

SESSION AGENDA (Updated)
Tuesday, March 23, 2021
Meeting In Person
6:00 p.m.

Item	Presenter
Opening Devotional & Prayer	All (Birchfield)
Omnibus Motion Minutes Consent Motions	Birchfield
Finance Report	Malinsky
Old Business HTS 2.0 Proposal Sunday Morning TF Report	Birchfield/Brents Meikle
New Business	
Pastor's Report	Birchfield
Clerk's Report	Wolfe
Closing Prayers	

2021 Upcoming Session Meetings & Important Dates

Session Meeting – Tuesday, April 20, 2021
Session Meeting – Tuesday, May 18, 2021

**MINUTES OF THE SESSION
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON, TEXAS
March 2, 2021**

The March Stated Meeting of the Session began at 6:00pm by a zoom conference, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a quorum present. Dr. Jim Birchfield called the meeting to order and Tanner Sykes opened the meeting with a devotional and 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:

- Moved that the submitted Session Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021 be approved.
- The Marriage and Family Committee moves that the session approve providing our First Presbyterian Church covenant partners with a unique opportunity to worship, reflect, reconnect, and build community in a beautiful, outdoor setting at First Presbyterian Church's 2021 trip to Mo Ranch on July 8-11, 2021.
- The Operations Committee moves that Session elect Steve Oldham to serve a two-year term as treasurer, beginning June 1, 2021, providing a three month overlap for training with the current treasurer.
- The Operations Committee moves that the Session approve, the following:
 - 1) An expenditure not to exceed \$511,180 for the following deferred maintenance projects:
 - a) Complete exterior woodwork repair and repaint / \$307,565.
 - b) Replacement of all interior light bulbs with LED bulbs / \$70,493.
 - c) Replacement of all basement sump pumps / \$133,122.
- The Operations Committee moves that the funding for the items above come from: (i) the remaining balance in the Building Maintenance Fund, with a projected balance of \$250,000, following the previously approved roof replacement at 5100 Travis, and (ii) the remainder to be paid from the Church Facility Maintenance Fund, which, as of December 31, 2020, has a balance of \$968,738.80.

Old Business:

Grand Hall, Contemporary Worship and Children's Sunday School Update: Andrew Stepp reported that due to the freeze, the repairs to the Grand Hall floor were delayed two weeks. The first Sunday of worship in the Grand Hall will be March 21, 2021. Children's Sunday School will begin on Palm Sunday.

Prayer Initiative: Callie Paterson reviewed the Prayer Plan Proposal which had been presented in December.

A motion was made and approved receiving and endorsing the detailed report of the Prayer Plan Proposal for First Presbyterian Church.

Young Adult Proposal: Melaney Dearden gave an update on the Young Adult Ministry Task Force recommendations, calling for a new Young Adult Pastor whose purpose is to clearly define the ministry plan, goals, outreach ideas, mentoring plan, and overall strategy to best seamlessly connect the Young Adult and Youth population (ages 12-30) into the greater discipleship path of FPC's cradle to grave ministries. A motion was made and after discussion approved accepting the recommendation to create and fill the position responsible for the Young Adult and Youth Ministry for those aged.

Finance: Matt Malinsky reported that the General Summary-giving Income was nicely up in January (\$1200K Giving).

Mo Ranch Proposal: Jon Crantz reported on the guidelines for attendance at Mo Ranch. A motion was made and after discussion approved going forward with plans to go to Mo Ranch, but suggesting obtaining advice from the Medical Advisory Group on how we can make this event as safe as possible for attendees.

NEW BUSINESS:

Long Range Planning Update and Budget Discussion: Doug Meikle presented a detailed power point on the updates, with corresponding proposed next fiscal year budget, for the Long-Range Planning Program. Our mission does not change, and our posture does not change, but our approach to ministry must change to adapt to a changing world. With endorsement from the Advisory Council, after discussion, based on the work completed by staff, along with the consultation and input of Session, and recognizing prior approvals of Session, the following motions were adopted:

1. Session approved a preliminary \$7.4 million operating budget target for 21/22 and instructs detailed review by the appropriate Session committees.
2. Session approved the flatter, more accountable organizational structure presented.
3. Session approved the setup of two short term task forces.
 - a. A Governance “The Task Force” will make recommendation on changes to our committee structure in response to the ministry organization.
 - b. A Sunday Morning “Task Force” will make a recommendation for the Sunday morning schedule.
4. Session approved the “Here to Serve 2.0” priorities as listed.
 - a. Media upgrades Grand Hall, Fellowship Hall, and Sanctuary. (Approved/Complete)
 - b. Welcoming and gathering spaces for children, youth, and young adults. (Approved/Paused)
 - c. Maintenance: Building systems renovation, repairs, and upgrades.
 - d. Explore the creation of “welcome spaces, specifically for worship:
 - i. Main Sanctuary Narthex Expansion
 - ii. Palm Court Renovation
 - e. Place people into worship: signage and renovation of routes to worship, complete campus enhancement commitments to Museum of Fine Arts.
 - f. Explore the establishment “off campus” locations – for off campus ministries:
 - i. Evangelism, Alpha, Movies and Theology, etc.
 - ii. “Faith and Work”

Pastor’s Report: Jim Birchfield reported that Governor Greg Abbott has released the Texas state mandatory requirements for wearing face masks. The Medical Team will review how First Presbyterian Church will look moving forward with this new decision.

Clerk’s Report: Chris Wolfe reported that a team will be formed to study our response to a bill passed by the House of Representatives restricting Religious Freedom.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm with prayer by Caitlin Rhodes.

Rev. Jim Birchfield, Moderator

Chris Wolfe, Clerk of Session

Consent Motions

The Operations Committee has approved by unanimous consent a motion to request that Session approve the grants coming from the Permanent Funds Team that are listed below that exceed \$10,000.

Grant Applicant	NEED	Approved Amount	GRANT
Amazing Place	expansion of the Savvy Program	\$5,000	Ricks
CanCare	expand program to more seniors in need through the training and recruiting of volunteers and building better relationships between senior living communities	\$0	
Galveston Urban Ministries	architectural Master Plan for 12,800 sq ft retreat and training center being built in Galveston	\$15,000	Ricks
Generation One	upgrade early education classrooms to create trauma-informed learning environments for social/emotional skills and wellness.	\$23,500	Ricks
Our Daughters House		\$0	
Pfunanane	Purchase of a new van for ministry	\$12,500	Ricks: \$1428; Other: \$9117; Estill \$1955
Plant with Purpose	construction of 25 cisterns in Oaxaca and Chiapas	\$12,500	Other
SEARCH	early childhood education program at the House of Tiny Treasurers (HTT)	\$3,000	Estill
Bible Society of Jordan	Setup of fencing and utilities at new youth camp	\$15,000	Other
The Summer Institute	Funding of summer Bible Instructor and meals	\$9,000	Ricks
Treasure in Clay International	Purchase of a new vehicle for ministry	\$0	
Wolfe and Wine, LLC (DBA City Cellars HTX)	feed people in need as well as healthcare workers. This grant will allow them to feed 2000 more people	\$0	
	TOTAL	\$95,500	

Reports

Operations

March 11, 2021

- 1) **Members present:** Tiffany Melchers, Al DuPont, Amy Winstead
- 2) **Members absent:** Henry Humphries, Merrie Davis, Andrew Stepp, Jamie Hampton
- 3) **Staff & Others present:** Hunter Johnson, Debbie Thompson, Steve King
- 4) **Opening Prayer and Devotional** (Hunter Johnson)
- 5) **Facilities Ministry Team Report** (Hunter Johnson)

Facilities meeting

- Painting resumes in the Grand Hall; there is an expectation that the Contemporary Service will return to the Grand Hall on March 28
- Damage has occurred in the back wall of the Sanctuary as a result of the installation of new video cameras and their wiring
- Still working to create a comprehensive Maintenance Budget...about another month needed for completion
- An outside firm is interviewing our staff to assess current maintenance procedures...knowledge could provide insight into streamlining and updating our current procedures

