

First Presbyterian Church of Houston
Session Agenda – January 29, 2018
5:30 PM LC 181

Devotional and Opening Prayer Discussion of <i>The Circle Maker</i>	Cindy Cook	45 min.
Omnibus Resolution Approve Minutes of Oct. Session Meeting Approve Membership Reports Additional Consent Motions (listed in packet)	Jim Birchfield	5 min.
Committee/Task Force Reports		
Operations Committee/Finance Report Budget Shortfall Working Group	Chris Herbold	15 min.
Presbyterian School Project Update	Kim Clark	15 min.
Old Business		
Worship Schedule Discussion	Jim Birchfield	60 min.
Pastor's Report Staff/Personnel Update Stewardship Campaign	Jim Birchfield	10min.
Clerks' Report Elder Training Schedule Adaptive Conversation Planning ECO National Gathering Volunteers	David Calkins	10 min.
Prayer and Praise	Jim Birchfield	10 min.
Communion and Doxology	Jim Birchfield	10 min.
Motion to Adjourn		

Important Dates:

January 23-25, 2017 – ECO National Gathering

February 13, 2018 – AC Meeting

February 20, 2018 – Session Meeting – Adaptive Conversation – Refugees/Immigrants

March 13, 2018 – AC Meeting

March 20, 2018 – Session Meeting

April 10, 2018 – AC Meeting

April 17, 2018 – Session Meeting – Adaptive Conversation –
Mental Health/Substance Abuse

May 8, 2018 – AC Meeting

May 15, 2018 – Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE SESSION
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON, TEXAS
November 21, 2017

The November Stated Meeting of the Session began at 5:40 pm in LC181 with a quorum present. Cindy Cook led a discussion of Chapters ten, eleven and twelve of "If You Will Ask" by Oswald Chambers. In January, the discussion will be on the book "The Circle Maker" by Mark Batterson. In February we will begin a study of the book "The 40 Day Prayer Challenge". Brent Dorsey closed the discussion with a prayer. Dr. Jim Birchfield called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with a prayer.

Attendance: See the attached Session Attendance Record for attendance to date this year.

Omnibus motions:

The following omnibus motions, provided to Session in advance of the meeting, were passed unanimously without discussion.

- Moved that the minutes of the October 17, 2017 Stated Meeting of the Session.
- Moved that the October Membership Report be approved.
- Request from Attack Poverty for \$20,000 for start-up funding: Friends of Northside, two computers, one year rent and part-time volunteer coordinator (affected by Hurricane Harvey).
- Request from Cho-Yeh for \$10,000 towards funding the conversion of a maintenance barn to a large meeting space.
- Request from Generation One for \$20,000 to assist G1 Academy & Step It Up expenses (large number percentage of donors affected by Hurricane Harvey).
- Request from Interface-Samaritan for \$10,000 to assist expenses of providing critically needed behavioral healthcare services for those (affected by Hurricane Harvey).
- Luther and Loraine Trammell created a Charitable Remainder Unitrust for the benefit of FPC Houston in 1994 at Texas Presbyterian Foundation. The trust designated that the income be distributed annually to the Nehemiah Center or its successor in accordance to the agreement dated February 22, 2007. The trust stated that a permanent endowment (Luther and Loraine Trammell Fund) be established with the remaining amount following the deaths of Luther and Loraine. Note: Luther Trammell passed away 9-27-2011 and Loraine Trammell passed away 9-23-2017. Value of gift \$117,950.95 as of 9-23-17. Support documents are available on request.
- Motion that the Luther and Loraine Trammell Fund of First Presbyterian Church Houston be administered by the Permanent Funds Ministry Team under Operations Committee. It is to be administered on behalf of the Sr. Pastor and Clerk by the same standards as the other Session restricted benevolence funds where the corpus will be held in perpetuity and the annual earnings made available for distribution each year to Nehemiah Center of Houston or its successor.

Committee/Task Force Reports

Operations Committee: Jennifer Boubel reported giving for October exceeded budget and prior year and expenses are below budget.

