

Saint Mark Presbyterian Church
Stated Meeting of the Session
April 22, 2014
Minutes

The stated meeting of the session of Saint Mark Presbyterian Church was held on April 22, 2014, in Room 104 at Saint Mark Church. The session shared dinner at 6:10 p.m. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. Pastor Howard led us in prayer. A quorum was present.

Rolls

Present: Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Roy W. Howard, Associate Pastor Shelby Etheridge; Elders Mary Casper, Karl Kaufmann, Mike Lutz, Meisie Roberts, Mike Welsh, Clerk of Session George Huggins

Excused: Elders Jennifer Carr, Alison Dewey, Teddy Ferguson, Suzanne Lofhjelm, Diane Wirono

Absent: Elder Sharon Tarr

Guests: Rachel Zutshi

Pastor Howard lead us in a contemplative examination and reflection on a painting by Eugene Burnand, depicting the Apostles Peter and John as they hurried to the tomb on the morning of the resurrection.

It was MC to adopt the agenda.

It was **MC** to approve the minutes of the 03/11/2014 stated meeting, and the minutes of the 04/20/2014 special meeting (new members).

CLERK'S REPORT

Communion: 04/06/2014, 9:30am; 04/13/2014, 9:30am and 11:00am; 04/17/2014, Maundy Thursday; 04/20/2014, Easter.

Deaths: Ellen C. Midlam, b 6/28/1938, d 04/05/2014, Potomac, Maryland

Funeral/Memorial Services: Ellen C. Midlam, 04/11/2014, Saint Mark; inurnment in the Memorial Garden at Saint Mark.

New Members [G-1.0303]: 04/20/2014, received by certificate of transfer: Katry Harris and Sandrine Moamoasse; received by reaffirmation of faith: Kyle B. Carson, John King, Kathryn Ligon, Matthew Manik, Okto Manik, Timothy Manik, Flantina Silalahi, Rini Suardiningsih.

Incoming Correspondence:

- 03/25/2014 – email of appreciation from Vincent DeMarco for hosting him and Bryan Miller during the Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekend observance at Saint Mark.
- 03/25/2014 – email from Vincent DeMarco inviting Saint Mark to join the *Maryland Health Care for All Coalition* in support of their proposed one dollar tobacco tax increase to reduce teen smoking and fund critical health care and public health needs.

- 04/02/2014 – email from Alison Bennett: application for recertification as an Earth Care Congregation.
- 04/14/2014 – email from John D. Hagner with copy of the submission to the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation to dissolve Saint Mark Presbyterian Church, Inc.
- 04/16/2014 – email from Pledge Secretary Connie Long, transmitting her retirement letter from being pledge secretary.
- 04/22/2014 – from NCP Stated Clerk, numerical parity of teaching elders and ruling elders at presbytery meetings.

Outgoing Correspondence:

- 03/18/2014 – Provided a copy of the Manual of Operations to the Clerk, Poolesville PC.
- 04/14/2014 – Articles of Dissolution of Saint Mark Presbyterian Church, Inc., from John D. Hagner to State Department of Assessments and Taxation. (Note fee of \$105.00)

Session Records Review: On 03/15/2014, Saint Mark’s Minutes Book and Register were reviewed and found to be in compliance with no exceptions or comments.

Presbytery Meeting: It was **MSC** for Mike Lutz to be the rotating commissioner to the scheduled meeting of Presbytery on 05/20/2014, with permanent commissioner Elder George Huggins.

OMNIBUS MOTION

It was **MC** to receive the Clerk’s Report.

ORDER OF THE DAY

Motion: to discontinue collecting per capita payments from the congregation in 2014. After discussion and consideration the motion failed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Pastor Update

Pastor Howard praised the long faithfulness of pledge secretary Connie Long, whose resignation letter was received this week. Plans will be made to recognize her service. Session discussed how to fill the service void left by Connie’s resignation.

It was **MSC** to direct the Finance and Stewardship Ministries and the church treasurer to discuss and decide on how to define and fill the need, and to report back to Session.

