

**Bonhomme Presbyterian Church
Minutes of Called Session Meeting
March 30, 2021
6:00 PM in via Zoom**

Minutes of the Meetings

Those Attending:

Jenny Brown, Robby Cella, Steve Ecker, John Green, Steve Lucas, Chad Schrieber, Jenni Stecher, Cliff VanIttersum, Mary Oldfield, Steve Cox, 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.

Topics to be considered in the called Session Meeting.

1. A one-hour conversation given to the Baptism; and
2. A 30-minute conversation given to the start of the “end of pandemic.”

Discussion

1. Conversations and Scripture concerning baptisms and our emphasis this year. Questions considered included the following:
 - a. If a person is moved by the Spirit to request baptism on April 18 (our first Baptism Sunday), and they have previously spoken to no one about this, do we allow a baptism at that moment?
 - b. If a person has previously been baptized as an infant, and requests baptism, can we “reaffirm their baptism” using water?
 - c. If a person requests baptism but is not willing to become a Covenant Partner of the church, can we still baptize them? There is some expectation in our Reformed Theological tradition of baptism requiring accountability.

Pastor Dave summarizes ECO’s position, where they allow flexibility, and where they have more strict requirements. This is an excellent opportunity to follow our Clerk’s suggestion at the last meeting that we think of Scripture passages that are relevant to the conversation.

After much discussion it was generally agreed that a fully fleshed-out policy needs to be developed as part of the revision of the 2011 “Rules of the Session.” In the meantime, it was agreed that:

- Membership is not necessarily required ahead of Baptism. However, if someone is Baptized in BPC it is incumbent that leadership strive to establish some spiritual accountability for the candidate.
 - Reaffirmation of an earlier Baptism is likely OK and should be performed with water. Reaffirmation Baptisms will not count toward the overall goal of 100 Baptisms during 2021.
2. The beginning of a conversation (to be continued on April 20) about how to open the church as the pandemic is coming to an end. Again, a great opportunity to reflect on Scripture passages that apply, e.g. passages about not being afraid, passages on God’s provision even in plague, or passages about caring for one another and valuing those who are most vulnerable. We have a specific request from a Covenant Partner to allow people to come to church without a reservation. But we anticipate that many will want to come without masks; and that others will want everyone to continue wearing masks. It would be wise for us to get ahead of this conversation and listen for God’s counsel.
- It was generally concluded that we will stay the course regarding masking and social distancing pending any substantial change in regulations or governmental guidance. Session will review this position each month. Andy Seeks will prepare a summary of the Sessions thinking for video distribution to the congregation.

Adjourning the Meeting

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Closing Prayer

Benediction

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
April 20, 2021