

**SESSION AGENDA**  
**Tuesday, October 19, 2021**  
**LC181 (In Person)**  
**5:30 p.m. (Includes Dinner)**

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Presenter</u></b>
<b>Opening Devotional &amp; Prayer</b>	Woodard
<b>Omnibus Motion</b> Minutes Consent Motions	Birchfield
<b>Committee Reports &amp; Updates</b> Finance Report Construction/Remodel Update Pastor's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance Model Transition</li><li>• ECO National Gathering – 1/31 to 2/3 (Dallas)</li><li>• FPC Attendance Trends</li></ul>	Oldham Johnson Birchfield
<b>Old Business</b> Transition Team Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senior Pastor "Opportunity Profile"</li></ul> Church Mission Priority Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Theology of Worship</li><li>• Missional (Forward &amp; Outward)</li><li>• Formation (Discipleship for a New Generation)</li><li>• Transformative Community</li></ul>	Hutcheson Stepp
<b>New Business</b>	
<b>Prayer</b>	All
<b>Communion &amp; Closing Prayer</b>	Lee

**2021 Upcoming Session Meetings & Important Dates**

November Session Meeting – Tuesday, November 16

Governance "Mini Retreat" – Tuesday, December 7

- Special Guest: Dana Allin

**Session Christmas Party (Youth House) – Friday, December 10**

**MINUTES OF THE SESSION**  
**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON, TEXAS**  
**September 21, 2021**

The September Stated Meeting of the Session began at 6:00pm in LC181 Dr. Jim Birchfield called the meeting to order with a quorum present and Al DuPont opened the meeting with a devotional and prayer.

Omnibus Motions:

The following omnibus motion, provided to Session in advance of the meeting, was duly adopted:

Resolved, that the submitted Session Meeting Minutes August 24, 2021, be approved with the addition of Tanner Sykes to the Governance Task Force member list.

Committee Reports:

Finance:

Steve Oldham

The financial outlook continues to look good. August was a strong month, and we are ahead of the year-to-date projection. Jon Crantz offered a prayer of thanksgiving for our generous congregation.

Construction /Remodel Update:

Hunter Johnson

- The Youth House on Pinedale is nearing completion with fencing and landscaping.
- The three-floor construction project should be completed by December.
- Narthex renovation should be completed by December
- Children's area should be completed by December.
- Palm Court should be completed by December.

Signage and Wayfinding:

Kent Woodard

The interior and exterior signage has been installed. The committee is now waiting for the museum's proposed signage and Way Finding as it relates to the museum and First Presbyterian Church's mutual interests and benefit. Signage covered both the Glassell and Kinder Garages, interiors, elevators, and entry/exit ways. Tom Bents is working on the design for the back wall. The museum will pay \$175,000 towards the construction of the wall.

Pastor's Report:

Andrew Stepp

- Matt Lee has been asked, and has agreed, to be the Director of Church Planting Residency for Houston Church Planting Network. Rev. Lee will continue to work part time with First Presbyterian Church planting also.
- Emmanuel Paulpeter will pick up aspects of Matt's current position.

Jim Birchfield

- Presbyterian School has withdrawn its offer for the purchase of land from the church. The school prefers to invest in the alignment of the relationship of First Presbyterian Church/Presbyterian School and to develop together what that relationship should look like.
- The church is now in the transitional period for implementing the new Governance Model. This model is governed by the Governance Policies and Procedures Manual, a living document to be revised, if needed, as the new model is used. By December the current session committees will be dissolved. All session elders will step down from their current committees during this transition process.
- Jim Birchfield and the clerks of session are redesigning the session meetings.
- Tuesday, December 7 will be a mini session retreat with Dana Allin.

- Sunday, October 3 is a Breakfast, a Ministry Fair, and the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- A motion was made and approved to endorse the following nominations for the slate of the Pastor Nominating Committee:
  - Cindy Cook
  - Chris Derden (co-chair)*
  - Dade Dowdle (Ruling Elder)
  - Sabrina Espinoza
  - Houghton Hutcheson (Ruling Elder)
  - Janet Lionberger (co-chair)*
  - James Melcher
  - Sam Murray
  - Fred Robertson
  - Claudia Stewart
  - Mary Wassef
- Changes have been made, with the help of Dan Wagner, Worship and Music Director, and the Media Team to improve the quality of the sound of the music on the TV worship service.

Clerk's Report:

Doug Meikle

- Pastoral transition team update:
  - Dingman Company has been hired as the search consultant.
  - The Opportunity Profile is being completed and will be presented at the next session meeting for approval.
  - The Pastor Nominating Committee may only alter the "Opportunity Profile" in consultation with the Session.
  - The Pastor Nominating Committee will regularly report progress to Session within the necessary boundaries of confidentiality.
  - The current Senior Pastor is engaged in the process on a limited basis.
- Session Retreat: the session dinner on Friday night is for fun and fellowship. The session retreat on Saturday will focus on potential church priorities over the coming years.
- A motion was made and approved by an email vote September 9, 2021, that the session endorse the following slate of proposed candidates for the Officer Nominating Committee:
  - Matt Corbett
  - Ann Petty
  - Jared Spicer
  - Hailey Benningfield
  - Linda Moore
  - Gabe Zamora
  - Leslie King
  - Ken Dunek
  - Allen Rustay
- A motion was made and approved by an email vote September 9, 2021, that the session endorse the following slate of Proposed Elders:
  - Class of 2025**
  - Tom Brents
  - Jim D'Agostino
  - Stephanie Fleck
  - Kristen Foxley
  - Susan Miclette
  - Randy Wilson

**Class of 2023**  
Brent Dorsey

OLD BUSINESS:

Asset Resources Task Force Report and Recommendations: Martha Barnes presented a power point presentation "Asset Leadership: Moving Forward." The mandate is (1) to clarify the resources available to pursue our goals in the short and medium term and (2) to prepare a motion (or motions) to Session on any specific changes to resource governance or uses.