Church/School Committee:

The charter of the Church/School Committee is to advance the relationship between the two organizations with a specific focus on opportunities for shared mission ministry. The Presbyterian School Members (all members of the Board of Trustees) are Kim Clark, Chris Champion, Martha Erwin, Nelson Mabry, Marilyn Winters and Mark Carleton. A motion was made and approved to add, to the committee, members of First Presbyterian Church as follows: Rev. Jim Birchfield, Rev. Michael Homan, Tom Kennedy, Martha Lawler and Stacey Rockwell.

Worship Schedule Revisions and Planning: Rev. Michael Homan and Rev. Andrew Stepp distributed handouts reviewing the Worship Focus Group Report, October 2015 and the First Presbyterian Schedule Proposal. Worship followed by a discussion of the options for worship in 2018.

OLD BUSINESS:

Adaptive Conversation – Homelessness: A panel discussion surrounding the problem of homelessness in Houston and how First Presbyterian Church should respond, was led by Rev Jim Birchfield and David Calkins with a panel: Jim Oswald, facilitator; Sonja Gee, Marc Eichenbaum, Sgt. Steve Wick, Matt Brollier and Mr. Dupler.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

- A motion was made and approved to make the following changes in the Sunday Worship Services for December. On December 17 there will be three services in the sanctuary (8:30/9:45/11am – no 11:05 service) for a Christmas Music Sunday. December 24 there will be one worship service on Sunday morning in the sanctuary at 9:00 a.m.
- The Mission Affinity Group comprised of First Presbyterian, Grace Presbyterian and Memorial Drive Presbyterian met and are gathering momentum as they discuss ways they can proceed together in shared ministries.
- Andrew Stepp gave an update on personnel changes. Cheryl Tucker has been hired to serve as the interim Director of Youth Ministries. Cheryl Crissy has been hired to serve as the Connections Director. Megan Stidham, who has been overseeing Harvey relief efforts, has resigned her position, to seek a career in teaching and to further her study for a Phd in theology.
- A motion was made and approved to accept Rev. Jim Birchfield's Sabbatical Proposal.

CLERK'S REPORT:

- The Nominating Committee Working Group is working on direction and guidelines for the Nominating Committees.
- David Calkins stressed the importance of attending the ECO Synod Meeting in January. John Going volunteered to be the additional delegate.
- Elder training for the class of 2021 will begin in January and will be led by the Clerks and organized by Robert Moore and Gordon Marcum.
- The Session Christmas party will be at the home by Jenn Rustay, December 6.
- The Town Hall Coffee Conversation was successful.

Prayers were raised for the church, member concerns, ministry partners, the city and neighbors. There was a special time for laying on of hands for Donna Marcum (Gordon Marcum stood in for Donna) and Jan Smith. Communion was served by intinction officiated by Rev. Jim Birchfield and assisted by Clerk David Calkins.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 PM with prayer and the singing of the Doxology.

Rev. Jim Birchfield, Moderator

David Calkins, Clerk of Session

Worship Services 2015	Week 49	Week 50	Week 51	Week 52
	12/6/15	12/13/15	12/20/15	12/27/15
8:15 Worship	160	N/A	256	N/A
9:30 Worship	226	N/A	326	N/A
10:45 Worship	356	N/A	360	N/A
11:05 Worship	320	340	275	345
Total Worship Att	1062	340	1217	345

Worship Services 2016	Week 49	Week 50	Week 51	Week 52
	12/4/16	12/11/16	12/18/16	12/25/16
8:15 Worship	158	131	130	N/A
9:30 Worship	242	244	271	N/A
10:45 Worship	312	337	404	276
11:05 Worship	255	260	240	N/A
Total Worship Att	967	972	1045	276

Christmas
Day

Worship Services 2017	Week 49	Week 50	Week 51	Week 52
	12/3/17	12/10/17	12/17/17	12/24/17
8:15/8:30 Worship	236	221	272	
9:30 Worship				312
10:45 Worship	342	373	294	
11:05 Worship	207	248	650	
Total Worship Att	785	842	1216	312

Unique Live Unique Live Unique Live Christmas
Streams: 91 Streams: 104 Streams: 77 Eve

December 2017

Baptisms:

 Infant 0
 Adult 0

Weddings: 0

Member Funerals: 0

NonMbr Funerals: 0

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, HOUSTON
REPORT TO THE SESSION
MEMBERSHIP REPORT, December 2017**

NEW CHURCH MEMBERS

None

RESTORED TO ACTIVE ROLL

None

DECEASED

None

DISMISSED

Peterson, Susan

T/L – St. Paul’s United Methodist Church

REMOVED FROM ACTIVE ROLL

None

MOVED TO INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP ROLL

None

DISMISSED FROM INACTIVE ROLL

None

MEMBERSHIP AS OF November 30, 2017	3125
Gains	0
Losses	<u>- 1</u>
MEMBERSHIP AS OF December 31, 2017	3124

Reports

Operations

January 10, 2018

Members present: Bob Shimp, Chris Hill, Debbie Hanna, Merry Davis, Mark Strange, Russ Schulze, Henry Humphries and Chris Herbold.

Members absent: Martha Barnes

Staff and Others present: Jim Birchfield, Andrew Stepp, Jennifer Boubel, Steve Burns and Fred Robertson

- I. **Call to Order and Prayer** - Chris Herbold called the meeting to order at 6:45AM and Bob Shimp opened with a prayer.
- II. **Finance Report and other Finance and Accounting Matters**

- A. **Review of Weekly Giving Report/Formation of Working Group** - The December 2017 Financial Packet was not available for the meeting; however, the weekly giving report was distributed and reviewed. Year-to-date giving to the General Operating fund was approximately \$800,000 below budget.

Chris Herbold reported that Advisory Council would be making a motion to Session regarding the formation of a working group to address the response to the giving shortfall. It is anticipated that, once formed, the working group will work with the Operations Committee.

- B. **Auditor Report to Management and Management Response** – Jennifer Boubel reviewed the Auditor Report to Management and Management’s proposed responses to the finding and recommendations. Jennifer reported that she will continue to work with the Audit Committee and the auditors to finalize the responses. In addition, Chris Hill will provide advice to Jennifer and the finance team regarding implementing changes to address the recommendations.
- C. **Stewardship Campaign** – Mark Strange provided an overview of the Stewardship Campaign and distributed copies of the materials that will be provided to the congregation. The campaign will run from January 14th – February 11th and will include:
- i. Email communications, a devotional tied to a brochure/calendar, monthly church alive inserts
 - ii. Sunday School Class presentations
 - iii. Discussion during worship services and
 - iv. A series of events including hosted gatherings in homes to discuss Vision 2020 goals and stewardship.

- III. **Facilities Ministry Report** – Debbie Hanna provided an update on facilities related matters including an update on the recent city closure of Barkdull St for several weeks, speed bump work on Oakdale St and a preliminary compilation of a multi-year capital needs assessment.

The committee closed with a time of corporate prayer.

Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2017

The meeting began at 3:00 PM. In attendance: Jim Birchfield, Andrew Stepp, Jennifer Boubel, David Calkins, Cindy Cook, Robert Moore, Chris Herbold, and Debbie Hanna. Opening Prayer + Devotional was led by Chris Herbold.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Finance report: Chris Herbold reported on the strong level of giving in October, stating that year to date, giving is only \$75,000 behind budget.

Trustee meeting update: Steve Oldham briefly reported on progress that the three Trustees committees are making in their areas of involvement.

Homelessness Adaptive Conversation: David Calkins reported on the upcoming Adaptive Conversation to occur at the November Session meeting to discuss the problem of homelessness in Houston, how FPC should respond and how our response should align with city of Houston initiatives. The discussion will be facilitated by Jim Oswalt and will include representatives from the community who work with the homeless population, including Sonia Gee of Main Street Ministries, Marc Eichenbaum who is Special Assistant to the Mayor for Homeless Initiatives at The City of Houston, and Sgt. Steve Wick of the HPD Homelessness Task Force.

Presbyterian School/FPC Strategic Relationship Committee: Jim Birchfield discussed the formation of PS/FPC strategic relationship committee that will include representatives from the school and the church. The purpose of this committee will be to assess how the school and church can better partner in ministry. The AC suggested that the church representatives include Jim Birchfield, Michael Homan, Stacy Rockwell, and likely 1 member of the Board of Trustees and one Elder to represent Session.

