

FPCLY SESSION REPORT: 2020 MID-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- **Dr. Will Willimon Challenges FPC Session** Page 2
 - Look Outward!
 - Appreciate Our Many Gifts
 - Share Our Message with the Community

- **New Audio/Visual Equipment** Page 2
 - Sanctuary Speakers improve Sound Quality & Discernibility
 - Sanctuary Hanging Mikes Improve Recording, Radio & Streaming Quality
 - Portable Sound System Supports Streaming Of FPC Services
 - Multiple Video Cameras & Website Streaming In The Works

- **FPC Hosting Elections - A Tradition of Community Support** Page 3

- **New Church Directory** Page 4
 - Last Directory Was 2015
 - All Pictures & Info Will Be Available on FPC (Password Protected) Website
 - Some Printed Copies Available
 - Sittings Scheduled for Aug. 4-5 & 25-26, 2020, Look for Announcements

- **Re-Opening The Church** Page 4
 - Church Offices & Meeting Rooms Open By Appointment June 8
 - Services Continue (Outdoors @ 9:00, On Radio & Facebook @ 10:30)
 - Sanctuary Services Will Resume When No Capacity Restrictions

- **Replacement Church Steeple** Pages 2,3 & 5
 - Session Approves Replacement With Original Design & Modern Materials
 - Installation Planned for After Easter 2021

- **Financial Matters** Pages 2,3 & 5
 - 2020 Finances To Date Are Solid, PPP Used for FPC & WDS
 - Endowment Is Healthy, FPC Has No Debt
 - One Time 2019 Bequests & Gifts Balance Our 2020 Budget
 - Increased Participation, Growth & Giving Are Indicated



Session Report: 2020 Mid-Year Detail

A Copy of Minutes for all Session Meetings and the Strategic Plan are available to you by request

Session Members

Catherine Adams, Al Baker, Jennifer Clark, Rob Cleland, Caskie Giles, Morgan Hollister, Erik Koroneos, Tance Laughon, Emmett Lifsey, Gwen Maddox, Jamie Moss, Chal Nunn, Robert O’Brian, Donnie Ore, Jenny Osinga, Hollins Pierpoint, Kathryn Pumpherly, Jim Richards, Laurie Sommardahl, Nancy Strosnider, Diane Stroud, Kirk Todd, Donna Whitehouse, Bill Wescott, Dave Tate (Clerk of Session), Rev. Peter A. Thompson (Moderator)

January 2020

Session retreat with Dr. Will Willimon of Duke University Divinity School. Lunch was provided to the group by Chris & Amy Heppner. The main objective of the retreat was to “be in conversation” during the afternoon with Dr. Willimon and with ongoing FPCLY Strategic Plan implementation efforts.

Dr. Willimon offered his impressions and observations of FPCLY based on his extensive experience and involvement with many churches over his career: The work that we do (on Session and in leadership roles) is “literally life and death for the church,”; The FPC building is a beautiful gift offered to us and for our stewardship. It projects beauty, quality and stability; Keeping the church “up to date” is extremely important. It reflects on the quality of our stewardship of it’s gift and projects the church’s image in the community; We must be always be mindful of looking at ourselves from the outside as other people see us; The more we look “inside the house” the more trouble we are in. We must be tireless in looking “outside the house” in projecting our ministries; The choir and music program at FPCLY is robust, strong and growing. This is in contrast to most mainline protestant churches in the US (the number of choirs decreases 10% every 8 years).; Church attendance and participation are key and essential metrics for church health; In many congregations, the younger people are concerned about the lack of content in the worship services; Many churches have instituted “alternative services” with success. Dr. Willimon offered the following observations of the FPCLY Strategic Plan: Growth of the church is essential! Getting more new, young Presbyterians in the congregation is crucial to church sustainability; Hospitality of the church and its congregation to people outside the church must be intentional and practiced. Redoing the Foyer and Narthex to be a “welcoming hall” should be considered. Hospitality is the KEY to growth.

February 2020

Regular Stated Session Meeting in the Officers’ Room. Items approved: Purchase of a new Portable Sound System, new Speakers for the Sanctuary (with trial first), and recording microphones for music broadcasting, as completion of phases within Communications Plan in 2017 to upgrade technology and sound quality throughout the church; Replacement of Fellowship Hall Refrigerator after failure; Option of FPC Weekday School Benefits to all Full Time Church Staff; Wedding request for Louis Burton and Emma Mortemousque on September 26, 2020 in the Sanctuary.

Approval for the Facilities Committee to proceed with Campbellsville Industries and Jamerson-Lewis Construction Company to develop the project proposal for steeple replacement in order to better define the

scope, costs, schedule and terms of this project. Next steps will be to assign Project Managers and complete the FPC Project Contract for final approval before final contracts are signed.