NEW BUSINESS: none

Prayers were raised for the church, member concerns, ministry partners, the city, and neighbors. Communion was served by intention and Individual communion pods by Emmanuel Paulpeter and elder Michael Harada.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm with the singing of the Doxology.

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Rev. Jim Birchfield, Moderator

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Doug Meikle, Clerk of Session

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HOUSTON, TEXAS  
October 3, 2021**

The Annual Congregational Meeting of the First Presbyterian Church of Houston was called to order on Sunday, October 3, 2021, at 11:45 a.m. in the Grand Hall and by zoom, with a welcome and an opening prayer by Reverend Jim Birchfield. Doug Meikle, Clerk of Session, declared that a quorum was present.

Doug Meikle, clerk of session, reported on the State of the Church.

- The church has remained strong during the past year.
- God's purpose is alive and well in this place.
- The number of worship services has been reduced to two each Sunday morning, one traditional service in the sanctuary and one contemporary service in the Grand Hall.
- We are moving towards making "Here to Serve" a way of life, not just a slogan.
- The senior pastor will be retiring in April 2023.

Steve Oldham, treasurer, reported that the church is in a strong financial position at this time and thanked the congregation for their generous giving during this past year.

Hunter Johnson reported that the current construction projects should be completed by Christmas. This includes the children's spaces, the elevator, the media control room, the choir library, Palm Court, the gathering area outside the narthex, the Youth House, and the remodeling of the restrooms.

Sara Robertson, chair of the Officer Nominating Committee, introduced the committee members. A motion was made and passed to elect the following for the Elder Class of 2025: Tom Brents, Jim D'Agostino, Stephanie Fleck, Kristen Foxley, Susan Miclette, and Randy Wilson; Elder Class of 2023, Brent Dorsey.

Sheila Heinle, chair of the Standing Nominating Committee, introduced the committee members and presented the slate for the Officer Nominating Committee for 2021-2022. A motion was made and passed to elect the following for the Officer Nominating Committee: Hailey Benningfield, Matt Corbett, Ken Dunek, Leslie King, Linda Moore, Ann Petty, Allen Rustay, Jared Spicer, and Gabe Zamora.

Sheila Heinle, chair of the Standing Nominating Committee, presented the slate for the Pastor Nominating Committee. A motion was made and passed to elect the following for the Pastor Nominating Committee: Cindy Cook, Chris Derden, Dade Dowdle, Sabrina Espinoza, Houghton Hutcheson, Janet Lionberger, James Melcher, Sam Murray, Fred Robertson, Claudia Stewart, and Mary Wassef.

Jim Birchfield offered a prayer for the newly elected and the future of First Presbyterian Church.

A time for questions - none

Jim Birchfield adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m. with a benediction and the singing of the doxology.

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Rev. Jim Birchfield, Moderator

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Doug Meikle, Clerk of Session

## Consent Motions

- The Operations Committee requests a consent motion from Session to approve the highlighted awards below (in **BOLD, including annual releases**) as their amounts exceed \$10,000.00:

Grant Applicant	NEED	GRANT	FUND
<b>Africa Renewal Ministries</b>	<b>Ministry Van for Africa Renewal University</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>Bene-Other</b>
Angela's House	Online teaching resources, Dave Ramsay resources, and a student intern	Tabled	
<b>Camp Cho-Yeh</b>	<b>Shower and Restroom facilities at the new "Boxwood" camp</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>Bene-Other</b>
<b>Generation One</b>	<b>furniture for Next Gen (after-school youth program) and technology needs for Mobile Device Management</b>	<b>\$13,900</b>	<b>Bene-Other</b>
Health Outreach to the Middle East	Finishing construction and medical equipment for Medical Christian Training Center and Hospital	Tabled	
Holly Hall	Employee Wellness Program	\$7,700	Bene-Other
Musalaha	Karaoke Machine & all in one laser color printer for office	\$3,550	Bene-Other
Nabilala Community Development Programme	Completion of construction of Namunkanaga Children Health Center	Tabled	
<b>Nehemiah Center</b>	<b>replace damaged plumbing pipes, relandscape and evaluation</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>Bene-Other</b>
<b>Open Door Mission</b>	<b>New Kohler generator and a 7.5-ton AC unit for the kitchen</b>	<b>\$39,054</b>	<b>Bene-Other</b>
<b>Prayers of the People</b>	<b>Launch of Phase 2 "The Global Circle of Faith in Medicine" project in Singapore.</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>Bene-Other</b>
Serenity Retreat for Healing and Spiritual Renewal	road repair	Tabled	
Small Steps	furnishings and equipment for one classroom in the new Jensen expansion wing.	\$8,500	Bene-Other
<b>Teen Challenge Romania</b>	<b>Used van and recording studio</b>	<b>\$23,000</b>	<b>Bene-Other</b>
	Total Awarded Funds	\$165,704	

