Minutes of Stated Meeting of Session Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church

noon Sunday, June 28, 2026

Youth House

THOSE PRESENT AND CONSTITUTING A QUORUM

Elders: Elizabeth Beshear, Danya Casey, Drew Dahlstrom, Alan Deichler, Joy Ellis, Mike Gelhausen, John Holcomb, Kyle Lewis, Lesley Martinelli, Jim Meyer, Julie Richard, David Scott and Anne Smith

Elders Absent: Trey Graves and Jason Howard

Guests: John Carver, Janelle Crays, Brooklyn Freisen, Chuck Fuquay, Caroline Homan and Reagan Rothenberger

Pastoral Staff: Revs. Mark Brainerd, Caroline Grindrod, Matthew Ruffner and Elizabeth Snyder

Staff: Ashlee Hueston, Israel Estrada and Katherine Pawlowski

Clerk of Session: Mindy Baxter

CALL TO ORDER

Rev. Mark Brainerd called the meeting to order and opened in prayer. The clerk declared a quorum.

MEETING WITH INQUIRER

Session meets with Matt Sumrow, who is discerning his call to ministry. He will be attending Yale Divinity School this fall after graduating from Vassar College. Matt shared his sense of call growing up in the church. He appreciates the community aspect of faith and is currently considering congregational ministry. He shares a formative experience was having doubts, and that PHPC youth staff was very supportive during that time. Campus life ministry at his undergraduate school was minimal, so he's developed a more personal practice of faith. He is looking forward to having more of a dedicated space to explore and grow in his faith alongside peers at Yale, as well as being surrounded by people from different faith backgrounds. Mark closes this portion of the meeting in prayer.

Matthew entertains a **MOTION** to sustain his nomination to become an inquirer. Motion carries. Matt will be paired with a session member for the next three years.

CHURCH HEADLINES

- Rev. Matthew Ruffner welcomes the new class of elders, who are attending this meeting as guests.
- Rev. Caroline Grindrod shares staff is over 500 coffees on the way to their 600 coffees goal. A group of kids is heading to Junior High Jubilee next week with Lauren and Josh. VBS had great attendance and was a big success.
- Mark shares a meaningful service was held Friday for Scott Odom, which was well attended with many people impacted by his story. Also, the current grief group concludes tomorrow and a community of intercessors has also been meeting.
- Rev. Elizabeth Snyder is planning another sip and social for older members of the church.
- Matthew shares it has been a meaningful and spirit-filled summer. Staff is working on next year's theme. Fall kick-off will be August 23, syncing up back to school instead of waiting until after Labor Day. The connection hour learning items have been interesting.
- Lauren Hood graduated from seminary yesterday! She is in the process of ordination and hopes to stay at PHPC.
- Julie Richard asks if the theme for the year will be shared with session before the congregation. Danya shares the journals and themes have been impactful this year, and that Mark's message today was especially impactful.
- A member of the church's property team, Pastora, noted how impactful VBS is in terms of hours spent on campus. Matthew thanks staff for their time dedicated to this event.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes and consent agenda reviewed and approved.

PHPC PULSE

Matthew shares that staff is working to retool these numbers so they provide the most relevant information.

MOTION FROM SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Matthew shares that the Special Projects Committee is ready to move to the next phase of planning. The significant lead gift the church received allows us to move forward at this time.

The Special Projects Committee **MOVES** that the Session authorize the Capital Projects Team to complete Phase I of the capital project and to expend up to $3,000,000 for that purpose, including conducting due diligence and engaging an owner's representative, architect, general contractor, and other professional services as needed. These

authorized payments will be made to vendors who have a contract with PHPC, will utilize capital campaign funds received by PHPC, will be managed by the PHPC Finance staff, and reflected in the capital campaign budget created and maintained by the Finance office. The Capital Projects Team will report regularly to the Session on its actions, expenditures, and progress.

