

Session Meeting Minutes
First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio
December 9, 2024
As Approved by Session January 13, 2025

Officers' dinner program:

The Session received, and the officers welcomed, one new Covenant Partner (see the Changes in the Church Register). Lynn Thompson encouraged officers to help with worship leadership.

Session meeting: All elders were present save Bobby Mickler, Don Ryan, and Cody Heffron. Bill Sirakos joined via Zoom. Rev. Dr. Bob Fuller, Jr., moderator, was the only pastor-member present.

Many staff members were present and several covenant partners attended.

- I. Call to order in Covenant Hall at 7:10 p.m. Bob Fuller
- II. Opening Prayer Mike Charlton
- III. Approval of the Agenda
Bob Fuller suggested we amend the agenda to include an order of the day for adjournment at 9:30 p.m. After second and discussion, the motion was defeated by a vote of 9-9. The agenda was then approved as originally presented.
- IV. Clerk's Report Nancy Cross
 - a. Consent Docket
The Consent Docket was approved with corrections to the minutes.
 - b. Clerk comments
 - i. Cody Heffron is absent as he and wife Emily are at the hospital awaiting the birth of their first child, a baby girl. Carter Ray led the Session in prayer for them.
 - ii. Nancy apologized for misinterpreting Robert's Rules regarding the referral to personnel in Executive Session.
 - c. Communications
 - i. The documents shared by David West regarding the Z Center are for information in preparation for action at the January meeting.
 - ii. Nancy offered thanks to all those who have written letters to the Session and/or attended Session meetings. We appreciate the heart for the Lord and this church that was the impetus for these. She asked all of us – Session members, staff, and congregation, to be careful about spreading rumors.
 - iii. On our tables is a "save the date" for the Elder Retreat.
Feb 28, 2025- 4p.m.
SA Gun Club, 928 E Contour Dr.
Sat. March 1st, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FPC- Breakfast and lunch provided. Speaker: Brad Hobbs
 - d. Motions from the Clerk
Two items to help us be more effective and efficient in our work:
 - i. **I move that the Session's committees begin the practice of distributing draft minutes for committee approval via email so they can be forwarded to the Session in a timelier manner. This should ordinarily happen within 10 days of any meeting. Should there be any controversy**

about what had been decided in a meeting, the approval should be delayed for an in-person meeting. The motion received multiple seconds and was APPROVED unanimously.

- ii. **Motion: I move that the Session form a Technology and Communications ad hoc group to explore more efficient and effective ways for the Session to communicate and operate, to report back in February.** After receiving multiple seconds, the motion was APPROVED unanimously. Lynn Thompson, Mike Meadows, Sheila Figueroa, Eric Schluter, and Nancy Cross will serve. Others are welcome.

V. Moderator's Report

- a. The Christmas Pageant was very well done, yet bittersweet as we said goodbye to Becky Prichard and Wendy Garcia. The congregation prayed for them as well as for Callan, who will be leaving in January.
- b. Over the weekend, several communications were received regarding the Officer Nominating Committee. Bob and others affirmed that the ONC slate has people of good faith, character, and wisdom; now they need to be empowered and educated regarding the strategic plan and the desires of the Session. Morris Camp will be reporting later in the meeting on the demographics of the church and church leadership as a baseline for the strategic plan's intention of progressively increasing multi-generational participation and leadership within the church. Ben McCaleb proposed two motions regarding the ONC's makeup and its instructions from the Session. The motion was seconded by multiple people. After discussion, Ben withdrew the motion and asked the Activation Team to look at this as they explore leadership, systems, and governance. Charlotte Milner urged us review the current ONC guidelines in our officer training notebook. Many agreed the guidelines for makeup of the ONC need updating.
- c. Bob reminded the Session of the ECO National Gathering, January 27-29, 2025, at Highland Park Presbyterian Church, 3821 University Blvd., Dallas, Texas.