- In addition, the Permanent Funds Ministry Team approved 10 annual releases:
  1. **Presbyterian School Fund (2) \$24,067**
  2. **Scholarship Fund for PS (33) \$23,862**
  3. **Youth Department (10) \$14,631**
  4. Nehemiah Center – Nehemiah Fund (20) \$2,279
  5. Nehemiah Center – Trammell Fund (38) \$5,858
  6. **Church Facility Maintenance Fund (27) to Bldg. Maintenance Fund \$41,584**
  7. **Morrow (35) to General Fund \$22,882**
  8. Music: Maintenance/expansion (3) to Music Dept \$4,000 (scholarship requests)
  9. Mission Partner: Micah Project (28) to Micah \$8,246
  10. **Urban Task Force request to Main Street Ministries from Bonner Fund (22) \$80,000**

Whereas:

The Session approved a \$8.3M operating budget in May of 2021, for fiscal year 2022. The Operations Committee requests the following changes:

- Changing the fiscal year end to June 30<sup>th</sup> instead of the current May 31<sup>st</sup>. The primary benefit is concluding our year at the end of a calendar quarter.
- That Session approve an Income budget of \$8.3M, comprised of \$7.6M in contributions and \$773,700 in Presbyterian School Rent. This provides a budgeted surplus of \$73,700.
- The Worship be increased by \$50,000. The additional funds would cover St. John's Passion during Holy Week (John Yarrington's final major work as choral conductor before his retirement), Easter Sunday, advent, and all of the associated streaming fees for the musician's union. In addition, the use of pods for communion has increased this cost significantly.
- The Temporary Restricted Account known as "Flower Guild", with a balance of \$1408, be collapsed and the funds added to the Worship budget.
- These changes will not require an addition to the approved operating budget but represent a reallocation of existing funds from Ministry Support to Worship.

## Reports

### Operations Committee Meeting

October 15, 2021\*

\*meeting originally scheduled for 10/11/21, rescheduled due to staff conflict

**Members present:** Al DuPont\*, Amy Winstead\*, Alicia Ten Eyck\*, Merry Davis, Henry Humphries, (\* Voting members)

**Members Absent:** Jamie Hampton

**Staff & Others present:** Hunter Johnson

**Opening Prayer:** Al Dupont

### Facilities/Building Ministry Team Report (Henry Humphries)

- **Facilities Report**

- Work ongoing for builds/repairs:
- Outside wood window repair/repaint is in the final stages, pending the final walk through and punch list.
- LED bulb replacement project is 75% complete.
- Elevator shaft for the multi-story project is proceeding.
- Narthex renovation and Children's area remodel are scheduled for completion in December.
- Basement pumps: Options for alarm systems for the basement pumps are under review.
- Pumps are continued be checked daily to insure there is no failure.

- Hearing loop for the sanctuary work has been postponed until January, due to supply chain shortage of replacement carpeting for the sanctuary.
- WIFI upgrade will be complete by the end of the month.
- Azaleas in the new green space along the north side of the sanctuary are scheduled to be installed by the end of October.
- Narthex expansion project: demolition is complete. Permitting is in process to proceed with the build back.
- Palm Court refresh project is waiting for the arrival of the carpet.

**Permanent Funds Ministry Team Report** (Jamie Hampton)

- The Operations Committee received the following grant distributions from the Permanent Funds committee at their September meeting. The Operations Committee unanimously approved the grant awards up to the committee's \$10,000.00 approval authority.
  - For clarity, the two non-capital grants are for special projects that the Permanent Funds committee believes would enhance the living experience of many members from FPC at Holly Hall, as well as a global project (through Prayers of the People) that would be beneficial through much internal member support from FPC.
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**Proposed Consent Motion**

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  - 20. Urban Task Force request to Main Street Ministries from Bonner Fund (22) \$80,000**

## Report of the Chief Operating Officer: Hunter Johnson

### Report to the Operations Committee, October 2021

The September financial packet is still under review---but is expected to be available for Session on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

- Conversion to the Governance model is going well and will conclude in November with a gathering of all the existing committees for the purpose of expressing appreciation for all their contributions to the church.
- The new Finance committee met on the 14<sup>th</sup> and has approved a motion to change our current fiscal year end to June 30<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the Committee is evaluating all financial policies of the church. In addition, the Worship budget needs to be increased by \$50,000 to cover additional projected costs. Proposed consent motion attached.
- Work on the new children's wing is expected to be complete by Late December. There has been a delay on the carpet for Palm Court, but we are optimistic that we can complete installation by the end of the year. The expanded Narthex project is also expected to be completed by December 2021.
- New flooring is scheduled to be installed in the CE wing---the section not being remodeled, in mid-November. The floor will match the "new" children's section.
- The network upgrade is in progress and is expected to be substantially complete by the end of October.
- We are currently 2 weeks into a complete trimming of all the trees on campus, with this project expected to be complete by the end of October.
- The Director of Facilities position has been vacant since October 1<sup>st</sup>, and there are currently no plans to replace this position.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hunter Johnson  
Chief Operating Officer

The Operations Committee unanimously approved the proposed Omnibus Motion from the Chief Operating Officer to be forwarded to Session for approval:

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**Proposed Consent Motion**

Whereas:

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- These changes will not require an addition to the approved operating budget but represent a reallocation of existing funds from Ministry Support to Worship.