IT Ministry Team

- No update

Building Committee

- No update

- 6) **Permanent Funds Ministry Team Report** (Jamie Hampton)
 - a. Gift of \$200,000 was given to FPC under the auspices of the Bonner Fund.
 - b. Operations Committee unanimously approved the grants that came from the Permanent Fund Ministry Team that were less than or equal to \$10,000.
 - c. A Consent Motion is enclosed for Session approval of the Permanent Fund Ministry Team grants which exceed \$10,000.
- 7) **Finance Report** (Hunter)
 - a. February an anomaly for financial reporting...only three Sundays, FPC closed for one week
 - b. Continuing efforts to revamp financial reporting
 - c. Operations Committee has asked (thru Hunter Johnson) that the Financial Committee review two accounts and recommend a disposition...Basics Class Radio Account has a balance of \$3400...Ricks Memorial Garden Account has a negative balance of \$5400.
 - d. The position formerly occupied by Steve Burns has been eliminated to aid in streamlining.

February 28, 2021

Current Year Comparison to Budget and Prior Year - Month

General Fund	CY		Budget	PY	PY
	Actual	Budget	Var	Actual	Var
Income	\$ 259	\$ 646	\$ 387	\$ 992	\$ 357
Expenses	(477)	(689)	212	(594)	(64)
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (218)	\$ 43	\$ (175)	\$ 398	\$ 293

Current Year Comparison to Budget and Prior Year - Year-To-Date

	CY		Budget	PY	PY
	Actual	Budget	Var	Actual	Var
Income	\$ 7,967	\$ 5,922	\$ 2,045	\$ 6,070	\$ 1,897
Expenses	(5,165)	(5,773)	608	(5,937)	772
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 2,802	\$ 149	\$ 1,437	\$ 133	\$ 2,669

Liquidity - Cash Balances

Cash in Bank	\$6,999
Less: Temporary Restricted Accounts	(897)
Less: Memorial Wall Garden Fund	(78)
From (To) PFM/Capital	0
 Capital Fund Cash Balance	 \$6,024

- **Open Discussion**

- None

8) Adjourn Meeting with Prayer (Tiffany Melchers)

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 11, 2021

Equipping & Sending

Date: March 9, 2021

Time: 11 – noon

Location: Zoom

Present: Mary-Floye Federer, Martha Lawler (E&S chair), Abigail MacDougall, Caitlin Rhodes, Sara Robertson, Catie Smith, and Tanner Sykes

I. Opening prayer - Martha Lawler and devotional – Sara Robertson

II. Reports

For details and additional information, see the three attached ministry reports which were given to E&S committee members prior to the meeting. As requested by Martha, the reports were brief.

- a. Mary-Floye Federer (Ministry Partnerships and Engagement)
Mary-Floye and Lea are discussing offering local mission opportunities (Crossover Houston type events) and thinking about creating an email list to contact FPC covenant partners about ministry opportunities and events.
- b. Abigail MacDougall (Young Adults)
The Table participants are engaged online in the study of Mark. New participants are joining.
- c. Catie Smith (Discipleship)
There is good feedback to the current series, Rediscovering the Cross and the discipleship resources on prayer practices. Ice storm Uri provided the opportunity to continue discussing justice and to serve neighbors and the vulnerable.

Study guides will be provided until June 20 on the Acts sermon series beginning after Easter. Study guides will resume being offered in August.

Work continues developing Discipleship pathways.

d. Caitlin Rhodes (Pastor)

III. Discussion

1. How can the committee better serve the church? This involves equipping, but must also focus on sending. What do the pathways of discipleship look like? Including, *sending*? Caitlin and Catie continue to work on the pathways to Discipleship discussed in our October 2020 meeting. The four Discipleship pathways to serve those at different stages in their walk: Exploring Christianity, Growing in Christ, Close to Christ and Mature Christ-centered. Ways to serve will be a component of each pathway.

2. Once equipped, how do we help with the *sending* aspect? Encourage and engage covenant partners to serve within the church and with other ministry partners. Communicate with other ministries to update volunteer opportunities. Engage shepherding elders who are not currently on the Session. More discussion to follow.

Offer an assessment of spiritual gifts, followed by a personal discussion/guide to help the person choose where to serve. This will not be another the APEST test.

3. Discussion of upcoming changes and role of the E & S Committee
Men's Ministry – need for a man to be involved in planning.