VI. Report from the Strategic Planning Director

Pam Ray

- a. Many ministries of the church need to be informed about and involved with the strategic plan. Pam offered "shout outs" to several people who had been working on this.
- b. In today's packet is a chart showing the Activation Team's monthly progress.
- c. Upcoming: The Activation Team will meet tomorrow to evaluate Executive Director applications and begin the interview process previously approved by Session. This Sunday, December 16 in worship we will see a video which is a Strategic Plan teaser. Thursday, members of the Activation Team will meet with key staff whose roles intersect with Becky and Mitchell's former ministry areas, to receive their input on the open pastoral roles, as we keep the Strategic Plan at the forefront. January 26, we will have worship combining the two 9:30 services and the two 11:00 services in the sanctuary. Brad Hobbs, the consultant who helped us with the Strategic Plan and is giving ongoing advice, will preach.
- d. As a reminder and by request, members of the Activation Team as previously approved by Session are: From the original Strategic Plan committee—Martha Maynard, Eric Schluter, and David Youngquist. From the three elder classes—Tyler Burnett, Morris Camp (chair), and Nancy Cross. Three pastors appointed by Bob were envisioned. Bob and Scott are currently serving.

VII. Committee Reports

a. Stewardship and Finance

Bill Sirakos via ZOOM

- i. Bill presented the **final October financials and asked that they be approved**. APPROVED by acclamation. Bill presented the **November preliminary financials and asked that they be approved as preliminary**, to be revisited in January. APPROVED by acclamation.
- ii. We are about \$143,000 below budget in giving for the month. Spending has been kept in check and is currently \$220,000 below budget. We usually have a good December. We'll need \$1.9 Million in December giving to meet budget, which is slightly more than the last two years.
- iii. Spending increases are anticipated in the 2025 budget; at this point the budget reflects what was "asked-for" and will be adjusted as information on the actual 2025 pledges and December giving comes in.
- iv. Morris Camp gave an update on the Stewardship Campaign and encouraged those who had not yet made a pledge to do so. Both the number of pledges and the average pledge amount is down over the same period last year. Pledges make up about 40% of the usual giving budget.
- v. Betsy Baker reported for the Budget Subcommittee. The budget as currently envisioned would require about a 17% increase in giving. Some of the anticipated increases are out of our control, such as the staff's health insurance costs and church security needs. Stewardship will keep a close eye on giving, trends, and expenditures. In January, session will see a revised budget with options. The budget may not be finalized until February.

b. Strategic Plan Activation Team

Morris Camp

Morris presented an analysis of the generational makeup of the church's Covenant Partners and leadership. A lengthy discussion followed centered around ways to promote a leadership pipeline. David West pointed that many elders on Session were first elected to serve when we were in our 30's. Current younger elders were thanked and shared some of their stories. Efforts to engage young adults in the life of the church are very important, especially in our current situation. Morris was thanked for the very helpful analysis.

c. Personnel Committee

David West

- i. David brought a number of motions from the Personnel Committee.

1. **Motion to Retain Temporary Personnel. The Personnel Committee makes a motion that the Session approve the hiring of the following persons:**

- a. **Rev. John Kaiser, Temporary Assistant Pastor**

- i. **John would assist Bob with pastoral care, worship leadership, occasional preaching and general pastoral assistance as directed by Bob.**
 - ii. **Approximately 15 hours per week, without benefits**
 - iii. **Compensation to be decided. An hourly rate of [redacted]/hour was discussed. This will be referred to the S&F Committee.**
 - iv. **Tenure up to 6 months.**

- v. John is ordained by ECO and therefore qualifies for an Assistant Pastor position.
- vi. John would begin effective January 1, 2025.
- b. **Rev. Paul Kacsur, Minister for Congregational Care**
 - i. Paul would assist Bob with pastoral care, worship leadership, occasional preaching and general pastoral assistance as directed by Bob.
 - ii. Approximately 15 hours per week, without benefits
 - iii. Compensation to be decided. An hourly rate of [redacted]/hour was discussed. To be referred to the S&F Committee.
 - iv. Tenure up to 6 months.
 - v. Paul is not ordained by ECO, so would serve in a director position but with the title of minister.
 - vi. Paul would begin work January 1, 2025.