Pastor Howard reminded Session of the construction of the Memorial to the Lost on Saturday, April 26, beginning at 10:00 a.m. and probably needing only an hour to be complete. Please notify Elder Jennifer Carr if you are planning to help. Pastor Howard and wife, Claudia, will accompany the youth to Montreat. He will also attend a three-day training course at Montreat.

Associate Pastor Update

Pastor Etheridge is anticipating summer activities, especially in nurturing, supporting, and accompanying the youth on faith-building and mission trips. She is soliciting adult volunteers to also accompany the youth, and would greatly appreciate any Elders or Deacons who could do so. Pastor Etheridge has helped produce the first of a series of videos to educate and promote the Legacy Campaign II. The first will be shown this Sunday, and each video will have an advocate from the congregation. Next month she will participate in a retreat to Pennsylvania with the organization Company of Pastors. She reminded us of Vacation Bible School, June 23-27, and that registration will be online.

Finance Ministry Update

Treasurer Rachel Zutshi summarized financial progress in 2014 as looking good, with two areas that will need attention. Some relief from healthcare payments for staff is expected, as member, and NCP Stated Clerk, Sara Coe is completing applications for healthcare credit. The application for the year 2010 has been completed and Sara is working on subsequent years. Session expressed appreciation to Rachel for her faithful attention to detail.

Personnel –Walla Dempsey and Mike Lutz (elder) Personnel Ministry Meeting

April 6, 2014

In Attendance: Mike Lutz, Walla Dempsey, Sharon Shoemaker, John Hagner, Roy Howard

There were two substantive topics covered during the meeting, the conversion of Akayla Boyd to regular employee status and performance feedback for the staff.

Akayla Boyd

Walla presented on the topic of converting Akayla Boyd from a contractor to a regular full time employee. Roy reported that the staff was uniformly pleased with Akayla. He complimented her skills, her demeanor and her abilities as the public administrative face for Saint Mark. Others on the Committee supported Roy's statements. Roy went on to say that he had a non-binding discussion with Akayla about joining the staff full time and she indicated strongly that she would appreciate and accept the offer. After a thorough discussion, the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend Akayla to the Session for regular employment.

The terms proposed are:

1. 35 hours per week

2. Full holidays, per the employee handbook
3. A salary of \$36,000 per year. She would be a non-exempt employee, but will probably never work more than 40 hours in one week.
4. Pension and Medical benefits will be offered at \$5,000 per year, prorated the first year, to be used by the employee on her discretion on split, through the PC(USA) Board of Pensions.

An additional consideration is the fee we have to pay to the staffing agency if we convert Akayla to a regular employee prior to her working 961 hours. She's currently below that, which would require Saint Mark to pay 5% of her starting salary, or \$1,800, as a penalty. The Committee supports paying the fee in order to "capture" Akayla. She's currently looking for a second job (in order to pay her bills and save for college) and our concern is that in the course of that search she may find another full time position which she will take instead of ours. We believe the \$1,800 fee is a reasonable expense to mitigate that risk.

Performance feedback for the Staff

We haven't given the staff performance feedback in over a year and Roy said the staff would appreciate receiving feedback. The format of the process is very simple:

1. The Committee members will sign up to solicit feedback for a staff member.
2. The Staff member (Roy, Shelby or Jeff) will provide 3-4 names of people for solicitation. The Committee member can add more at his/her discretion.
3. The Committee member will arrange to interview the people and consolidate the feedback in writing.
4. The Committee member will meet with the staff member to review and discuss the feedback.
5. The Personnel Ministry will keep a record of the feedback.

As part of the process, there will be a "check-in", where the Committee member asks the staff member if they are getting the support they require from Session and the congregation. In effect, the feedback process is bi-directional.

The process will commence in May and be complete by the end of June. Subsequent to our meeting, Roy sent me the attached form for the Committee's consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Lutz

It was **MC** for the Personnel Ministry Team to proceed with the offer to Akayla Boyd.

Property – Mike Welsh and Teddy Ferguson

Property and Liability Insurance [G-3.0112]: Saint Mark has property and liability insurance coverage to protect the facilities, programs, and officers, including members of the Session, staff, and deacons.