4. A very important component of Equipping & Sending is Ministry Partnerships and Engagement (Missions), led by Director Mary-Floye Federer. The committee feels a great loss as Missions will transfer to Evangelism pillar. We thanked Mary-Floye and Lea Byrd for their tremendous work and expressed our continued support through the transition and beyond. We need to keep current on volunteer opportunities for covenant partners, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between missions and engagement.

IV. Mo Ranch – July 8-11. Speaker is Jim Singleton.
Safety protocols being used now are the model for Mo Ranch.
Keeping the cost to attend affordable and making scholarships available.

V. Next meetings:
April 13, 2021 – Tanner Sykes devotion
May 11, 2021

VI. Closing prayer - Catie Smith

Respectfully submitted
Martha Lawler

Equipping and Sending

Ministry Partnerships and Engagement/Missions

March 2021 Report

MIT Director's Report – Mary-Floye Federer

- Finance update – We continue to be well within our budget. Regarding 550 received gifts, we will be requesting checks for those ministries with revenue/gifts that have not yet been released. We are working with the Finance office to give us a breakdown of the Designated Mission accounts to request.

With the new budget process soon to begin for 2021-2022 fiscal year. In preparation, we are sending out the Ministry Partner Update/Evaluation Form to all partners. The form asks for updates on ministry, vision, challenges and recent financials.

550 General mission support account- as of 2/28/21, we have \$75,043.62 in the remaining available balance. This account which represents contributions from members as well as several larger allocations from previous fiscal years. The funds in this account allow MIT to respond to special requests or emergency needs such as initial COVID response and most recently Winter Storm response allocations to partners.

- Ministry updates –
 - i. FHH: continue to serve Fire Houses 16 and 46, most recently in March sending Burger IM to Fire House 46 near Cullen MS. The FHH team is feeling called to also encourage those partners working hard to respond to the emergency needs caused by the Winter Storm. Discerning which partners that are working so hard for Winter Response to send cookies and notes to later in March/early April.
 - ii. Cullen Middle School: Cullen is working hard to encourage students to be back on campus. This spring, they have 100 students on campus and the rest are virtual. Cullen reached out to us to see if we could help in encouraging the students achieving during this unusual time. FPC is providing lunch for 30 students who are doing well out of 100 passing on campus! The following Friday, we are providing cupcakes for all 100 students on campus.
 - iii. Mission/Vision trips: Communicating with global partners to discern their thoughts on how to resume any travel. It is all contingent on COVID and when vaccines are received. The postponed Holy Land Pilgrimages from 2020 will not be resumed until 2022.
 - iv. Website: Our efforts with Communications to have an updated mission page are progressing. Whitney has been doing the partner information transfer to the new webpage; Lea is faithfully providing refreshed information.
 - v. Mobilizing/Equipping Opportunities: *Mobilizing Medical Missions/M3 Conference* - We continue to encourage our medical professionals as well as non-medical to take advantage of the M3 Conference which is in Houston and FPC has been a sponsor since the beginning. This is a tremendous mobilizing tool to engage medical professionals and others in missions. FPC has many of our doctors who attend and invite their colleagues. This year due to Covid, the M3 is virtual. Originally scheduled to be held during the Winter Storm, the M3 is this weekend, March 5-6.
- FPC Winter Storm Response – As soon as power returned on Wed night and the immediate crisis was over, we began drafting our response plan for the winter storm, utilizing the Disaster page on the website. Attack Poverty was responding from the beginning of the storm on Monday to assist people in their communities. Immediate needs for volunteers were promoted that included KidsMeals, a ministry that serves many of our ministry partners' children, Food Bank, and Blood Bank. I reached out to our different partners to check on them. Forge was serving as a Warming Center until they lost power. We were on several Houston Responds calls as they were gathering needs and volunteer opportunities in our Central Coalition. Steve Winstead has been on the calls as our Disaster Coordinator.

We are once again collaborating with Attack Poverty, Main Street Ministries and Houston Responds as our priority response partners. Attack Poverty is doing phenomenal work responding to this Winter Storm crisis, and Friends of Northside is our relational, engaged community with AP. MSM has agreed to again allow referrals from Ministry partners and their clientele since they already have the systems in place to vet and process these needs. MIT approved emergency Winter

Storm response donations of \$7500 to Attack Poverty and \$7500 to MSM from our 550 General Mission Support account.