APPROVED unanimously.

2. Motion to Name Lindsay Selli Director of Missions.

- a. Lindsay has served as the Assistant Director of Missions for several years.
- b. Lindsay would be paid commensurately with other directors (Youth, Children's Ministry). Lindsay will work with Whit Anderson.
- c. Lindsay's promotion would be effective January 1, 2025.
- d. Rich Delano, Chairman of Global Missions, and Mike Munroe, Chairman of Local Missions, enthusiastically approve the motion.

APPROVED unanimously.

3. Letter to the Congregation.

- a. **The Personnel Committee proposes that a letter be sent to the congregation stating what the Session is doing during the transition:**
 - i. Retention of John Kaiser, Interim Assistant Pastor.
 - ii. Retention of Paul Kacsur, Interim Minister of Congregational Care.
 - iii. Promotion of Lindsey Selli as Director of Missions.
 - iv. **The Session previously approved the following positions:**
 - 1. Rev. Whit Anderson, Director of Church Planting.
 - 2. Pam Ray, Director of Strategic Planning.
 - 3. Hiring of an Executive Director.

v. In addition to these positions, the Zbinden Center for Biblical Leadership has retained the following persons:

1. Rev. Dr. Jonathan King, Director of the Fellows Program, a seminary education offered at First Presbyterian Church (part-time position).
2. Rev. Izzy Mendez, Director of Cohorts and the Certificate Program (certificates to be offered to church planters, emerging leaders by the Zbinden Center for completion of courses, also a part-time position).

b. The letter would be signed by the Senior Pastor and Clerk of Session.

APPROVED unanimously.

4. **Terms of Departure for Associate Pastors.** The Personnel Committee proposes the following terms of departure for Becky Prichard and Mitchell Moore:

a. **Loans.** [redacted]

b. **Sending Pastors to next areas of ministry.**

The Personnel Committee proposes that Becky and Mitchell be paid their compensation and benefits until the end of March, in appreciation for their service to this church and to help send them into their next areas of ministry.

c. **Gifts.**

- i. The congregation will be given the opportunity to make financial contributions to both Becky and to Mitchell as appreciation for their service here. Bob will write a letter to the congregation for Mitchell, similar to the one he prepared for Becky. Because these are gifts to individuals, they are NOT tax deductible.
- ii. A reception for Mitchell will be held at a location outside the church.
- iii. Laptops cell phones, etc. will be given to the departing associate pastors.

APPROVED unanimously.

ii. The Session has received a letter from Rev. Roland Zavala, Chair of the Ministry Partnership Team (MPT) of Texas Presbytery, ECO, offering to come alongside us to help work through our issues. Bob suggests we look at the variety of things they offer and see what could be helpful and what is either not needed or covered elsewhere. Accepting their help may exhibit that

we're taking this seriously and looking for accountability and help from our denomination. The Session discussed the offer, reviewed some of the professional help we have obtained over the last few years, and concluded that we should ask the MPT to give us more detail so we can make an informed decision.

Motion by Ed Moore, seconded multiple elders:

That the Session ask Bob to talk with the Texas Presbytery leadership and request they tell us more at our January Session meeting or a specially called meeting.

APPROVED unanimously.

- iii. Session had made a referral to Personnel in Executive Session. Personnel has received the referral and formed a subcommittee.

- VIII. Adjournment was at 10:07 p.m.; the meeting was closed with prayer offered by Rev. Dr. Bob Fuller, Jr.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Scott Cross
Clerk of Session

Rev. Dr. Bob Fuller, Jr.
Moderator