

**MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF SESSION**

**02751**

On Monday, May 6, 2024, the 654<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church was held in Galbreath Memorial Chapel. Dr. Forrest was the Moderator and opened the meeting with prayer at 7:00 pm.

Attending were Dr. Forrest and Rev. Bentley, and Elders Berrott, Eccher, Galbreath, Hallums, Jenkins, Locke, Ludwig, Malarkey, McGee, Null, Page, Price, Ralston, Rost, Sarraf, Waller, and Widmar, constituting a quorum.

**BUSINESS**

**REPORT OF THE CLERK**

A motion to approve the minutes of the 653<sup>rd</sup> (March 18, 2024) regular meeting of Session and the Special Meeting of April 21, 2024, was made, seconded, and approved.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the membership changes indicated below.

**BAPTISMS**

**April 21, 2024**

Oscar Ellis Bentley-Nusser; parents Laura Bentley and Ed Nusser  
Jackson George, Everett Levi, and Elliot Baker, Kern, parents, Jill and Brooke Kern

**DEATHS**

Jack Elliot, March 28, 2024  
John Walker, April 10, 2024

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Inactive by Request**

Jeremy Czarniak  
Lucy DeBor  
Josh Dilly  
Patricia Montgomery  
Taylor Montgomery  
Alicia (Aly) Rae Walker  
Luke Joseph Walker

## **SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

During worship services on Sunday, April 7, 2024, and Sunday, May 5, 2024, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to communicants.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **Meeting Dates**

Dr. Forrest reported that the following meetings are scheduled:

Pittsburgh Presbytery, May 23, 2024, 1 pm at Pittsburgh Seminary  
 Westminster Session, June 17, 2024, 7 pm in Galbreath Chapel  
 General Assembly, PC USA, June 25-July 4.

### **Proposal to Replace Electrical Panel**

Elder Tom Page, Chair of the Property Commission, gave a detailed report concerning the obsolescence of the electrical panel that has been in service since the original construction of Westminster and has provided service to the entire facility, including additions. He stated that parts critical to the operation of electrical service are no longer manufactured. Consequently, the failure of any critical part would cause an extended interruption of electrical service to the entire church campus. After a careful inspection and consultation with electrical contractors and the Church's power supplier, the Property Commission submitted a Request for Proposals to ten electrical contractors for proposals to replace the electrical panel and associated work. Elder Page reported three contractors responded with proposals and fixed pricing. The Property Commission recommended that Session approve the project and accept the bid of Keystone Electrical Systems. Elder Page explained that Keystone submitted the lowest bid, \$389,595.80 and is the only contractor that has in stock all the components required to complete the job. He stated that Keystone can start the work immediately, he and estimated that all of the work including landscaping, which will be a separate contract that is not included in the Keystone proposal, can be completed by the Fall of 2024.

Dr. Forrest explained that the entire project, including building modifications to accommodate the new electrical system and landscaping is likely to cost approximately \$500,000. She stated that the Endowment has agreed to provide a grant of \$150,000. The balance will have to come from other donations from members and other sources and that a specific capital campaign is planned. She stressed the importance of avoiding funding from the Church's operating balance. If necessary, Westminster's former line of credit at PNC Bank will be reinstated.

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Property Commission and the Director of Finance and Operations to proceed with the project and to accept the proposal of Keystone

Electrical Systems and to sign a contract of behalf of Westminster for that purpose. The moderator opened the floor, and after discussion the motion was passed unanimously.

### **Winding Up of Town Hall South**

Town Hall South, a longstanding mission program of Westminster, will cease operations at the close of the current session. The reasons for the termination of this speaker's series have been discussed, and a motion to terminate the program, was approved at a previous meeting of Session.

Elder Brian Eccher, Chair of the Finance Commission reported that at the conclusion of its activities, Town Hall South expects to have a balance of approximately \$180,000 in its operating account. Under its current by-laws, at the end of each season, Town Hall South is authorized to distribute 10% of its net operating profit to selected charitable organizations. Although it has no operating profit at the conclusion of its final season, Town Hall South has requested that Session authorize it to distribute up to 10% of its final account balance to local charities that support the needs of women and children. To recognize and honor the work of Town Hall South and its many volunteers during more than fifty years of service, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to authorize the Board of Town Hall South to distribute up to 10% of the balance in its account after all remaining expenses for the season are paid, to those charitable organization that the Board selects.