- 415 COVID Response Funds - \$18,000 remains in our Covid Response Funds. We are intentionally listening for other needs in our community related to the Pandemic. The pandemic and crisis like the Winter Storm have much overlap since pandemic already put people in precarious positions and the storm for example, may have sent people into crisis. The distribution of these budgeted funds is determined by Pastor Caitlin, Becca and Mary Floye. To review, allocations have been made in fiscal year 20-21 to the following:

Musalaha - \$5000
Bridge Africa - \$2500
Free Indeed Ministries - \$15,000
Africa Renewal Ministries - \$10,000
FHH Transfer - \$2000

Save the Dates:

- Mobilizing Medical Mission/M3 - Rescheduled – March 5-6, 2021
- Nehemiah Virtual Celebration Dinner – March 11, 2021
- TxCCDN “Learners Book Club” – starting April 27, 2021
- TxCCDN *No Need Among You* Annual Conference – Oct. 6-8, 2021 at FPC

Equipping & Sending

Ministry Update – March 2021

DISCIPLESHIP

1. *Rediscovering the Cross: Easter/Lenten Series*

- Began January 21st and concludes East Sunday, April 4th, 2021
- Small Groups are using guides based on the sermons- we have received great feedback thus far.
- The storm allowed for an opportunity to continue discussing justice, particularly considering loving our neighbors and reaching out to the vulnerable after the storm.

2. *Small Groups*

- Small Groups continue to meet and give us great feedback on the guides and the series.
- The next sermon series will begin after Easter. We will be going through the book of Acts. We plan to offer small group guides for the entirety of this series, which will end beginning of July.
- We will then encourage groups to take a break the month of July.

3. *Sunday Schools*

- Sunday Schools still have the option to meet over Zoom. As of now, no Sunday Schools are permitted to meet on campus during the Sunday worship hour.

4. Equipping Seminars

- Marriage Beginnings will be offered April 11th through May 16th.
- Facilitated by Alan and Claudia Stewart with various teachers.
- Planning to meet on campus Sunday evenings

5. Lent Discipleship Resources (In congruence with Sermon Series *Rediscovering the Cross*): Begins February 21st

- What is currently being offered
 - Each Sunday, we release a ten-minute podcast to guide the FPC Family through the prayer practice for that week. Think of this as a guided prayer experience. We hope people will repeat the practice throughout the week—as the forms become more familiar, people might find them even more restful and restorative. To learn more about each practice, people can follow along on the Growing in Faith with FPC Facebook page or visit fpchouston.org/lent.
- We have created an abridged companion guide to the weekly prayer practice. People can tuck this into their Bible or anywhere they will see it daily and be reminded to listen to the podcast and engage that week's practice. This abridged companion guide was mailed to the FPC family the week of February 14th.
- Along with the guided prayer experience, we have two other opportunities for people to connect with our church family during this season.
 - First: our Encouragement Emails, where others will share their experience of practicing each week's guided prayer (2-3 emails will be sent a week).
 - Second, a Discipleship Group (D-Group) was formed for people who desired to practice and debrief their prayer time each week together. We have received great feedback thus far from this group.

Prayer Requests

- **That the FPC family would practice and meet Jesus more personally throughout the Lenten experience.**
- **That those disconnected to the FPC community would reach out to join a small group or D-Group in the coming weeks.**
- **That the Lord would guide the Discipleship Department in a vision for the August and fall discipleship offerings.**

Evangelism Session Report

March 3rd, 2021

1. Updates:

- a. We have started a Med Center Gospel Conversations Task Force (MCGCTF) to find ways to engage with the Med Center for the sake of the Gospel following are the people in this Task Force - Melissa Carbajal, George Mallory, Rachael Martin, Manish Shah, Eric Smith, Jan Smith, and Stephanie Zamora.
- b. Gospel Conversations Learning group is a place where we coach FPC members to help them find non-anxious and winsome ways to share the Gospel within their circles of influence (pic below). The goal of this group is to create a culture of Gospel sharing withing FPC.