Susan Rahe asks about how prior funding for outstanding projects will be handled. Ashelee Hueston shares that outstanding needs will be handled through the property committee. Joy Ellis says this money has already been received. Caroline G. asks which decisions will be only in the hands of the Session and which will be handled by the SPC. Anne Smith asks if Session has to approve all contracts. Chuck Fuquay will be reviewing all these contracts to keep these moving. The Book of Order requires oversight, but not individual approval. Anne asks if we're approving three years or if there will be an official campaign announcement before then. The announcement should come later this year.

Session receives a **MOTION** to name the executive advisor to the Capital Projects Team and senior director of operations of the church as contract signers. Amended motion passes.

Lesley Martinelli asks that Session receive updates, and Session will receive regular updates on contracts, amounts and names of vendors.

FINANCE REPORT & REVIEW

Janelle shares a summary of the finance report. We are ahead on giving this year. There are also some overruns for property. We are ahead in net deficit, though we've been successful in offsetting these. Net cash reserves is at three months right now, down about a half month right now. Giving is usually down in the summer, so this number will continue to decrease and Session will need to take action to address this. Anne Smith asks if addressing urgent needs will help with property expenditures. Janelle shares they are interrelated and work is not yet completed, so this should eventually resolve.

Matthew entertains a **MOTION** to receive the finance report as given. Seconded and passed.

BUDGET REVIEW

Janelle covers the budget review, which was provided in the consent agenda for advance Session review. Our cash intake is flat, but our expenses are going up. The proposed budget has a deficit this year, though we have funding to cover that and create a balance budget. That depletes our resources for the next 12 months. Janelle

shares about some of investment funds being used to close the gap, some of which are restricted and some of which are not. Session discusses appropriate use of these funds.

There will be a property reserve account established, and the property committee proposes any extra funds each year be applied there. Janelle shares the investment work is a new thing to the church, which has prompted the finance committee to rethink the way we manage our money. The foundation and church have been working closely together.

Session receives a **MOTION** from the finance committee to approve the budget. Motion carries.

Janelle reviews some investment disbursement guidelines with Session, including a Session-approved disbursement limit of 4.5%, base disbursements on prior year fund average, no disbursement limits on unrestricted funds and all disbursements of funds require finance committee and Session approval. Alan asks why we need these guidelines, and Janelle shares this provides some guardrails for future. Joy asks if this is best approved today or better with more discussion. Janelle shares it helps facilitate the work of the finance committee. David shares we have not needed these guidelines before since these funds being directed to the church are new.

Session receives a **MOTION** from the finance committee to approve the investment fund disbursement guidelines. Motion carries

Session receives a **MOTION** to release the remaining funds in the Ina Walker Capital Fund and the Property Reserve Accounts held at TPF to meet the urgent needs gap and initiate work on identified priority project needs. Motion carries.

Janelle reviews the church's cash position, which will need Session's attention to address. Mike asks about looking at more multi-year budget planning and various leverages the church has.

Janelle shares personally with the Session that she recommends a holistic look at the church and its purpose and understanding. Trade-offs may be necessary. It's time to evolve our ways of thinking in terms of revenue, with committees working together. We need to think more broadly in terms of fundraising and look long-range. She recommends engaging all people across the church community. Matthew prays for Janelle.

STAFF REPORT

Matthew entertains a **MOTION** to move into executive session. Moved and approved.

Matthew entertains a **MOTION** to adjourn from executive session. Moved and approved.

Jim Meyer mentions that we need to call a congregational meeting to approve new terms of call. That will be called in September.

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING ELDERS

Matthew thanks outgoing elders Drew Dahlstrom, David Scott and Anne Smith for their service. Each elder provides reflection for the Session.

ADJOURNMENT AND PRAYER

A **MOTION** to adjourn was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting closed in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindy Baxter, Clerk of Session

Attest: Rev. Matthew Ruffner, Moderator

Date Approved: 8/23/26