Worship Schedule Revisions and Planning: Jim Birchfield and Andrew Stepp reported on the comments (both positive and negative), concerns, and implications of possibly making the current changes to the worship schedule permanent by eliminating the 9:30 service. Andrew discussed the recommendations of the worship team and staff, which will be presented and discussed at the November Session meeting. The recommendations will be voted on at a special Session meeting to be held on December 5.

Overall, FPC is trying to establish a culture that church attendance on Sundays will be for 2 hrs. To that end, strategies are being developed to determine how to best use the 9:40 equipping hour and how to make the 8:30 service more child friendly.

Coffee Conversation, November 19: David Calkins and Jim Birchfield will host a coffee conversation during the 9:40 hour on Sunday, November 19, to provide information and invite discussions and questions about a number of issues including worship schedule revisions, parking, church directory, and church planting.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Staff/Personnel Update: Jim Birchfield and Andrew Stepp announced that Cheryl Tucker has been hired to serve as the interim Director of Youth Ministries. Jon Crantz will be working with a group, including parents of youth, to begin a search for a permanent director. In addition, Cheryl Crissy has been hired to serve as the Connections director and will be begin in early December. Andrew announced that Megan Stidham, who has been overseeing Harvey relief efforts, has resigned her position, to seek a career in teaching. Finally, Jennifer Boubel announced that we will be filling an opening in the Accounts Payable department.

Birchfield Sabbatical Proposal: Jim Birchfield presented his plans and budget for his sabbatical for the summer of 2018 using the rubric "Serve, Stretch, Reflect, Renew." The sabbatical will include service time with Mama Maggie Groban in Cairo, retreats at monasteries in Egypt and California, and completion of the "Leader Breakthru" process.

Birchfield Annual Review: The annual review for Jim Birchfield will be scheduled for sometime in late November or early December. Jim will provide materials to assist with his review.

CLERK'S REPORT

David Calkins reported on recent problems with having enough elders to serve communion, especially at the 10:45 service. Efforts are underway to encourage current Ruling Elders to serve at either the 8:30 or 10:45 service.

David Calkins also announced that FPC will have 6 commissioners at the upcoming Synod meeting in January.

David also reminded the AC of the Clerk's dinner to be held on November 14. Discussion items will include the worship schedule revisions and the progress of Vision 2020.

Robert Moore closed in prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. Respectfully submitted,
Robert Moore
Clerk, Class of 2020

Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2017

The meeting began at 3:00 PM. In attendance: Jim Birchfield, Andrew Stepp, Jennifer Boubel, David Calkins, Cindy Cook, Robert Moore, Chris Herbold, and Debbie Hanna. Opening Prayer + Devotional was led by Jennifer Boubel.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Finance report: Chris Herbold reported that year to date giving remains behind the last fiscal year and stressed the importance of December giving. Additional efforts will be made to communicate the importance of a strong December for giving. In addition, Chris reported that the church has a large amount of restricted funds on deposit, and the finance committee is working to use these funds appropriately, as indicated. Finally, the Nehemiah Center loan should be repaid in early 2018. It was recommended and endorsed by the AC that the church forgive the interest portion of the loan repayment.

FY 2019 Stewardship campaign: Jennifer Boubel reported on the upcoming Stewardship campaign, which will be chaired by Mark Strange who will be assisted by Henry Wyche, John Watson and Fred Robertson. The theme for the campaign will be "My Gifts Matter" and there will be brochures with devotionals and dinners for leadership to share their vision for the church and the need for a healthy budget. Pledge Sunday is planned for February 11.

December Session meeting debrief: Jim Birchfield and Andrew Stepp led a discussion about the December Session meeting that focused on the revised worship schedule. The Session had a full discussion about the pros and cons of reinstating the 9:30 service but was not ready to make a final decision. The key points discussed by the Advisory Committee, if the Session votes to make the revised schedule permanent, were the importance of articulating the leadership's vision for Sunday mornings, providing a family friendly worship experience at 8:30, making sure there were a variety of high quality Sunday Schools from which to choose, and providing better options for parents with children in traditional Sunday Schools who previously attended worship during the 9:30 hour. It is this group that is most frustrated with the current revised schedule. The worship team is working on different options that hopefully will be ready for presentation to the Session in January.