**New Business:**

The new giving platform is online and operational.

November 9, Hunter Johnson is hosting a luncheon for the current members of the Operations Committee, The Building Committee, the Facilities Committee and the Board of Trustees. The luncheon will be held in LC181 from 11:30-1:00.

Alicia Ten Eyck closed the meeting in prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, November 8, 2021, at 12:00 at First Presbyterian Church, Room FH253.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Winstead

**Finance Committee Meeting – 9/30/21**

Attendees: Sara Robertson, Hunter Johnson, Steve Oldham, Kent Woodard

Agenda-

Opening Prayer: Kent Woodard, Chair

Three -Five minutes of Committee introductions

Review Charter – Appendix D of FPC Governance Policies and Procedures Manual

Review Structure – Appendix G of the FPC Governance Policies and Procedures Manual

Voting Members

- Chair - 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Ruling Elder – Kent Woodard (2021-2)
- Vice Chair – 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Ruling Elder – Sara Robertson (2021-2)
- Treasurer – Appointed by Session – Steve Oldham (2021-2)

Non-Voting Members

- COO/CFO – Hunter Johnson
- PF Chair – Jamie Hampton (2021-2)
- Executor Pastor – Andrew Stepp

Areas of FPCH Responsibility for FC

- Budget Review Reporting
- Permanent Funds
- Property and Asset Management
- Audit Team
- Stewardship Development

Specific Charter Responsibilities

- Financial Oversight
- Support and Serve the ministries and people of FPCH

Individual Primary Responsibilities

- Accounting practices, budget, monthly financial statements, audit, and risk management – Hunter and Steve
- Review, assist, oversee all financial and audit practices of FPCH – Kent, Sara, Andrew

- Support and Serve the ministries and people of FPCH – Kent, Sara, and Andrew

#### Financial Procedures

- Review current procedures

#### Lines of Communication

#### Organization Chart

#### Monthly Meeting Times

Any other thoughts and priority items for discussion

Discuss areas of FPCH responsibility – structure, possible strategy and action – Hunter and Kent

Sara to close us in prayer.

## **Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – October 14, 2021**

Time: 10:30am

Place: Pastor's Conference Room plus ZOOM option

Attendees: Sara Robertson, Jaime Hampton Hunter Johnson, Andrew Stepp, and Kent Woodard

Absentees: Steve and Matt

Opening Prayer: Kent Woodard

Review 9/30/21 Meeting Minutes – Approved as written

Status Update:

New GAAP accounting system using intacct – Hunter

- Up and running for Monthly Financials, can be viewed online by designated Elders and Staff
- Individual Staff Dashboards are in process of being uploaded

Review of September Monthly Financials – Not ready for viewing. Will be provided on the 19<sup>th</sup>

Review of Monthly PF Report – Hunter, Jaime, Kent

Discussion centered on need:

- Investment Policy – We will start to review prior to next meeting
- Set up investment committee – Steve, Jaime, Kent plus one or two others. Former investment management, Fred R. and Allen S. were discussed as well as possible younger additional CFA.
- Sara will work with Hunter to review Donor Estate Gifts documentation for restriction and use. Coordination with Martha Barnes may be useful.
- Jamie to review using Salesforce to create complete background and relationship on PF recipients with FPCH
- Review existing authorization and control documents for FPC investments – Hunter to provide to Sara and Kent

Review of Capital Spending Plan for Session – Hunter

- Has been pushed to later in the year for additional time to review resources

New FPC Policies and Procedures regarding FC responsibilities – Hunter, Steve

- This exercise to establish new policies and procedures will begin in earnest after accounting system upgrade is finished.

Other Old business:

Hunter has secured fireproof metal containers to store all our important documents. Our goal next will be to organize them and ultimately digitize them.

New Business:

Hunter requested that FPCH move to a fiscal year ending of 6/30 quarter end vs 5/31. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed as this will facilitate financial reporting and operations. The Operations committee will bring it to Session.

Closing Prayer: Jaime Hampton

Submitted by Kent Woodard, Chair

## FPC Outreach Department

### Missions Ministry Report October 2021

#### Local Engagement

##### Feeding Houston’s Heroes

FHH continues to bless our first responders, medical professionals and local partners serving children while supporting local businesses during these challenging months of the pandemic. Contributions continue to come in at just the right time. \$5,210 has been received this 21-22 fiscal year with a total of \$35,070 received since the establishment of FHH in June 2020. In August/Sept/Oct, FHH served the following:

Camp Agape Lunch (Kids and Teens)	50	Brown Bag
Agape Development (20 staff)	20	Little Matt's
Generation One (16 staff)	16	Little Matt's
Nehemiah Center (25 staff)	25	Picnic
The Forge (15 staff)	15	Picnic
HFD HQ (180 staff)	180	Homemade Cookies
Station 46	64	Burger IM
Station 16	48	McHugh Tea Room
Station 16	48	Island Grill

HPD Condolences – Officer Jeffrey80                      McHugh

Plans are in the works to bless Hermann Memorial medical professionals working in the Covid ICU and patient rooms, hopefully by end of the month. They have had an exhausting past few months with the recent Delta variant surge.