How can FPCLY improve its role as an election site? After a period of discernment including feedback from the congregation, it was agreed that the Congregational Life committee would work to recruit volunteers who can support the Election Board and serve as greeters to all voters present.

A report on the February 13, 2020 Presbytery of the Peaks meeting at Forest Presbyterian Church was made by Tance Laughon and Bill Wescott, FPC Commissioners for that meeting. A longstanding "Mission Study" was accepted at the meeting. The Mission Study described various strategies and organizational structure for the Presbytery in the future.

March 2020

Regular Stated Session Meeting was canceled due to COVID-19. Electronic votes were received to approve the New Member Request to receive David and Dayna Kumar by Reaffirmation of Faith and for their son Caleb Kumar to be baptized. Dates for reaffirmation and baptism to be determined.

April 2020

Regular Stated Session Meeting was held via Zoom. Items approved: Baptism Request for Austen Lee Coffee at a date to be determined; New member request to receive Wayne and Melissa Johnson by transfer of letter from Forest PC, VA; Transfer of membership for Daniel Warsing to FPC Greenville, SC; Wedding request for Macon Cobb and Charles Yates on May 9, 2020 in the Rose Garden.

Approval to amend the standing policy of First Presbyterian Church, Lynchburg, regarding the confidentiality of congregational donor data to now allow a select group of personnel, including the Business Director, Treasurer, Senior Pastor/ Head of Staff, and presently serving members of the Stewardship Committee, to have access to the names of donors and their donor history for a period of up to five (5) years preceding any request for the same, as hereinafter set forth. The chair of the Stewardship Committee is authorized to request a report, or multiple reports, containing specific donor data from the Business Director and in return, the Business Director shall provide the Stewardship Committee with a printed or electronic report of the requested data. Once obtained from the Business Director, the Stewardship Committee may determine the use of the donor information, as needed. All donors will be given the option of keeping their specific data "anonymous", meaning their information will not be shared beyond the Business Director and Treasurer. All personnel with access to donor data will be required to sign a Confidentiality Statement, on a form to be later determined. Intentional communication about this motion and process will be directed by the Stewardship Committee to the entirety of the congregation by letter and email.

Approval to replace the HVAC on the roof servicing the Narthex and the HVAC unit on the roof servicing the Choir Loft. The HVAC work is estimated to be \$18,206 for both units. Funds for all this work will come from the Building and Maintenance Fund.

Approval to Renovate History Room Bathroom after toilet cracked and plumbing failed. The bathroom is estimated to be \$4600. Funds for this work will come from the Building and Maintenance Fund.

Election of a Capital Projects Steering Committee was approved. With several capital projects on the horizon, like the replacement of the steeple and a potential organ renovation, it was fortuitous to get ahead and began planning any capital campaign plans. The Capital Projects Steering Committee will include Kathryn Pumphrey, Donna Whitehouse, Kirk Todd, Dave Tate, and Rev. Peter Thompson.

May 2020

Regular Stated Session Meeting was held via Zoom. Items approved: New Member request to receive Emma Tinsley by Re-affirmation of Faith at a date to be determined; Removal of membership request for David and Diane Dwyer who moved from Lynchburg to Michigan.

It is time for a new church directory of the congregation. It has been five years since the last directory was issued. Pictures, names and contact information (addresses, phone #s and email addresses) will be incorporated in to the directory. A limited number of the directories will be printed and all information will be available through FPCLY website. Access to the directory information will be password protected to ensure confidentiality of the information. Jamie Moss, Diane Stroud and Gwen Mattox volunteered for the committee.

Approval for the purchase of Licensing Services for Music. Since Facebook and other platforms allow people to access the service after the live event, it is necessary for us to secure proper licensing for streaming and copyright. He then explained there are currently two "blanket-licensing" services that we will need. The annual cost for both of these licenses would be \$924. The money for this licensing cost would come out of the Radio Broadcast Fund. Donnie put forth the motion.

Re-opening FPCLY: The church's current position is one of cautious optimism. As Virginia's statewide restrictions begin to gradually ease (Phase by Phase) the church will determine what is appropriate for FPC by 1) considering the extent of restrictions, 2) being informed by expert advice and 2) the capacity and capability of the church to provide services and equipment for protecting congregants, staff and visitors. Rev. Chad McCain reported that as a part of the church's Safety Committee risk matrix, "infectious disease" was identified as a risk item. Chad will involve the Safety Committee in these COVID-19 re-opening of church conversations. Subsequent efforts will be made with Worship and Music on ways to get back together for worship in person (outside worship), Staff for Office and Facility use, and the Weekday School for thoughts on school reopening in Fall.