Elder Eccher stated that balance of funds in the Town Hall South following those distributions will be reported to Session when that amount is known, and Session will then determine the apportionment and use of those funds.

### **WECEP, LLC Lease and Rent**

Dr. Forrest reminded Session that the Westminster Early Childhood Education Program, which for many years operated as a program of Westminster under its direct control, was incorporated as a separate legal entity named WECEP, LLC in 2015. Although Westminster is the sole member (shareholder) of the LLC, WECEP is managed by a separate Board of Managers, all of whom are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Session. The majority of the members of that Board must be members of Westminster. Day-to day operations are conducted by its own executive(s), hired by the Board of Managers; and all teachers are employees of WECEP, LLC. The programs of WECEP are subject to regulation and evaluation by the State of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Forrest reported that since becoming a separate entity, WECEP has paid nominal rent for the space that it uses in the Church; but it has no lease or rental agreement for the approximately 18,000 to 20,000 square feet that it uses. For the past several months Elder Heilmann, Treasurer of Westminster, has led informal discussions with members of the WECEP Board of Managers concerning the need for and terms of a lease agreement that describes the separate

responsibilities of Westminster and WECEP, specifies the amount of rent payable during the term of lease, and includes a provision for renewal.

Elder Eccher reported that WECEP is currently paying approximately \$2.40 per square foot for the space that it uses regularly. WECEP is not charged for the scheduled use of additional facilities such as the WROC. The rent charged to WECEP has not increased for the past several years. Elder Eccher stated that he and Elder Heilmann have surveyed the prevailing rates for comparable space in the commercial market and have found that typical rent for similar space in the Upper St. Clair area is \$10.00 to \$20.00 per square foot. Based on the current financial needs of Westminster, the absence of any increase in rent for several years, and the prevailing market rate for similar space, the Finance Commission recommends an increase in rent to \$5.00 per square foot, with a modest annual increase thereafter. Although this would be an increase of slightly more than 100% of the current rate, the Finance Commission believes that an increase in rent to approximately one-third of the amount paid by commercial day-care and pre-school program providers in the area would be fair and appropriate.

Elder Eccher cautioned that this recommendation is presented only to inform Session of the current recommendation of the Finance Commission and the reasoning behind that recommendation. WECEP will be informed of that recommendation in discussions with the WECEP Board and members of the Commission on Children's and Family Development. The prospective lease agreement will be presented to Session for approval when agreement with WECEP is reached on rent and other terms.

### **SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Forrest announced that Harrison Burgess has begun his work as Associate Director of Youth Ministry. Harrison brings great enthusiasm and unique skills to Westminster and is a welcome addition to Youth Ministry.

Dr. Forrest also reported that on the recommendation of the Presbytery and with the approval of the Personnel Commission, Westminster will hire an intern from Pittsburgh Seminary who will work approximately twelve hours per week, beginning in the Fall of 2024.

### **PARISH ASSOCIATE'S REPORT**

Rev. Bentley reported that she recently participated in and administered Communion at the Sunday 11:00 remote worship service at Chartier's Bend. She stated that this enthusiastic group of Westminster members and other residents is also starting a Bible study group at Chartier's Bend.

**COMMISSION REPORTS AND ACTIONS**

The following Commissions submitted written reports prior to the meeting:

- Bridge
- Children’s and Family Ministries/WECEP
- Communications
- Community Engagement
- Endowment & Special Gifts
- Property
- Stewardship
- Youth Ministry
- Worship

**SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS**

Meeting participants shared individual joys and concerns for the Church, its members, and their families and for the community.

**ADJOURNMENT WITH PRAYER**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm with prayer led by Dr. Forrest. The next regular meeting of Session will be held on June 17, 2024, in Galbreath Chapel.

Respectively submitted,

Approved:

William C. Ludwig  
Clerk of Session