##### Houston Welcomes Refugees

The Mission Ministry has been raising awareness of the work of Houston Welcomes Refugees, a priority partner, and the urgent need for volunteers and essential supplies for the large number of Afghan refugees coming to our city. Their mission is to “ease the resettlement process of refugees coming to Houston by mobilizing invested caring volunteers, fostering hope amidst crisis”. They do this by providing welcome kits with household essentials and move in teams, and friendship by assigning welcome teams to come alongside them as their settle in to life in Houston. We have used E-Weekly as well as having an information table with

volunteers in Palm Court for three Sundays in September/October . Many people signed up to bring welcome kits for either a bathroom or kitchen. We were thrilled by the heart of Covenant Partners to want to help the refugees especially after seeing the fall of Afghanistan and the desperation of people wanting to leave. FPC has several welcome teams established to come alongside Afghan families as they arrive. One team already has a family, and have worked with them to try to locate family members still in Afghanistan. The families arriving have experienced great trauma and are in need of stability, security and a listening ear. Having new friends to love them and help them is a blessing.

#### No Need Among You/NNAY Conference

FPC was the host site of the Texas Christian Community Development Network's annual conference, NNAY, Oct. 6-8, with pre-conference sessions held on Oct. 4 and 5. The Missions Ministry coordinated the details and logistics for the conference working with the Houston planning committee. FPC has been a sponsor for many years of previous conferences. FPC had 21 volunteers helping with greeting, registration, and logistics. The main sessions of worship and keynote presentations were held in the Sanctuary with workshop sessions held throughout the church facility. There was wonderful energy and fellowship all week long with many of our local mission partners attending, Covenant partners, and people from Houston and statewide. Over 300 were registered to attend in person and virtual registrations as well, but I do not have that number at this time.

#### Fall Kick-off and Ministry Fair

Our Missions Ministry was represented in the Ministry Fair on Sun Oct. 3. We had 6 tables with 9 local priority mission partners represented. They included Houston Welcomes Refugees, Restoring Justice, Nehemiah Center, The Forge for Families, Generation One, Open Door Mission, Main Street Ministries, Agape Development and Attack Poverty/Friends of Northside.

We also had people sign up for several of our regular mission engagement opportunities including the following: Engaging the Muslim World prayer time held the third Thurs of the month, Feeding Houston's Heroes, Cullen Middle School Teacher Appreciation Breakfast now held on the fourth Wed of the month, the Mobilizing Medical Mission/M3 conference (Feb. 18-19. 2022), and Houston Responds Central Coalition.

#### **Global Engagement**

With the Covid pandemic still impacting daily life and with vaccines not yet available to many of our global partners, our global engagement is limited to prayer, financial support and virtual communication with our partners.

#### Engaging the Muslim World Prayer Time

The Engaging the Muslim Prayer time that is held the third Thursday of the month is a time when a small group of fervent prayer warriors lift up the prayer requests of our partners serving the Muslim world, primarily global. This prayer time is held virtually on Zoom. 14 people are on the list for the prayer time. We are listing in E-Weekly with contact information if others are interested in joining.

#### Advent Mission Market

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual Advent Mission Market will be held this year on Sundays, Dec. 5, 12 and 19, 2021. Last year, the Market was held outside the Mini-gym for one day due to the pandemic quarantine. This year, we plan to host the Market in person. We are working with Events to determine how best to set up considering the new Palm Court arrangement and furniture. The Advent Mission Market provides support to several of our global partners by purchasing the artisan crafts from their ministry then reimbursing ourselves through the sale of the items. The Market also raises awareness of these amazing partners and the work that they are doing. We are currently working with our partners on the orders and reaching out to volunteers to help. BBC and Hillcrest AIDS Center orders have already been made.

### **Church Planting Report**

#### Jericho Road Renewal:

We are back volunteering and serving at Cullen middle school after a year off due to covid and we are doing our normal activities of supporting teachers and students and their families.

Our three transitional houses are still up and running. We are also thankful to God that as a result, we have started a couple of Bible studies that are currently meeting at the men's house on Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings.

Jonathan has also taken more active role in leadership at Restoration Community Church with David Hill, preaching regularly and leading the shepherding ministry. Taylor has begun taking meetings as a nutrition consultant especially working with people from within our neighborhood.

A great way to get involved is through coming to our monthly prayer walk at Cullen that is on Wednesdays. We would love to catch up with anyone interested in hearing more and they can reach us at [jonathan@jerichoroadrenewal.org](mailto:jonathan@jerichoroadrenewal.org).

#### Kingdom Story Fellowship:

Kingdom Story fellowship has continued to gather to worship, to study, to grow and live a life of faith together. After gathering in parks and the houses, we are looking forward to moving into a space where we can relaunch and watch God do even more amazing things than these.

To accelerate our progress post shut down, we worked with The Unstuck Group (church consultant) in July to provide some focus and strategy as we assess and plan a new way forward. As a result, we are tackling our most identified issues for a successful relaunch and revisioning how we articulate our purpose and presence on this side of town.

