

First Presbyterian Church of Houston
January Agenda – January 14, 2020
5:30 PM LC 181

Opening Prayer

Omnibus Resolution

Approve Minutes of November Session Meeting
Additional Consent Motions

Jim Birchfield

Old business

Here To Serve Report

Jim Birchfield

Book Study

Discussion of *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* chapters

Doug Meikle

Committee Reports

Finance Report
Committee Reports
Communion update

Matt Malinsky
Committee chairs
Jan Smith

New business

Proposed by-laws change, Advisory Council motion

Jim Birchfield

Pastor's Report

Personnel report

Jim Birchfield

Clerk's Report

Session retreat
Congregational meeting
Focused prayer: Community

Robert Moore

Prayer and Praise

Communion and Doxology
Motion to Adjourn

Jim Birchfield

2019-20 Session Meetings & Important Dates

January 19, 2020 – Annual called congregational meeting
February 4-6, 2020 – ECO National Gathering, Grapevine, TX
February 18, 2020 – Session meeting
February 22, 2020 – Session retreat 8:30 AM – 12 noon, FPC
March 17, 2020 – Session meeting

April 20,
meeting
May 3,
meeting
5:00 PM
May 19,
meeting

2020	Communion	Baptism
January	1/5/2020	1/12
February		2/9
March	3/1 (1st Sun of Lent)	3/8
April	4/9 (Maundy Thurs.)	4/5th (Palm Sun.)
May	5/31 (Pentecost)	5/10 (Mother's Day)
June		6/21 (Father's Day)
July	7/12 (Mo Ranch)	
August	8/2	
September	9/6	9/13
October	10/4 (World Comm. Sun)	10/11
November	11/1 (All Saints)	11/8
December	12/6	

2020 – Session
(Monday)
2020 – MAG
at MDPC, 3:30 –

2020 – Session

MINUTES OF THE SESSION
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON, TEXAS
November 19, 2019

The November Stated Meeting of the Session began at 5:45pm in the LC181 with a quorum present. Dr. Andrew Stepp called the meeting to order and Tanner Sykes opened the meeting with 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 Stated Meeting of the Session be approved.
- Moved that the October Membership Report be approved.
- A motion from the Standing Committee on Nominations was made and approved to recommend the following slate for 2020 Officer Nominating Committee to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting: Callie Paterson – Elder, Kent Woodward - Elder, Susan Boone, Joe Chorley, Leo Espinoza, Becca Herbold, Claudia Stewart, Nancy Turner, Lynda Walsh, Carlton Wilde, Jr. and Alison Younger.

BOARD OF TRUSTEE OPERATIONS TASK FORCE REPORT

A motion was made and approved to accept the following recommendations from the Board of Trustees Task Force:

- 1) Eliminate of the Board of Trustees in FPC's Bylaws and the Certificate of Formation as it currently exists.
- 3) Reduce the mandatory time between session terms from three years to two years (Bylaw change).
- 4) Session encourages the Officer Nominating Committee to nominate a minimum of two new elders and a minimum of two elders who have served on FPC's session previously in each new class of session nominees.
- 5) Session create a sixth committee that will retain similar responsibilities as the current Board of Trustees as defined and delegated by the session.
 - a) This will consists of nine members, each making a three year commitment.
 - b) It will recruit three new members each year for Session approval to replace the three departing members.
 - c) The Board chair or a representative will attend the Advisory Council.
 - d) A clerk of Session will attend Board meetings.
 - e) The Board will be named the "Board of Long-Term Strategic Planning and Property."

The following motion failed:

- 2) Elimination of the at-large member of session (Bylaw change).

Here to Serve Update: Andrew Stepp reported that the worship service in the Grand Hall was standing room only and there were request that we have joint worship more frequently throughout the year. The podcast and the devotionals had favorable comments. These will be repeated during the Advent season. Matt Malinsky reported that the commitment cards are still coming in.

Building Campaign: Tom Brents distributed a handout and presented a power point presentation of Phase one of the proposed Capital Fund improvement projects. There are considerations for renovations, expansion and deferred maintenance. How to improve our church home and make it a better worshipful experience. Session approval was tabled for two weeks after which there will be an electronic vote for approval of the requested authorizations.

At 8:00 pm a motion was made and approved for the session to enter into an executive session and guests were excused. Andrew Stepp delivered a report on the components of the Here to Serve budget and initiative. A motion from the Advisory Council was made and approved that \$153,000 be added to the personnel budget to provide Christmas Bonuses and a salary increase pool for First Presbyterian Church employees. A motion was made and approved to add \$36,000 to the ministry budgets to provide increases for Connections, Worship, Equipping and Sending-Discipleship, Executive Pastor and Caring. The executive session ended at 8:08 pm.

COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE REPORTS

Finance/Operations Committee: Matt Malinsky reported that aligned with previous months actual giving remains somewhat behind planned. However, expenses are also behind planned spending levels.

Committee Reports:

- Andrew Stepp reported for Operations Ministry that he had spent time in the crawl space that houses the 4302 organ pipes, some of which are in need of maintenance due to water damage.
- Gordon Marcum reported for Mission Innovation Ministry. Project Flourish has received 101 applications, 54 have moved to screening. Approximately 20 to 30 are expected to make the next step. Jan 1st start labs, March 2-5 start pitching. Fall Alpha had 48 people, 14 were non-Christians and 5 were skeptical Christians. Alpha had a great retreat to close the fall session. One person came to faith at the retreat. Matt Lee's title has been changed to Pastor of Church Planting and Innovation.
- Paul Seifert reported for the Equipping and Sending Ministry. Jimmy Myers and the Young Adults have been reaching out to the homeless by engaging them in Sunday afternoon worship services at Main Street Ministries. The Young Adults had an intergenerational Hops and Hymnsing with approximately 80 people in attendance, 40 of which were young adults. The Advent Missions Market will be in December.
- Jon Crantz reported for the Marriage and Family Ministry. Valerie Arredondo has been hired full time to work with the Women's Ministry. The committee is looking for ways to reach out to existing members who have not been seen for a while.
- Jan Smith reported for the Worship and Prayer Ministry. There has been an effort to recruit more ushers. The various choirs will be singing at Holly Hall during the spring. Cheryl indicated that the prayer requests on the Connection cards are increasing. The 10:45 service will be begin having communion by coming forward to receive the elements. Beverly Schorre gave a demonstration of how the communion bread is prepared the Saturday before communion Sunday. The next communion date will serve crackers instead of bread.

Robert Moore led a discussion on a chapter from the book entitled "To Change the World".

PASTOR'S REPORT:

- Andrew Stepp encouraged attendance November 24 in the sanctuary for the ordination and installation of Caitlin Rhodes into ECO and as Associate Pastor for Equipping and Sending at First Presbyterian Church Houston.
- Emmanuel Paulpeter will be ordained December 8 at the 11:05 service in the Grand Hall.
- The search for an Operations Director in ongoing.

CLERK'S REPORT

- A motion from the Advisory Committee was made and approved to present a slate of nominees for the Standing Committee on Nominations to be presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting in January. The nominees are: Stephanie Zamora - Elder, Al DuPont - Elder, Doug Meikle - clerk, Mary Alford, Sheila Heinle, Rebecca Turner and Tim Williamson.

- A motion was made, seconded and approved to call an Annual Congregational Meeting for Sunday, January 12, 2020.
- January 5, 2020 will be the next communion Sunday.
- The session Christmas Party will be Thursday, December 5, 2019 at Alan and Jenn Rustay's home.

There was period of prayer focused on gratitude.

Prayers were raised for the church, member concerns, ministry partners, and the city and neighbors. Communion was served by intinction by Rev. Andrew Stepp and elder Robert Moore.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23pm with a prayer by Rev. Andrew Stepp and the singing of the Doxology.

Rev. Andrew Stepp, Moderator

Robert Moore, Clerk of Session

Consent Motions:

None

Reports

Permanent Funds

Meeting was called to order by email at 10:59am on Monday, November 4th. All members were present; Chris Athon, Jane Champion, Sam Murray, Julie Harris, James Melchers, Gabriel Zamora, Jamie Hampton, Sharon Henry, Josh Kirklin and Andrew Stepp. Erin Varnell was present to represent staff.

Minutes from September 9, 2019 meeting were submitted. Motion by Sam Murray- second by Josh Kirklin - All voted in favor.

Discussion/Review/Motions

- 1) Reviewed two Seminary Applications: Motion by Sam Murray- second by Josh Kirklin - All voted in favor.
 - i. Martin Nkundeki - \$7500 scholarship from the Bentsen Fund.
 - ii. Hannah Barnes - \$1779 scholarship from the King Fund.
- 2) Discussion of request of transfer of \$2278.00 from the Music Equipment Fund to the Worship Department for payment of organ repair. Motion by Sam Murray- second by Josh Kirklin - All voted in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:43pm on Wednesday, November 6, 2019.

Marriage & Family

On December 18, 2019, the Marriage and Family Committee met from 7:30 to 8:30 AM. In attendance were Jon Crantz, Mark Potter, Stephanie Zamora, Ellen Mabry, Melissa Carbajal, and Jenn Rustay. Stacey Rockwell attended to discuss the Children's Ministry.