Financial Report: "The long-term financial viability of the Church is not sound. The big picture is that 1) pledging is steadily declining, 2) attendance is declining, 3) the average age of the congregation is climbing, 4) future budgets would project an annual loss of approximately \$120,000 per year until such time as we spend all of our endowment. We must reverse the current trend. Please understand that we stand on a burning platform. We are faced with an existential (financial, not spiritual) situation." To be clear, FPCLY has a healthy endowment that serves as a lifeline for our Annual Operations. Also, we have no debt. Rev. Peter Thompson charged the Session to begin discussions about initiatives needed to increase participation and enhance the vitality of FPCLY. First step will be in three sessions organized by elder class. Follow up step will be identifying key initiatives moving forward (5-7 at most). Follow up to that will be educating congregation.

June 2020

Regular Stated Session Meeting was held in the Fellowship Hall for social distancing and via Zoom.

The Annual Report and Vision of the Weekday School was provided by the new Director of the FPC Weekday School Bianca Childress. The school had to close for the remainder of the Spring semester on March 12 due to COVID-19. With foresight and effort from the Weekday School Board Finance committee and additional work with Lori Wright (Church Business Director), an application for a PPP Loan was completed, submitted, and granted. This loan helped to pay all school staff and teachers for the remainder of the school year. With a loss of almost \$20,000 in tuition to early birds, lunch bunch, and summer camp, the loan was a saving grace to the bottom line of the school's financial status. Bianca discussed 3 main goals for the school in 2020-2021: *Program Development* with a focus to increase Christian themes to classrooms, music, and chapel; *Professional Development* for staff and teachers to grow and learn how to implement new and exciting

classroom ideas; *School and Church collaboration* to increase with communication, volunteer opportunities, and program support. With Session support, the school plans to open in compliance with state guidelines for COVID-19 precautions for the start of the school year and will seek to follow more of the LCS schedule.

The Steeple Replacement Project Contract, compiled and submitted by project managers Bill Perkins and Sutton Tinsley, was approved. FPCLY will proceed in contract with Jamerson-Lewis Construction to facilitate the full project. Timeline for construction is planned for April 2021 (after Easter). Payment procedure will be shared between 2020 using Building Maintenance Funds and 2021 with an option to be covered by endowment, bank loan, or capital funding.

The Capital Projects Steering Committee request to contract James Klote and Associates, a capital campaign consultant, to conduct a feasibility study (readiness assessment) late summer and early fall was approved. The total cost of the feasibility study is estimated to be \$21,000 and will be supported by the Special Needs Fund. The purpose of this study will be to determine the congregation's willingness to support a capital campaign over the next 3 years. A scope of projects to be included is being developed to include a minimum of the steeple replacement and organ renovation. Following the feasibility study, the Capital Projects Team and Session will determine if, when, and how to move forward.

The Personnel Committee provided an update on the status of Rev. Chad McCain, Associate Pastor. Chad requested a leave of absence on May 31 for 1-3 months to focus on personal and health matters. The Personnel Committee granted the leave and is working with Chad to support what is best for him and the church.

Approval for a new Welcome "Hospitality" Desk to be built and placed in the Front Entrance Foyer. The request for this desk came out of the hospitality initiative from Session in May 2019. Initial drawings were rendered and quotes from cabinet makers were collected. The desk will be on casters and movable. It will match the décor of the paneling and wood work in the Foyer area. The main purpose of the desk will be to provide a main resource center for visitors and members to be greeted and access information on the life and ministries of FPCLY. It will also add a layer of safety and security with better line of site to the front entrance. Total project is estimated to cost \$5000. Memorial Gifts has agreed to support the project. Caskie Giles will be working with Peter and Lori to complete the project this summer.

Approval to remove Communications from the current Session Committee structure and commission the responsibilities of communication to the church staff. The decision was supported because we now have a staff member focused on communications and the rest of the staff is able to identify and assess effective communication methods needed for the church.

A compilation of initiatives for what and how FPCLY can increase participation and enhance the vitality of the church was reviewed. The main initiatives were hospitality, worship, the Weekday School, Communications, finance, mission, and embracing diversity. Rev. Peter Thompson proposed a new way forward built on 1 Peter 4:7-11 charging FPCLY to be the church as God intended to "be and share God's love and God's light." How we do that is by "Celebrating God's grace and inspiring the next generation for Christ" through 6 main efforts: being hospitable and loving ourselves and others, reaching out to share the good news and serve our neighbors, praising God through worship and music, learning and growing as disciples, being good stewards of what has been entrusted, and managing effective leadership and administration. To embody these efforts as our way forward would call for a shift in organizational structure to a more initiative driven approach rather than program approach. This will be a start for further conversations pertaining to how FPCLY continues to discern how to best move forward in being the church God calls FPCLY to be.