As a missional presence, our church is gaining momentum in a nearby neighborhood to bring needed assistance through our Mobile Resource Partnerships; we are building our world vision team for child sponsorships and clean water projects; we have found a church space to house arts programs that we are hosting through what we call The Artist Abbey.

After a Summer of gathering as House Church, Oak Presbyterian has been working with us on the use of space for services and children's ministry. If all goes well, we will be meeting in person in their location as early as November. New families have found us and we continue to pray for more.

We ask for your continued prayers as we embrace the joys and challenges of the call, that we would continue to build a faithful community in NW Houston and find peace in every step and season. We'd love to continue the update and share more with anyone who'd like to join us for coffee. Get in touch, 832 546 7236 or [chris@akingdomstory.com](mailto:chris@akingdomstory.com)

#### Creo Christ:

Creo Christ has been continuing to meet on Zoom on Wednesday evenings to have fellowship, play a game on zoom, then study a passage from the Bible and pray for each other. We have folks who are Christians, folks who identify as Christian but searching, a person who identifies as Buddhist but is curious about Christianity also, Hindu but curious about Christianity. Kartik was sharing the other day that even as Alpha helped him to be emotionally open to Christianity, Creo Christ community helped him to deepen his faith in Christianity.

We have also started meeting once a month for dinner on Wednesday evenings so folks can meet in person to fellowship. In person meeting is much appreciated by the community, especially after a long time of meeting only on zoom. To know more about the community please reach out at [epaulpeter@fpchouston.org](mailto:epaulpeter@fpchouston.org)

#### Matt:

Matt has begun his new role as the Director of Residencies at HCPN. This fall, there are 22 planters in the residency. He is meeting with them regularly and assessing if there are any good potential residents to become FPC's next planter.

## Work Faith & Innovation Report

### Project Flourish:

All funds to winners of the last round are now deployed. Check out "Project One Day," last cycles winner, who is up and running! (<http://www.podhouston.org/>). Currently, we are preparing for the next Project Flourish cycle by auditing and evaluating the program's work to date. Look out for news of the next cycle soon.

### Main Street Fellows:

MSF started its 5<sup>th</sup> cycle with a strong group of candidates. First semester is all about building a Christian worldview and our Fellows are making their way through a series of great books and reflections on how the Christian worldview can bring purpose to life and work. A total of approximately 75 people have gone through the program and this year several alumni have returned to reach classes.

## Evangelism Report

### Alpha @ The Y:

By God's grace we have had **68 people** come through Alpha at the Weekley Y, the highest we have ever had! Coming out of the pandemic the need for community is very much of a felt need. Of the 68, **42 are Non-Christians and/or Christian-but-searching**. Of this 42, **29 came from the our pre-evangelism groups** (Movie group, Ted Talk group, Taco Group, MeetUp group etc.)

### Day Time Alpha 4 Presbyterian School Community:

We started a Day Time Alpha for the PS school at FPC this Fall, meeting Thursday mornings, starting October 14<sup>th</sup>. The goal is to expand the Alpha culture to the Presbyterian School. We had 11 people for the starting session. Brenton Smith the assistant Chaplin at PS school attended the first session to get a sense of the Alpha culture and perhaps to explore if the Youth Alpha Program could be a part of the Christian Education curriculum at the school.

### Pre-Evangelism Groups:

Our Movie group, Ted Talk Discussion group, Book group, Taco Socials are MeetUp based pre-evangelism Groups as FPC – they are spaces where we build trust with the community around us in order to invite them to Alpha. All of these groups have seen active engagement in the Fall leading up to the alpha. About 29 of the non-Christians/searching-Christians who came to Alpha came from the these pre-evangelism groups.



Ted Talk Group, Movie Group,  
Alpha



**ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
Wednesday, October 12, 2021  
3:00 p.m.

Attendees: Jim Birchfield, Doug Meikle, Andrew Stepp, Steve Oldham, Michael Harada, and Sabrina Espinosa

**Opening Prayer (Espinosa)**

Sabrina's devotional came from the book, "Jesus Always," by Sarah Young. The scripture references were 2 Corinthians 12:9 and Isaiah 41:13.

**Discussion Topics**

A. Governance Implementation Update (Birchfield)

Jim shared that all of the new committees have met and are working on charters.

There will be a mini-retreat on 12/7 to work on any issues with implementation we may encounter.

There may be a few issues with our current by-laws that need to be addressed.

B. Finance Report (Oldham)

Steve shared that the finance report was not ready to view because of the new software. He said that the outlook continues to be good.

Steve told the council that they are still looking at Martha's report from Permanent Funds wanting to ensure that there are control mechanisms in place before we begin talking about how the funds might be spent.

C. Pastoral Transition Team Update

Doug submitted a draft of the opportunity profile produced by the Dingman Company, the search firm hired to help in the candidate search. He asked our committee to scrutinize the document and send editing suggestions to Houghton Hutchinson, who will act as liaison.

**Pastor's Report (Birchfield/Stepp)**

A. Andrew reported that we are still in the midst of the search for a Young Adult pastor.

B. Jim asked for patience during the transition and implementation of the new governance model. The staff will bear the brunt of the work in the coming season of change. Andrew has planned to bring in training for the staff to help them adjust. He is also working with the lead in each area to develop metrics and discuss what impediments might exist.