Recent Events

- Advent night: well attended by families. Next year will consider how to make service more family focused – this year's service had numerous choral performance that made a longer service for children. Attendance may have been affected because only a week after Thanksgiving in order to get all four Sundays of advent before Christmas.
- Dodgeball with dads – very well attended – served 90+ burgers (one per person). Many attended from Presbyterian School. One of the few “dad and kids” focused events – discussed adding more to calendar – perhaps around Easter weekend or back to school.
- Christmas Eve service – went well; discussed need for new petting zoo provider. Jenn to follow up – provided name of group used by Houston Arboretum for years for ArBOO.

Staff

Stacey discussed the members of her staff and the positive contributions they are making.

- Katie Hill: Coordinator for special events. Katie plans activities like VBS, advent night, etc. She is enthusiastic and loves to have fun with kids.
- Lindsey Colvin: Special events childcare coordinator. Lindsey ensures that if there is an event (outside of Sunday School and worship) for families, childcare is in place. She loves children and families and works to make FPC more welcoming to families. Discussed needing additional care – when families have multiple children, offering preschool care isn't sufficient. Discussed coordinating volunteer care for older kids. Discussed making the need for care more FPC staff friendly, and how to let FPC members know when care is provided.
- Stacey Franklin: Elementary Sunday School coordinator. Stacey loves children and Sunday school; focusing her work on recruiting teachers and ensuring good teaching. She is working to make sure good experience in large and small groups. Discussed how to work on outreach to kids and parents.
- Julie Robertson: Coordinator for fourth and fifth graders. Julie teaches and coordinates separate Sunday morning curriculum for tweens. She also teaches a Sunday night Bible study that is well attended. She will take students to the SuperStart conference February 13-15.
- Kelly Hebert: Stacey's part time administrative assistant. Kelly is helpful to whole ministry and ministry team.

Upcoming activities

- VBS
- Communion workshop
- Good Friday picnic and Easter activities
- End of school year activities

Equipping & Sending

Date: January 9, 2020

Committee Members: Martha Adams, Mary-Floye Federer, Jimmy Myers, Caitlin Rhodes, Paul Seifert (Chair), Catie Smith, Tanner Sykes

Note: The Committee did not meet in person in January due to scheduling issues around the re-scheduled Session meeting. Below are Ministry Updates from MPE (Mary-Floye Federer) and Young Adults (Jimmy Myers).

MINISTRY PARTNERSHIPS & ENGAGEMENT

1. *Here to Serve* – Mission service opportunities
 - We continue to work with Communications for our options to better promote our service opportunities.
 - We are strategizing how to better communicate our global vision and mission trips and planning team training for Spring.
2. *Cullen Middle School*
 - Teacher Appreciation Breakfast on the third Wed. of the month; Jan. 15 is the next scheduled event.
 - Cullen Prayer Walk on the second Wed. of the month at 6 p.m.
3. *Friends of Northside*
 - Jan. 16 - Work day with “major social media platform” whose employees from corporate will be at Friends of Northside office helping revamp outdoor areas.
4. *Engaging the Muslim World Prayer Gatherings*
 - We hope to invigorate this important time of prayer to reach more of our Covenant Partners. Prayer is even more vital now with the tensions between the US and Muslim majority countries in the Middle East. The prayer time is the third Thursday of the month from 12:00 – 12:45 p.m. in the FPC Bride’s Room. Jan. 16 is the next gathering.
5. *Middle East Partnerships*
 - Bethlehem Bible College Awareness and Fundraising Dinner at FPC on Friday, March 6, 2020
 - i. Reaching out to Holy Land trip participants and promoting to FPC congregation.
 - ii. President Jack Sara will be guest speaker along with alumnae of BBC and Middle Eastern music, food and silent auction. Will promote to the church membership.
 - iii. Jack Sara will be our guest preacher on Sun. March 8
 - Holy Land Pilgrimage and Encouragement trip May 3-15, 2020 and Oct. 4-16, 2020.
 - Christ at the Checkpoint Conference and pilgrimage trip June 3 – 14, 2020
 - FPC Women’s Ministry Vision and Encouragement trip being planned for 2020

6. *Equipping and Mobilizing Opportunities*

- State of the City (April 17-18, 2020)
 - i. Volunteers needed for the event.
 - ii. Speakers include Steve Klineberg (Fri.); Dr. Spann with UH Medical School, Kathy McGibbon with Street Grace, Doug Foshee on education system, and Cindy Wu or Molly Raney with Houston Welcomes Refugees will speak on Sat.
- Mobilizing Medical Missions Conference/M3 (Feb. 21-22, 2020) at Lakewood Church
 - i. An excellent mobilizing gathering for medical professionals. Several FPC doctors have engaged in medical mission trips after attending this conference. FPC is a sponsor of the conference.