- c. Fall Zoom Alpha successfully completed with 26 participants, 7 non-Christians, 5 Christians-but-searching. We are very excited for this Alpha class, there is a lot of openness. We have some non-FPC young adults attending this, which can bring more people into FPC YA community (pic below). Doug Red prayed to commit his life to Jesus at the Alpha Retreat.
- d. We continue the Movie group, Taco Socials and the Book group this month. 4 of the non-Christians at Alpha came from the Movie and Ted Talk groups.
- e. We restarted the Ted Talk Discussion group this year to see if we can build traction on zoom with Ted Talk group. We had 10 people attending, which is the most for the Ted Talk on Zoom yet. We even had a person join from Japan.
- f. We restarted the outdoor, socially distant, Taco Socials, we had 18 people come (Pic below), of which 7 were new. We invited someone walking in the park to join us, and that person connected with the community.
- g. Prayer: Prayer and Evangelism are two sides of the same coin.

2. Prayer Requests:

- a. For new faith journeys to be started from this Alpha starting right after Easter.

3. Highlights for Session:

- a. Med Center Gospel Conversations Task Force (See above for details)
- b. Gospel Conversations Learning Group (see above for details)

Gospel Conversations Learning Group:



Marriage & Family

(3/9/21)

Members Present: Mark Potter, Jon Crantz, Jenn Rustay, Melaney Derden, elder-elect Roby Norvell; congregational members: Melissa Carbajal and Ellen Mabry; Staff: Ryan Born and Ali Silverman
Minutes by Melaney as edited by Mark

Focus of meeting was on our Youth Ministry and Ryan Born and Ali Silverman joined our call to give updates.

Updates on Youth Ministry:

Sunday School going well, meeting in-person in the building.

Small groups also going well - - outside, social distanced, masked.

Oakdale Discipleship Program for juniors and seniors is smaller this year, but also going well as the kids are diving deeper into what it means to be a disciple of Christ and further...to make them disciples of Christ. They are studying 1 Peter. Organized in small groups of 3-4 youth with a leader.

General excitement building about the summer program and hopeful loosening of some restrictions, in particular whether we can start having meals at Small Groups again. Jon said he would check with Robert Moore on the MAG to verify ability to do so.

UPDATE 3/14/21 : Food approved for small groups

Staff updates:

Grace Homeyer returned to Uganda to teach in her former school, so Harper Young is filling in as MS Girls Associate Director. Looking for a full-time person and interviewing two candidates currently.

Gigi Hanna will be stepping into the HS Girls Leader role in May and Ali will be doing the youth coordinator/administrator role full-time (please verify this, Jon)

We have hired 8 college interns for the summer program, 4 high school and 4 middle school. Will Derden will be a part-time middle school intern and part-time Youth Worship Leader intern. So excited to have the prior youth group members come back and lead and disciple our kids this summer!

Melissa Carbajal mentioned that everyone can be vaccinated now and suggested if youth staff want to get vaccinated, for anyone who needs/wants COVID vaccine, they are opening up for nearly anyone who wants one. NRG Mass Vaccine Site: 832-393-4301; TCH is offering vaccines for 16-18 year olds. Two youth staff members have already been vaccinated! Jon and Ryan will discuss including this information in our parent emails. Stephanie to provide marketing info re: the rationale and data to include in the emails.

The Dayspring Youth Website has been updated with all weekly small group lessons, quiet time lessons, summer videos. Grace H. created the website and transferred the knowledge and skills to the other youth staff to maintain the website.

Jenn discussed the plan to post Sunday School lessons and talks on the Dayspring.

Ryan said he would check with the media team to see what we need to do to be able to record and post lessons on the Dayspring.

Summer Plans:

Mission Trips were cancelled due to the nature of Mission Trips being so large with so much hands-on contact with those we serve. Jenn asked about having local Mission Days in light of not having the Mission Trips this summer. Ryan responded that he is going to definitely plan these throughout the summer.

Adventure Trips: 2 High School trips planned (1 Fr/Soph, 1 Jr/Sr) to remote locations (Zion Natl Park and Rocky Mountain Natl Park on flights for outbound and taking buses back; Middle School Adventure Trip will just be one trip to Buena Vista, Colo. taking buses both ways)

Mo Ranch - Students are super excited to return!

Private and public schools get out for the summer at different times this year due to Covid, causing some challenges with when to start the summer program as HISD doesn't release students until June 11.