Stewardship – Meisie Roberts and Alison Dewey

April report: stewardship ministry

- Met with Roy and Alison on 2/12/14. Action item: Identify 6 members to make a 3-5 minute video or personal presentation on ‘why they give to Saint Mark’. Further, will one elder from each team consider telling the story of their ministry to inform and encourage the congregation to willingly pledge to the work SMPC is doing? These will be delivered to the congregation at Sunday services between Easter and October. Please volunteer and I will be following up with emails.
- Attended Seminar on ‘How to Train A Stewardship Team’ at NCP on 3/12/14. Summary of ideas from seminar: ‘Christian Stewardship principles; systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, material resources and influence, based on the conviction these are a trust from God, to be used in service for all the people, in grateful acknowledgement of Christ’s redeeming love, caring for and managing all that God has given us.’ Session’s Role: tell their own stewardship journeys and be the first to pledge. Pastor’s role: provide monthly stewardship sermon and should know what each member pledges. Session to vote on transparency and option for congregation to opt out. Challenge congregation to increase pledging by 1% of income as you approach tithe and beyond. Year round stewardship. Session may want to discuss these ideas.
- Receive One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Palm Sunday. The Presbyterian Hunger Program receives 36 percent of undesignated One Great Hour of Sharing gifts, while the Self-Development of People and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance each receive 32 percent.
- General fund Pledge envelopes have been ordered by Connie and received. Connie to approach session regarding her service as pledge secretary.

The Ambassador Program

This is a program among National Capital Presbytery Immigrant Fellowships, NCP Member congregations (that’s Saint Mark) and the NCP Church development Committee (Kay Huggins). One of the goals of this program is to strengthen and transform our congregations by identifying a group of representatives from established and immigrant congregations who will receive each other as visitors in their Sunday worship services. These ambassadors will exercise hospitality, share resources, support, encouragement, time and prayer. Saint Mark’s Session has identified 2 Ambassadors, Sharon Banks-Tarr and Meisie Roberts, who will visit and host ambassador congregations. An ‘Ambassador Orientation’ held on March 15, 2014 at Rockville Presbyterian Church, was attended by Meisie Roberts. We are sharing and meeting with the Indonesian-American Presbyterian congregation who meet in the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in Derwood. The Indonesian congregation only moved into their new worship address in March so we will be visiting each other after Easter. The Taiwanese ambassadors are extremely

enthusiastic and have already established email conversations with us. Anyone else who is able and willing will be welcomed to join us when the actual dates are identified.

Environmental Stewardship – Alison Bennett, convener

Earth Care Congregation update:

- 1) Preparing for our Earth Day celebration on April 27
- 2) Preparing for Alternative Transportation Sunday on May 4
- 3) We have submitted an application to the Saint Mark Memorials Committee for funding for two picnic tables to be installed on the east side of the sanctuary
- 4) We are preparing the renewal application for certification as an Earth Care Congregation for 2014-15, due April 15

Session agreed to suggest pool of people to Stewardship for Stewardship team.

Welcoming – Mary Casper and Diane Wirono

Elder Mary Casper reviewed the new members that had joined on Easter. Session agreed to greet new members, in person or by email.

Worship and Music – Karl Kaufmann (elder) and Mary Jo Mountain (convener)

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The meeting opened with prayer.

We examined the calendar of events for the next few months, looking at each week and verifying that all set-ups, equipment, etc. were in place.

Palm Sunday--palms are taken care of by Shelby. Communion to be served.

Maundy Thursday--question about location re foot washing. Shelby will speak to Roy: sanctuary or fellowship hall? End in garden. Candles are here. Communion to be served.

Good Friday--joint service with Faith United Methodist, Shelby preaching, time 7:30.

Easter Sunday--9:30 communion, 11:00 reception of 9 new members

April 27--Communion to be served.

May 4 --First Sunday of month so one service at 9:30. Communion to be served.

May 11--Two services. Communion to be served.