ECO National Conference Update: Andrew Stepp provided a brief update and reported that to date over 1400 people have registered for the conference.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Jim Birchfield requested that the AC meetings be moved to the second Monday of each month due to a conflicting Presbyterian School board meeting. Jim and Andrew discussed some of the anxiety that church members have expressed over church planting and the loss of members. They discussed the importance of moving from the mourning over losses to the celebration about gains as well making sure the church planting residents have ample opportunities to discuss their visions and plans with church members. Finally, Jim discussed ways to encourage member engagement with APEST, including Session workshops and inclusion in new Elder training.

CLERK'S REPORT

David Calkins reported on upcoming Adaptive Conversations, focusing on Immigrants and Refugees in February and Mental illness and substance abuse in April. He will be creating a working group to around homelessness in Houston to follow-up on the most recent adaptive conversation. It also was suggested that the Session schedule a meeting to focus on the priorities that were identified at the fall Session retreat and to develop specific aims and goals based on those priorities.

Cindy Cook closed in prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. Respectfully submitted,
Robert Moore
Clerk, Class of 2020

Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2018

The meeting began at 3:00 PM. In attendance: Jim Birchfield, Andrew Stepp, Jennifer Boubel, David Calkins, Cindy Cook, Robert Moore, Chris Herbold, and Debbie Hanna. Opening Prayer + Devotional was led by Debbie Hanna.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Finance report: Chris Herbold reported that December giving was below expectations, but that the first week of January was above expectations. A working group, Chris Herbold, Jim Birchfield, David Calkins, Fred Robertson, and a representative of the Board of Trustees, will be meeting to do a deeper dive into giving, finances, and possible budget reductions.

FY 2019 Stewardship campaign: Jennifer Boubel reported on the upcoming Stewardship campaign, which will be chaired by Mark Strange who will be assisted by Henry Wyche, John Watson and Fred Robertson. The theme for the campaign will be "My Gifts Matter" and there will be brochures with devotionals and dinners for leadership to share what excites us now and for the future and to allow feedback. The goal is to better educate the entire congregation about the vision for FPC moving forward and to emphasize the importance of a healthy budget. Pledge Sunday is planned for February 11.

Worship schedule discussion: Jim Birchfield and Andrew Stepp led a discussion of the worship schedule and possible revisions. Several parents of young children attended the conversation held on

Sunday, January 7, and expressed how the 9:30 hour provided them with the best opportunity for worship while their young children attended a meaningful Sunday School. In follow-up, Andrew reported that Jon Crantz and Stacey Rockwell met with several 9:30 families to discuss children's Sunday school and choir, Sunday Schools for parents, and families with young children in worship. The families offered excellent feedback and encouragement, support for leadership, and discussed making the 8:30 hour a more meaningful experience for young families. While no conclusions were presented, they did offer that the 9:30 service was one of the reasons they began attending FPC.

Andrew offered that there are number of new Sunday School offerings for the Equipping hour that are being planned but are not all ready to roll out at this time. It was agreed that the Session needs to dedicate additional time to readdressing our vision for who we are as a church body and for Sunday morning worship and equipping and how we are to get there. It also was agreed that it is important to engage the congregation in further conversations. One suggestion is to reinstitute the 9:30 service during this time of further discussion and prayer as new programs for equipping and teaching discipleship and meaningful children's options are being developed and implemented.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Jim Birchfield reported on a request from the Israeli consulate to participate in events around the 70th anniversary of the formation of the state of Israel. We have chosen to decline this request but Jim will plan to meet with consulate officials.

CLERK'S REPORT

David Calkins reported on the upcoming Adaptive Conversation for February, focusing on Immigrants and Refugees. In addition, Robert Moore reported that Elder training for the class of 2021 will begin on Sunday, January 28, and continue for 15 sessions during the spring. Gordon Marcum will be assisting with these classes. A dinner with the class of 2021, Jim, and current clerks is being planned for early February.

Andrew Stepp closed in prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. Respectfully submitted,
Robert Moore
Clerk, Class of 2020