8th grade retreat being planned for mid-summer as a post-confirmation celebration as we weren't able to have the regular confirmation retreat this year.

Other smaller retreats being planned as well for summer.

Confirmation:

Ryan said confirmation is going really well with good attendance and participation. The kids are showing real openness in discussions and excitement for discipleship. Jenn mentioned how impactful the confirmation program has been on her middle school son and encouraged staff to next year have a real recruiting/marketing effort to get as many kids be part of the program, especially at Pres School. 18 in the program this year total.

Confirmation Sunday is May 3. April 11 we will have a meet 'n greet between confirmands and elders so we can encourage them in their faith.

Spring Break:

Nothing specifically scheduled for youth during the break, but Ryan said he would send out an email to let parents know the youth staff will be in town and available to meet with kids and if enough kids are in town, to plan something spontaneous.

FPC Worship, Music and Prayer Ministry Committee Report March 23, 2021

Scheduling challenges dictate that the Worship, Music, and Prayer Committee meeting take place after the session meeting this month. The committee will meet on Wednesday, March 24. Included in this report are updates on the ministry.

Worship and Music: The contemporary service will (finally) return to the Grand Hall on Sunday morning, March 28. That means that the service will return to its Sunday morning time slot of 10:45am. It also will be livestreamed. A full slate of Holy Week/Easter services that includes services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Resurrection Sunday will be offered.

Caring: Lay leaders Shikha Hansen and Ann Smith, with support from Lija Shah, launched a DivorceCare support group earlier this month. Lija is working with lay leader Mikki Edwards to develop a training program for the Stephen Ministry that will begin in the fall. As is the custom

during Lent, volunteers are delivering flowers to Adult Plus covenant partners who are confined to their homes or living in retirement homes. The Caring Ministry will develop another video, similar to the one that was aired in December, that engages the Adult Plus community. The new video will be released in May.

Connections: Cheryl Christie initiated the "**Calling to Connect**" project. Since the pandemic has lasted longer than a year, there is growing concern regarding those who have not had ongoing community within the church. With Easter soon approaching, this time is perfect for the following two-fold goal:

1. To check on the well-being of covenant partners and attendees
2. Invite the person or family to an Easter service (either in-person worship or online.).

Easter is a celebratory time when we can rejoice that we have not only been saved from death and destruction, but also we have been saved for a relationship with Christ and for a relationship with one another in Christ. "Calling to Connect" reminds us of this special covenant partnership that we share in this local body of believers.

Method:

Each ministry has been given a list of people from a decade (or a list of attendees) and a suggested script to utilize when calling. Ministry pastors, elders, staff, and volunteers are encouraged to be a part of this endeavor so that the calling list is divided into manageable numbers. Elders who would like to participate in this project should contact Cheryl Christie at cchristie@fpchouston.org. Before Easter Sunday arrives, we hope to reach the majority of our covenant partners and attendees who range in age from 20 to 59. The Caring Ministry did an excellent job of reaching out to those 60+ earlier in the pandemic.

During the course of the conversation, we hope to check in with people to see how they are doing since the pandemic began. Furthermore, we will offer to pray for them and will invite them to one of our many Easter services.

Connections hosted an **Explore FPC** class on Saturday, February 6, 2021. Joining Day was moved to Sunday, February 28, which was a week later than the original date due to the inclement weather. Nine people became covenant partners. A slide show, which presented these new members, was shown in the traditional and contemporary services on Joining Day. While only nine people became new covenant partners, we praise God that we have not had to cancel an Explore FPC class since the pandemic began. God has graciously blessed us with new people each quarter.

Respectfully submitted,

Callie Paterson

2020-2021 Chair of Worship, Music and Prayer Ministry Committee

ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

[Via Zoom]

3:00 p.m.

Advisory Council meeting by ZOOM

Attendees: Barnes, Birchfield, Brents, Malinsky, Meikle, Rustay, Stepp, Wolfe

Opening Prayer and Devotional Item-Brents

Discussion Topics

A. Finance Report-Stepp/Malinsky

February giving was down due to a short month that ended on a Sunday (not a bank day) and a serious ice storm. (\$259K Giving,) Expenses were also down \$477K in Feb, lower than the projected \$689K. However, the first week in March was good and made up for all of February. Cash in Bank is \$6024K net of designated funds. We are tracking on budget and have some funds left over for HTS. One note was that Facilities had a missing invoice from a main vendor which will show up later. The HTS dashboard is updated as of February 28, 2021 with expected giving predicted at \$24,300,000 through December of 2021.