May 18--Two services. Communion to be served. It was noted that the calendar for the usher sign-up shows this week as having one service at 10:00.

May 25--One service at 10:00. Communion to be served. Memorial Day weekend so begin summer schedule.

June 1--Communion to be served.

June 8--Pentecost. Communion to be served. Discussion of type of service, jazz or other music. The group felt that using musicians from the congregation would be effective.

Shelby and Jeff will pursue this with Roy.

June 15--Trinity Sunday. Communion to be served.

Other business.

Jeff suggested that we try to evaluate Advent/Christmas services closer to the events since our memories are a bit rusty after all this time. For example, do we need three services? Mary Jo will attempt to obtain attendance numbers for us.

There is a difference of opinion about the frequency of communion. Some members feel that having it so often takes away from the feeling of being a special event and becomes just one more thing we do. Others thought it was o.k. to have it so often.

Thanks to Brian Whitney for the installation of the projector at the back of the sanctuary. It has made quite a difference in the service!

Mary Jo Mountain, Convener.

OTHER REPORTS:

Board of Deacons:

Deacon Meeting Minutes: March 10, 2014

Quorum Present

Absent: Sandy Champion, David Porter, Mariechen Bresler & Carol Wood

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Kay opened the meeting with prayer.

New Business

Devotions for Deacons

Deacons shared stories of looking inward and risking new behaviors in this season of lent as we examined ordination question #6. We also discussed 1 Corinthians 1: 1-19.

We discussed moving our deacon meeting to a joint session of deacons/elders for the months of September thru December 2014 which would either be 2nd or 3rd Tuesday of every month.

Roy would like to coordinate a picnic for deacons/elders either August 10, 17 or 24th. More details to follow.

Reminder that we will be moving to summer month service sometime in late May/early June but need to confirm exact date from Roy.

Gina Vitale gave group an update of planning and coordinating lunch for residents of Ingleside – King Farm which took place on Tuesday, March 10th. She can provide group an update of the lunch at next meeting.

We discussed the deacons' luncheons with a particular focal point on how we engage both the newer members and long standing members. Some ideas that were discussed were I remember when or what captivates you now versus then to try and get the long standing members to hopefully give testimonials. The schedule of deacons' luncheons is the following:

April 6th – Team B
May 18th – Team D
June 15th – Team C
June 22nd – Team E
June 29th – Team A

Kay offered the closing prayer.

Old Business

The minutes for the last meeting were approved as written with correction of Guy Roberts being removed from absent listing:
February minutes submitted by Jeremy Fleisher: motion by Carey, second by Michael approval unanimous.

Prayer and Care Concerns

Gordon Hawk declining health
Luis Nunez health difficulties
Bill Long declining health

Next meeting is April 7, 2014
Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

National Capital Presbytery:

Elders Huggins and Wirono were representatives to the 03/18/2014 meeting at National Presbyterian Church. During the meeting, NCP:

- Approved the recommendations of the Wilson Lane Commission for the disposition of the Wilson Lane property.
- Waived the designation of the DC Equipping Ministry Resurrection Fund in order to give Northminster Presbyterian Church a loan of \$255,000 to replace their heating and air conditioning system.
- Heard a report on the process adopted by the Leadership Council for use should a church wish to disaffiliate from the PC (USA).
- Approved an overture from the session of Church of the Pilgrims on maternal and child nutrition, which will be forwarded to the 221st General Assembly for consideration.

- Concurred with an overture originated by the Presbytery of Hudson River on gun violence prevention, which concurrence will be relayed to the 221st General Assembly.
 - Denied a request to concur with the Overture on Engaging Presbyterians to Witness for Palestinian Human Rights and for Ending the Occupation of Palestine which overture was originated by Grace Presbytery.
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Other Ministry Business

Pastor Howard focused on the changing demographics of Session, and that challenges of family care are keeping some Session members from participating fully. He asked everyone to be mindful and creative of how we might support and encourage all Session members to attend each meeting and participate fully in Session and congregation activities.

It was **MC** to receive the Ministry Reports.

Pastor Howard adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m. with prayer.

George T. Huggins
Clerk of Session