C. Jim asked for input on a suggestion to have the annual Session Christmas party at the youth house. Everyone was enthusiastic.

D. Jim said that he has been looking into the liabilities FPC might face in keeping the charter for the Boy Scout troop. Steve stated that he is involved from the BCUSA side and believes that this will be a non-issue soon. He will work with Jim to make sure we are covered.

**Clerk's Report (Meikle)**

Doug stated that he was very pleased with the congregational meeting. Thanked God for the ease with which the recommendations were accepted.

**Closing Prayer (Stepp)**

Adjourned 5:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Harada, Clerk 202

## : Session Retreat - September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Session, Thank you for your participation in the session retreat. A few have said they enjoyed the day and the format. Especially, the time of prayer and silence was appreciated. And of course, we need it! During our meeting we laid out four priorities for consideration:

1. **Missional** – Shift our focus forward and outward. 2. **Formation**–

Create a new discipleship model for a new generation. 3. **Community**–

Build transformative community, inside and outside our

walls. 4. **Worship** – Craft worship services that prepare our congregants to be sent

into the world.

The session prayed, discussed, deliberated, and in due time voted on motions directing the senior pastor and his staff to bring plans to session to bring these priorities to life. Priority 4, Worship, revealed a lack of alignment amongst leadership on the theology of worship which redirected the motion associated with this priority.

The session voted to unanimously adopt the following motions:

### **Motion 1:**

*“The session recognizes the opportunities of our location at 5300 Main Street for a unique and compelling Christian witness. So recognizing these opportunities, the session declares shifting our focus **“forward and outward”** to be our missional priority for the coming season. The session asks that Jim Birchfield, as Senior Pastor, make a plan of execution to develop the practices and programs that will bring this priority to life. The session requires the plan to include measures and metrics of progress and success. Finally, the session asks that a pastor accountable for this priority be named at the October 2021 session meeting and the plan of action be presented at February 2022 session meeting.”*

**Motion 2:**

*“The session recognizes our covenant partners must be prepared to meet a culture that has dramatically changed and increasingly sees the church as irrelevant. So recognizing this challenge, the session declares **“creating a revised discipleship model fit for our current challenges”** to be our missional priority for the coming season. The session asks that Jim Birchfield, as Senior Pastor, make a plan of execution to develop the practices and programs that will bring this priority to life. The session requires the plan to include measures and metrics of progress and success. Finally, the session asks that a pastor accountable for this priority be named at the October 2021 session meeting and the plan of action be presented at February 2022 session meeting.”*

**Motion 3:**

*“The session recognizes unique challenges of isolation and fragmentation of our time and the challenges to others of our tight-knit culture at FPC Houston. So recognizing this challenge, the session declares to **“build a transformative community, inside and outside our walls”** to be our missional priority for the coming season. The session asks that Jim Birchfield, as Senior Pastor, make a plan of execution to develop the practices and programs that will bring this priority to life. The session requires the plan to include measures and metrics of progress and success. Finally, the session asks that a pastor accountable for this priority be named at the October 2021 session meeting and the plan of action be presented at March 2022 session meeting.”*

**Motion 4:**

*“The session understands and declares that worship is at the center of Christian life and therefore foundational to all other priorities. So recognizing, the session directs our pastoral staff to **“Articulate a theology of worship that allows all generations of our congregation to move toward the larger goal of experiencing worship as the center of Christian life.”** The session asks that Jim Birchfield, as Senior Pastor, make a plan of execution to develop this theology of worship. The session asks that a*

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*pastor accountable for this priority be named at the October 2021 session meeting and the fully worked theology presented at the November 2021 session meeting.”*

I call your attention to the following important staff commitments in these motions.

- October session meeting – named individuals defined for leading each priority.
- November session meeting – a theology of worship
- February session meeting – missional and formational strategy
- March session meeting – transformational community strategy The session, I trust, is excited and expectant as we wait for these work products. I will send to you a revised schedule for session meetings in this year and next. We will maintain our current format of clearing the agenda of session meetings to give adequate time to discuss these important matters. Finally, thank you to Melaney and her team. Special mention to Kate Thomas – with 10 people like Kate, you could change the world. One of the team, Mike Nichols, was not able to be with us. He and his wife Erika were expecting a baby right about the time of the meeting. Baby **Augustine Carter Nichols** was born on Sunday morning at 3.31 am. Never forget we work and deliberate and vote for baby Augustine and all the others that will be born into a world hostile to their faith. Baby Augustine will live in a world of rival faiths and stories – just as his namesake did. But, perhaps, baby Augustine will live also in a world where churches are strong and offer a living alternative to the dying faiths of the surrounding world. We pray and deliberate and vote so that we would be one of those churches. God bless First Presbyterian Church of Houston. D.E. Meikle, Session Clerk.

### **Priority 1: Missional**

#### **Appendix: Session Retreat (9/25/21) Feedback on Priorities**

Why this priority will work?