B. Long Range Planning Update-Stepp, Meikle

Reported that the Session meeting went well and now they are in the nuts and bolts of budget planning with staff and the ministry committees. They will present a more formulated plan to Session with a realistic budget and how ministries fit and work together. The Sunday task force will be led by Meikle and the Governance task force will be led by Wolfe and will begin meetings shortly.

C. HTS 2.0 update-Birchfield

Still trying to get the numbers updated for any existing and contemplated projects. Need to get to the congregation with direction and how to get there. Two main issues are campus maintenance and improvement and how to handle strategic assets.

D. Building Update -Brents -more extensive report to come from Trustees

1. **Basement, 1st 2nd floors**-Bids have come back with good construction pricing that was \$300K lower than expected due to post Covid competitive bid process. Expect about six months to finish. Working with Hunter to look at any reasonable updates to existing first floor classrooms to bring them up to date. The original Session approved amount of \$4.2MM included furnishings, etc. Will leave that main amount the same for now to allow for contingencies.
2. **HTS 2.0**- Will come to Session with a draft letter of what has been finished, what is left to do on projects, what has been approved and remaining strategy for looking at priorities. Meeting planned for March 24.
3. **Clarification of wording**-The \$1MM concept is not mandatory, but is designed to be a way to handle cash flow timing for the operating budget. The Construction Budget has a line of credit already established. This is different.

Pastor's Report

Birchfield/Stepp

- A. **Birchfield-Session.** Zoom meetings with 40 are difficult. Plan to have the next meeting in person in a large room with masks at 6:00pm to get back into our regular routine. More info to follow. Covid restrictions will be gradually lifted as appropriate.

- B. MAG- Medical Advisory Group.** Manish Shah is stepping down as head due to work load. Robert Moore will be the chair. Pew cushions are returning. Capacity will be gradually increased in the sanctuary. Masks still required. They will keep us up to date on protocol.
- C. March 21-** will have some sort of commemorative time about Covid. Balancing celebration and price paid.
- D. Celebration** of some kind in April/May to do something outside. Maybe a bigger one in Aug-Oct once we are on the “other side”.
- E. Worship leader-**Stepp gave an update on the task force looking for a new worship pastor/director. TF members are Jan Smith, Jeff High, Robert Moore and John Going.
- F. Grand Hall Floor-** Was planned for March 7, but the arctic blast caused 10 days of lost work. New time planned for March 28.

Clerk’s Report

Wolfe

Profound Gratitude-Wolfe expressed excitement for wrapping up the pandemic. New covenant partners are joining, babies are being baptized, the gospel is being preached, finances are in good shape and MO RANCH is coming! Dates: July 8-11, 2021. Young Adult task force will be moving ahead.

Trustee’s Update

Brents

- A. Dale Avenue-** Brought in \$161K in revenue to the church. Had some renovations last year required by the City of Houston. Doug asked for us to find out the capital value of the Dale Avenue properties.
- B. Bonner Properties-**Had a slight hiccup with title issue on one of the properties. Working on getting it figured out. Sold one and money is at TPF in the Bonner fund.
- C. Mulch field-**Working with Presbyterian School to swap usage of the “mulch field” to trade with the future grassed area of Oakdale. The brick wall needs to be addressed.

Closing Prayer

Meikle

Valley of Vision prayer “True Religion”

Adjourned 4:06pm

2020/2021 Upcoming Session Meetings & Important Dates

Session meeting – Tuesday, March 23, 2021
 AC Meeting – Tuesday, April 13, 2021
 Session meeting – Tuesday, April 20, 2021
 AC Meeting – Tuesday, May 11, 2021
 Session Meeting – May 18, 2021

AC	Devotion	Closing Prayer
April	Malinsky	Wolfe
May	Rustay	Birchfield

Respectfully submitted,
 Martha Barnes, Clerk 2023