YOUNG ADULTS

1. *Main Street:* The Young Adults did not serve the homeless in December and will no longer be serving at MSM on Sunday nights because MSM discontinued that particular ministry. This past Sunday at the Table Jimmy led a discussion with the Young Adults re: the YA plan to serve in the new year. The plan right now is to serve monthly at the MSM garden while we discern other opportunities.
2. *College Ski Trip:* Along with Abigail MacDougall, Jimmy led a group of 12 college students to Copper Mountain, in coordination with the youth group, for a ski trip and retreat. Jimmy gave one of the talks during the trip and both Jimmy and Abigail led college small groups, for guys and girls respectively. We built good relationships with the college students with the hope that they will, if they return to Houston, see a place to belong at First Presbyterian. This was, I think, the first time a college ski trip has happened, or at least the first in some time. Greatly thankful for Abigail in all she did to prepare and actualize this trip. Her relational presence absolutely essential.
3. *YA Christmas Party:* We had a great Christmas party at the Meikle's on December 10. Good, moderated, joyful fun. Hospitably included folks on the margins in a good way.
4. *Caroling with Boomers:* Because the Young Adult Sunday School finished their long journey through the Practices of the Apostles on December 15, we went on December 22 to join the Boomers Sunday School class for a time of singing Christmas carols. Great fun, and many thanks to Mary Ella Price for the invitation.
5. *Last thing to share:* Abigail prayed with a young woman on December 29th who was captivated by the Jesus story and Jesus way and wanted to become his follower. We're rejoicing that God has found yet another of his lost creatures and will now be joining us in our catechetical journey to grow in likeness to the Lord of glory.

Worship, Music and Prayer

Date: January 13, 2020

Two Communion services have been held since procedures were developed for Covenant Partners to come forward to receive Communion in all four services.

- This was a major change for the 10:45 service but most of the comments have been positive. A large part of this acceptance has likely been due to the Pastors' explanation of the theology behind the change.
- Another change implemented in all three Sanctuary services was the use of the unleavened Communion crackers including gluten-free option in place of cubes of bread that had to be cut before each service by the Communion Guild.
 - The smaller crackers are harder to pick up; the Guild will be asked to research other options, i.e., a larger size cracker.
 - One Committee members has suggested that all trays be gluten-free.
- Action on the third motion presented to the Committee regarding a plan to select and train non-elders to serve Communion is pending.

A meeting was held on January 5 to review the structure and purpose for the Committee. In attendance were Andrew Stepp, Jan Smith and Callie Paterson.

- The organization chart of the ministries under the purview of the Committee is shown below



- Callie will meet with Lija Shah and Cheryl Christie to discuss how the Committee can help them with Caring and Connections.
- A full committee meeting will be held in February to present this chart to the members who will be asked to concentrate on a specific ministry.
- Work on a prayer initiative is also pending.
- Dorian Benn and Jimmy Myers have been in discussions regarding a prayer walk around the church campus. Discussions began before the Here To Serve campaign was rolled out to the Covenant Partners with the idea that the initial walk would take place at the launch. However, the timing was problematic with all of the Advent activities and business of the season. The proposed date is currently the afternoon of February 16.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Smith

Chair of Worship, Music and Prayer

ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Monday, December 2, 2019

Attending: Jim Birchfield, Robert Moore, Chris Wolfe, Douglas Meikle, Matthew Malinsky, Marilyn MacDonald

Opening Prayer and Devotional were led by Robert Moore.

Discussion

Topics:

HTS Follow Up: Jim Birchfield gave a short follow up on the “Here to Serve” campaign. The highlight of the summary was that participation in the campaign had (by some measures) ticked upwards from the normal giving pattern. However, clearly this is a complex picture because of several competing influences in the program. Jim informed us that the campaign will remain open and also that we are moving now from the focus being the financial elements towards the objective of make “Here to Serve” a description of our way of life as a congregation.

Session Retreat – What’s Next: The AC discussed the follow up steps for the last session retreat and considered how best to move forward and prepare for the upcoming session retreat. Several themes were discussed including, “healthy rhythms of discipleship”, “how do we drive participation in our new articulation of our vision”, “what can we understand about the life of our congregation from all the data we are gathering”.

Building Committee Motion: The advisory council considered a motion authorizing the building committee to move ahead with a portion of its work. The motion wording was approved for a vote of the full session.

2019 Upcoming Session Meetings & Important Dates

January 6th, 2020 – Advisory Council

January 15th, 2020 – Board of Trustees Meeting

January 19th, 2020 – Congregational Meeting

January 21st, 2012 – Session Meeting

Closing Prayer: Jim Birchfield closed the meeting in prayer.