

Bonhomme Presbyterian Church
Minutes of Regularly Scheduled Session Meeting
February 23, 2021, 2021
6:00 PM in the Commons

Minutes of the Meetings

Those Attending:

Jenny Brown, Robby Cella, John Green, Steve Lucas, Chad Schrieber, Jenni Stecher, Cliff VanIttersum, Mary Bruning, Mary Oldfield, Steve Cox, Steve Ecker, Andy Seers, Dave Moore, Jim Keim, Fred Breitenwischer.

Opening the Meeting:

Following prayer, a quorum was declared, and the meeting was called to order by the Moderator, Pastor Dave Moore.

- Pastor Dave Moore offered a devotional.
- Session continued discussion of and recommendations concerning the structure of the church as follows.
- Session and Staff have established three lead goals and one wildly important goal.
 1. To make new disciples.
 2. Engagement in the ongoing mission of God in our neighborhood, city, and world.
 3. Actively challenge and equip everyone toward their next stage of faith development.

One Wildly Important Goal to focus our energy and attention, established by the Session at Bonhomme:

From 9 baptisms in 2020 to 100 baptisms by the end of 2021.

- The Major Components of Restructure include
 1. Move executive planning, worship planning, and program planning to a quarterly basis.
 2. Move the following Ministries to Quarterly Meetings:
 - Adult Discipleship
 - Student Discipleship
 - Kids Ministry
 - Traditional Worship

- Modern Worship
- Mission
- Guest Ministries (works in partnership with Communication)
- Community Care Ministries
- Stewardship
- Buildings and Grounds
- Communication (works in partnership with Guest Ministry)

3. **Change the leadership structure** on the teams mentioned in #2 above.

- Staff members will have final authority on decisions.
- Staff members will be expected to build teams with strong leaders willing to give healthy feedback. Our goal is always to have meaningful debate about ideas without attacking people.
- Each leader of each ministry will be required to create position descriptions (many unpaid) for volunteers.
- Those volunteers will report directly to the staff member, or to a staff member assigned by the leader of the ministry.
- Session retains overarching authority and can debate or overrule a decision deemed controversial. e.g., Worship Ministry staff member recommends a change in the worship time. This is a Session decision and must be approved by Session.

4. **Session Shall Meet at Least 12 Times a Year Following a Quarterly Planning Model:**

- 8 meetings per year are focused on mission, vision, spiritual leadership, and prayer.
- 4 meetings per year will focus on budget, property, finance, personnel. During these meetings Session members are free to go deeper into these issues, and these issues will actually get more attention due to the focus of our Session than they would normally receive.
- Shift to quarterly reporting of attendance, finance, stewardship, etc.

5. **The Following Ministries remain unchanged:**

- Preschool
- Budget and Finance (though we encourage quarterly meetings)
- HRC (though we encourage quarterly meetings)
- Corporation Board (though we encourage quarterly meetings)
- Stone Church Board (though we encourage quarterly meetings)
- The Foundation Board, which is a separate 501C3.

6. **Change in the Stewardship Focus of the church from seasonal (e.g. October) to annual.** We must effectively tell the story of Bonhomme every week and invite people to give.

- Each week have a testimony to share, hopefully one that is connected with the sermon (the benefit of advance planning)
- The format is as follows:
 - “This is how my life was changed, or how Bonhomme is changing the lives of _____”
 - “Today we’re giving you an opportunity to connect with ministries like this one, by signing up for/serving in _____”
 - “Your offerings changed my life and make it possible for other lives to be changed. Here’s how to give.”
- Develop plans to encourage estate giving. E.g., at least one event per year where people over the age of 50 are encouraged to consider Bonhomme in their estate plans.
- Weekly messages connecting different ministries and missions of the church with the opportunity to serve and to give.

7. Reduce the Board of Deacons from 36 to either 12 or 6

Pastor Dave More related the great feedback on the deacons. We in no way want to abandon the office. There is some theological conversation about how important the office was to the early church. The word diakonos appears about 30 times in the New Testament. It is only used 5 times with regard to something like an office. Notably, it is missing in the fivefold offices held up in Ephesians 4: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. But when the word is used, it is used consistently. The office of deacon is created to allow the Apostles more time for preaching the Gospel and for prayer. Baptist churches have interpreted this in one way, assigning a deacon board that is similar to our Session. Presbyterians have interpreted this another way, largely focusing on ministries of compassion and care like mission and hospital visits, etc. At Bonhomme our current model is to ask Deacons to lead ministries.

I can see two possibilities for the Deacons, and I’d like the Session to discuss them:

- **The Deacon Board exists to help new covenant partners, guests, and covenant partners serve the various ministries of the church.** This is done by adopting a focus on onboarding. Deacons help with the process of becoming a member. Deacons provide spiritual gift inventories. Deacons make sure that every member is contacted, and every member has spiritual gifts identified. Deacons then connect the members with the ministries. In some cases, these members will have an unpaid (volunteer) job description, and will report to the member of staff who is assigned as their supervisor.
- **The Deacon Board is redeployed across the city to act as neighborhood leaders of parishes.** (An alternative might be the assignment of sections in the church, as people tend to sit in the same place!) This parish model would assign each deacon to a geographic area. They would learn of guests who lived in their area and reach out to these guests. They would help them connect with the church and help them find a group with which to connect as well.