- Our location allows us to be networked to the areas we want to serve.
- The cultural value of the church can be leveraged (MSM, Nehemiah, etc.)
- God's gone before us and will enable this
- The influence in the communities exists already
- We have a talented community in our congregation
- We think there is a sending church culture shift underway we can use as momentum
- People (some) are craving to be deployed outward
- The Holy Spirit is leading this
- We have existing ministry partners
- We have a diversified pastoral staff that should be able to implement this What are the challenges in implementing it?
- Time is a stingy resource we are slow to share
- Misunderstanding of the mission field before us
- Inability as a church to hear what God is saying to us
- Struggle with people having to get their hands dirty
- Still have an internally focused culture in our church (our ministries, our priorities)
- Everyone is always busy
- We're always adding priorities and never subtracting them
- Feeling of being overwhelmed – where do we begin

- How do we more effectively capture the abilities/skills/work experience of our members
- Infiltration of politics/social media work against our message
- We lack a modern visual appeal (we're a 1950's church on the outside – how does that attract a modern, younger audience) – also do we look old as a membership (old white church, etc.)
- We don't fully know our audience and how to effectively market these priorities to them (inside and outside our walls)
- Engaging our people
- We're not a terribly agile organization, but hope with the new governance structure
- We don't have an open feedback process (feedback loop)
- "Our pastors will do it" mentality – major culture shift needed here
- The average congregant doesn't feel like we communicate to them well, they don't understand what our priorities are and what their part is therein
- "Average Joe" congregant doesn't feel like they can participate – how do we tap into those people

Why must we implement it? • We need to reflect true authenticity in pointing to Jesus • Obedience

- We're commanded to (Great Commission)
- If FPC doesn't do this, what happens to the ecosystem around us? Vote: Unanimously approved.

### **Priority 2: Formational**

Why this priority will work?

- Because the gospel speaks to every generation
- Covid has given us new tools and a new flexible mindset for creatively reaching people (Zoom, etc.)

- Desire is there, amongst leadership, staff and members
- Multigenerational church allows a mentoring process that allows passing of knowledge between ages and phases
- Already have a strong base of connections for discipleship
- We stand on the shoulders of giants in our SS classes, small groups, youth group in teaching legacy – but we need to adapt it to current culture
- We have the will and attention and people who want to help with discipleship
- Geographical location is strategic with our members involved in the organizations around us, allowing them to speak into discipleship that focuses outward.
- If Jesus has already modeled what discipleship should look like, it should be easy for us to implement
- Because it's critical and personal. What are the challenges in implementing it?
- Rapidly changing culture and environment – how long will it work?
- Mental health issues – how are we equipped to speak into these struggles and train our people to engage with them (caring elders opportunity)
- We're old dogs who don't learn new tricks very easily
- Resistance to changing approach
- Discipleship pathways unclear and are complicated to create entry points into our discipleship
- "Ministry clutter"
- Everything is competing with our attention
- Perception of no objective truth – how do we overcome that worldview?



- Unclear how we would “live out” and “speak into” our faith in the workplace, home, play Why must we implement it?
- Because the next generation is our priority investment
- Gospel transformation (of the heart and life...is imperative to implement all of these priorities) Vote: Unanimously approved.

### **Priority 3: Community**

Why this priority will work?

- We are inherently social animals that need community
- Our minds have been expanded during the pandemic as to how we form community, especially with our new tech investments
- Community is best found by engaging in service
- Jesus is the perfect example for welcoming and loving others
- We have the Holy Spirit to equip and guide us
- We have the facilities to provide a welcoming environment, but the people must be the welcomers
- Geographic dispersion can be a strength
- Everyone is seeking Jesus and wanting community
- Spaces: 5300 Main Campus Spaces updated; Networks into the surrounding neighborhood all very walkable; expanding out to rest of city to be welcoming to the community at large What are the challenges in implementing it?
- We’re a homogenous church (racially, socio-economically); do we have a heart to change that?
- Community is scary – how can I be responsible for someone else’s transformation. Who am I? When’s the

last time we invited someone to church?

- COVID
- Are we going to call on the Holy Spirit to empower us or just say we are?
- The building entrances can be limiting
- People who are isolated in smaller church groups might miss out on larger church happenings and community
- Community is relative and looks different for everyone
- Virtual community...how to bring them into larger in person community
- Everyone is so busy Why must we implement it?
- It's hard to break out of our social groups (cliques) within the church; need to move past our comfort zone
- How do we reach the "seeker" through our technology
- Because it works
- What's good enough for Jesus, should be good enough for us; the model is Jesus
- If we don't do it, we will have a slow death of our church
- Hospitality takes time and we're all busy
- The cost of not doing this is losing people – a leaky church where people are slipping through the cracks
- Leadership must set the example – not just assign hospitality to staff Vote: Unanimously approved.

#### **Priority 4: Worship**

Priority (Revised): Articulate a theology and philosophy of worship that allows us to move toward the larger goal of placing worship at the center of our lives in this changing world.

Note: We removed the second problem statement and revised the motion to redact the language indicating a problem connecting our youth, college, and young adults to worship.

The new motion reads: “The session understands and declares that worship is at the center of Christian life and therefore foundational to all other priorities. So recognizing, the session directs our pastoral staff to **“Articulate a theology of worship that allows all generations of our congregation to move toward the larger goal of recognizing worship as the center of Christian life.”** The session asks that Jim Birchfield, as Senior Pastor, make a plan of execution to develop this theology of worship. The session asks that a pastor accountable for this priority be named at the October 2021 session meeting and the fully worked theology presented at the November 2021 session meeting.”

Vote: Unanimously approved.

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