agenda.

Nominating Committee

There was no written report as the committee did not meet.

Organ Feasibility Committee (OFC)

There was no written report as the committee did not meet. Elder Warren, as session-liaison, met with co-chairs Ann Roberts and Bob Frans.

Outreach

A written report was emailed in advance to the session and received. Elder Brewer reported that Ron Talbert is recruiting a team to support the Presbyterian Disaster Relief at the end of April. The team will go to Pearlinton, MS; there are 20 spots available for our church and First Presbyterian Church in Springdale.

Pastoral Needs Assessment (PNA) Subcommittee

There was no written report as the subcommittee did not meet.

Personnel

A written report was emailed in advance and received.

Presbyterian Women

There was no written report as the committee did not meet.

Properties

There was no written report. Elder Woodruff stated how impressed he has been with Al Hanna and Hugh Brewer who serve as the church's handymen. An action item regarding the columbarium will be presented in March.

In regard to the Brook's property that lies adjacent to the church, Hugh Brewer met with Mayor Coody in person in order to report the intention of the church to not contribute financially. It was then announced at session that the city has bought up all the land being sold by the Brook's family and that this met with the satisfaction of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association.

Stewardship

A written report was distributed and received.

Trustees/Endowment Committee

A written report was emailed in advance and received.

Elder Woodruff reported that correspondence was sent to Ms. Amy Commer in regard to the church's inability at this time to contribute financially to sidewalk improvements on Calvin and Birwin.

United Campus Ministry

There was no written report.

Worship and Music

A written report was emailed in advance and received. Rev. Power requested approval *to serve communion at both services on Easter Sunday*. A motion was made and seconded *to approve Rev. Power's request and the motion passed*. A motion was made and seconded *that communion not be served on Sunday, April 6th but that the CEO offering would be held and the motion passed*.

New Business

Parish Associate Positions

Discussion followed regarding the Parish Associate positions. It was discussed that a request to COM would need to be made for a title change, effective March 17th, for the Parish Associates. The Clerk agreed to make contact with Toney McMillan, COM representative.

Presbytery of Arkansas - 2008 Nomination Committee Information

Elder Belden agreed to follow up on seeking nominees for the Presbytery Committees.

Action Item for Building Use: On behalf of Ember Lanuti, chancel choir member, the clerk asked approval *that a recital may be held on Sunday, March 30th at 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary and that donation baskets may be placed in the Narthex*. There was a second and *the motion passed*.

Recognition

A motion was made and seconded *that the following members be recognized by the session and the motion passed*.

Board of Trustees (approved by the congregation)

Ron Woodruff, Class 2008; Liz Fulton, Class 2009, Chair; Hugh Brewer, Class 2010

Memorial Gifts Committee

Barbara Verdery, Class 2008, Chair; Barbara George, Class 2009; Dick Forsythe, Class 2010

Endowment Committee

(approved by the congregation)

Russell Winburn, Class 2008; David Lashley, Class 2009; Tom Verdery, Class 2010

First School Teacher Representative

Holly Wimer, year1

Old Business

Update on Committee on Visitation Process

Visitation teams were reminded to make notes from each visit but to not list names. Also, there are note cards available in the church office to send a thank you.

Interim Pastor Nominating Committee Report

Elder Price announced the committee has unanimously agreed on a candidate for the Interim Pastor position and that COM had given approval of the contract "if the way be clear". With the approval of a called meeting on February 19th, copies of the contract would be made available to session. The Committee on Ministry will officially approve the candidate and the related contract in March. The new Interim Pastor will begin work on April 1st and will plan to attend the session retreat on March 29th.

On behalf of the IPNC, a motion was made to call a special meeting for Tuesday, February 19th at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of voting on a recommendation from the IPNC. In addition, the contract would be reviewed, the session would meet the candidate and approval would be requested to accept the IPNC recommendation and the motion passed.

Postponement

The following Personnel Ministry action items were postponed until the moderator could be present at the March 2, 2008 stated meeting:

Personnel Ministry Action Item's postponed from December 17, 2007 January 12, January 27, 2008 and February 10, 2008:

1 - Action Item from Personnel: *The First School Ministry shall have line items in the budget corresponding to detailed expenditures consistent with the budgets of other ministries.*

2 - Action Item from Personnel: *In order to improve communication and address concerns raised by members of the congregation, personnel documents relating to annual reviews and related documents pertaining to the employment of Rev. Woody Brown shall be made available to members of the congregation along with the Committee of Five report.*

3 - Action Item from the Personnel Ministry: *Personnel Ministry recommends we replace with a cash equivalent up to one-half the cost of yearly tuition to Kathy Hairston for two children and Jennifer Meldrum for one child, January 1, 2008. (Their children have grown out of the program.) This will be funded by First School funds. Discussion followed. Raises were given to First School teachers last year, which were funded by tuition raises; however, following accreditation, the co-directors did not receive a raise. More discussion followed with concern of the precedent that approval of this action item would set. It was stated that when the co-directors were hired, in lieu of a higher salary,*

they were given the benefit of a reduced rate for their children. A motion was made and seconded *to postpone action item #9 in order for the Personnel Ministry to obtain more information and the motion passed.*

Rev. Power reported that computer problems had involved the router and that the following issue has been resolved:

Old Business from December 2, 2007 (It was unclear in this motion *how much* could be spent out of Account #2378; more clarification was needed):

Rev. Leu raised a concern regarding computer issues in the office and the staff's inability to email large groups at once via the current server. Discussion followed as to appropriate funds to be used in order to address these problems, i.e. office expenses, the Properties ministry line items or Restricted Account #2378. Rev. Power will address these concerns with Carla Romere, church webmaster. A motion was made and seconded *that we address the computer problems at the church office by using Account #2378 (later named per Lisa Higgins, Church Treasurer) as soon as possible and the motion passed.*

Updated Church By-Laws - Final Actions

The Clerk reported that a final copy of the By-Laws has been signed and filed in the church office on acid-free paper in a bound notebook.

Session Retreat

A session retreat for the Healthy Congregations program as led by Rev. Dr. Bill Branch will take place on Saturday, March 29th from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Carnall Hall on the U of A campus.

Rev. Smith closed the meeting in prayer and there being no further business, a motion was made and seconded *to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. and the motion passed.*

Laurie Reh
Clerk of Session