- It was decided to cap the number of Elders on Session to seven beginning at the June 2023. The feasibility of having seven Elders will be evaluated during the 2021-2022 and a decision will be made on the following year's Session numbers. The number of Elders will be achieved by not replacing any of the Elders scheduled for sabbaticals or retirement.
8. **Bonhomme Presbyterian Church will develop a consistent approach to leadership training.** This approach begins with The ECO Flourishing Leaders Course; but continues with the requirement that anyone in a position of leadership take the Leadership Course.
 9. Pastor Dave Moore is recommending that we have two options for the **Flourishing Leaders Course**. One will be Wednesday nights, starting on February 24, and lasting until March 31, 90 minutes each night. The other will be a Friday-Saturday retreat format, on February 26 and 27. You should know that the content of the course will seem like it can be accomplished in fewer than 4 months, but there is a reason. We want people to take quite a lot of time in writing their spiritual autobiography and in sharing it with others. This starts the journey to a greater spiritual openness to our neighbors, friends, family, etc. I will be sending a note to the College of Deacons and Elders today and seeing how many are interested in the Wednesday and weekend options.
 - Pastor Robby Cella presented Owen Thomas Hill candidate for baptism. Owen is the son of Jenny Hill and Tommy Hill. The baptism will occur on March 14, 2021 Pastor Cella officiating.
 - Pastor Robby Cella presented Landon Raymond Porter candidate for baptism. Landon is the son of Maegan and Sean Porter. The baptism will occur on March 14, 2021 Pastor Cella officiating.
 - Elder Mary Oldfield – presented the Rise and Pray initiative
 - Pastor Dave Moore read, and Session discussed Mike Boland's e-mail.
 - Capping the number of Elders on Session to seven beginning at the June 2023. The feasibility of having seven Elders will be evaluated during the 2021-2022 and a decision will be made on the following year's Session numbers. The number of Elders will be achieved by not replacing any of the Elders scheduled for sabbaticals or retirement.
 - Confirmation class dinner will be April 25, 2021.

Motions Decisions

- Elder Steve Cox introduced a motion to Change ministry leadership structure and meetings to quarterly as outlined in #1, #2 and #3 above. The motion was seconded by Elder Steve Ecker and approved unanimously by voice vote.

- Elder Mary Oldfield introduced a motion stating that while continuing to meet 12 times a year, it is Session should adopt a quarterly planning model as outlined in #4 above. Motion was seconded by Elder Chad Schrieber and approved unanimously by voice vote.
- Elder Steve Ecker introduced a motion to change the Stewardship Focus as outlined in #6 above. The motion was seconded by Elder Steve Cox and unanimously approved by voice vote.
- Elder Chad Schrieber introduced a motion to Reduce the Board of Deacons from 36 to 6 as described in #7 above. The motion was seconded by Elder Jenny Brown and unanimously approved by voice vote.
- Elder Steve Cox introduced a motion that Bonhomme Presbyterian Church will develop and implement a consistent approach to leadership training. The motion was seconded by Elder Jenny Brown and unanimously approved by voice vote.
- Elder Mary Oldfield introduced a motion to approve Owen Thomas Hill candidate for baptism. Owen is the son of Jenny Hill and Tommy Hill. The baptism will occur on March 14, 2021 Pastor Cella officiating. The motion was seconded by Elder Fred Breitenwischer and unanimously approved by voice vote.
- Elder Cliff Van Ittersum introduced a motion to approve Landon Raymond Porter candidate for baptism. Landon is the son of Maegan and Sean Porter. The baptism will occur on March 14, 2021 Pastor Cella officiating. The motion was seconded by Elder Jenni Stecher and unanimously approved by voice vote.
- Elder Steve Ecker introduced a motion to call a congregational meeting to seek Congregational approval of the change in total numbers of Elders and Deacons. Pastor Dave will schedule the meeting as appropriate with two weeks public notice. The motion was seconded by Elder Chad Schrieber and unanimously approved by voice vote
- Elder Andy Seers introduced a motion to approve the Baptism of Greg Yess on March 21, 2021. The motion was seconded by Elder Cliff Van Ittersum and unanimously approved by voice vote.
- Elder Jenni Stecher introduced a motion to approve: Minutes of Regularly Scheduled Session Meeting 01-19-21. The motion was seconded by Elder Cliff Van Ittersum and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Adjourning the Meeting

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Closing Prayer

Benediction

Closing the Meeting:

The meeting was closed in prayer and adjourned by the Moderator.

Submitted Respectfully:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen H. Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

Stephen H. Lucas
Clerk of the Session
March 16, 2021