

**STATED MEETING OF SESSION**

**New Hope Presbyterian Church  
Tuesday, September 26, 2023**



**Our mission: To glorify God and make disciples by living out the gospel together.**

<b>Teaching Elders</b>					
		Pastor Mike Jones	X		
		Pastor Paul Pepin	<b>X</b>		
<b>Active Ruling Elders</b>					
<b>Class of 2023</b>		<b>Class of 2024</b>		<b>Class of 2025</b>	
David Carpenter	X	Doug Keno	X	Candy Engelman	X
Jerry Elliott	X	Sandy Knipe	X	Jim LaRue	X
Carolyn Melton	X	Mark Myers	Z	Jon Witenko	EA
David Milligan	X	Ken Walker	E A		
		Rodney Woosley	E A		
P=In Person; Z=via Zoom; EA=Excused Absence; =Absent				Quorum:	Ye s
<b>Others</b>					
Chuck Knox – Treasurer (absent-out of town); Signe Pagel – Clerk of Session; Flo Antuono – Exec. Director of Operations					
Guest present: Zane McMinn					

**MINUTES**

Participatory prayer meeting, led by Pastor Mike and Elders (6:00 – 6:40 p.m.), to include:

- a. Thanks for the many years of service to New Hope of Elder Doug Keno and wife Jan. God’s blessings to them as they leave Fort Myers tomorrow for the next chapter of their life in their new home “up north.”
  - b. We are called to be united in prayer, and we need to hold each other up just as Aaron and Hur held up Moses (see Exodus 17:8).
1. Session was called to order by Pr. Mike, with prayer by Dave Carpenter, at 6:40 p.m.
  2. **Motion (Larue/Keno/U)** -- to allow guests to speak if they so desire.
  3. Moderator’s Report – Pastor Mike Jones
    - a. One year ago this week Hurricane Ian devastated parts of Lee County. We appreciate Paul Gorny’s leadership of the New Hope Disaster Response Team

- through which \$298,000 was distributed to those in need (and there are still some funds left in the account), and we were able to rebuild 10 homes in Harlem Heights with the help of other disaster response teams.
- b. On October 8, Yves Dushime will be a guest speaker at New Hope and will share his testimony. He is a refugee from Rwanda and is a pastor in the refugee camps.
  - c. Please read the article distributed this evening entitled, “What is the Great Dechurching?” *“For the first time in eight decades, more adults in the United States don’t attend church than attend church.”*
  - d. At the worship services on October 29, we will read the names of New Hope members who have passed away since 2022.
  - e. **Motion (Elliott/Larue/U)** – the following were approved to serve as the officer candidate Nominating Committee: Jon Witenko (elder and chair), David Carpenter (elder), Dave Thompson, Diane Lake, Sue Morton.
  - f. **Motion (Elliott/Engleman/U)** – A Congregational Meeting will be held on October 8 for the purpose of electing the officer candidate Nominating Committee. It was agreed that a meeting notice will be carried in the E-News this Friday (September 29) and will also be announced during the worship services this Sunday (October 1).
4. Assistant to the Pastor’s report – Pastor Paul Pepin
- a. Cuba Mission Trip – A team currently consisting of Pr. Paul, Pr. Mike, Jim and Judy Mayer is going to Cuba the latter part of October for the purpose of training church leaders (50 pastors and their spouses in at least three cities).
  - b. Pr. Paul distributed a brochure that describes the re-designed path to membership in New Hope church. Entitled “Pathways: Stepping Stones of Faith,” the process begins with a person’s profession of faith in Christ in front of pastors and some elders. A series of seven classes follow which explain the essentials of the faith and help the new member live out their faith in the New Hope community.
    - i. Eight people attended the meeting last Sunday and five made their professions of faith. The ad hoc committee hearing their testimonies was comprised of Pr. Mike Jones, Elder Mark Myers, and Deacon Flo Antuono.
    - ii. **Motion (Myers/Jones/U ad hoc committee)** – The following individuals are accepted into membership of New Hope church. By profession of faith, they are: Concetta Castiglione, Janice Gevenda, Joan Koehler. By reaffirmation of faith, they are: Phyllis Crumbo, David Crumbo. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Clerk of Session Report:

- a. Motion (Larue/Keno/U) to approve the August 22, 2023, Stated Session Minutes (see attachment).
  - b. Motion (Milligan/Larue/U) -- to approve the Minutes of the August 22 Executive Session Meeting.
  - c. Motion (Larue/Myers/ U) approved by Session via email on August 31, 2023 – “Motion that the Session endorse the two-hour membership course and that it be offered on September 24 from 12:20 – 2:20.” (See attached)
  - d. Items in previous month (August) recorded for EPC submission:
    - i. Lord’s Supper – celebrated on August 6 at each worship service
    - ii. Ordination/installation of new deacons/elders – none
    - iii. New members – none
    - iv. Dismissal/deletions from membership – 14 (11 at their request; 3 by letter of transfer)
    - v. Deaths/births/adoptions/marriages/baptisms -- none
    - vi. Congregational meetings -- none
6. Executive Director of Operations Report (see attached report) – Flo Antuono
- a. Antuono noted that procedures are being refined for following up with visitors to New Hope.
  - b. Milligan suggested that the new staff organization chart be posted on the church website in response to questions about it and also to affirm the recent restructuring. Antuono indicated that will be done.
7. Treasurer’s Report – Chuck Knox was not at the meeting.
8. Finance Committee Report – Jerry Elliott (See attached report)
- a. Elliott talked through the highlights of the financial report usually covered by Chuck Knox. In particular, he noted that actual year-to-date income is approximately \$30,000 short of y-t-d budgeted income. However, history shows that giving goes up in the months of October through December and the committee is optimistic that actual income for the year will be close to what was budgeted. Expenses are in line with what was budgeted.
  - b. Session endorsed Elliott’s plan to speak at each Sunday School class next Sunday about the state of the church’s finances for the purpose of education and transparency.
  - c. On the idea of making the congregation aware of the gift of the Bliem house, the Session endorsed this idea, although it was suggested by Pr. Paul that the name of the donors not be used out of respect for their privacy. However, after discussion, since the gift was posthumous it was agreed to include the Bliem’s name.
  - d. Elliott gave the Session a “heads up” that the Finance Committee will reintroduce at a future meeting the suggestion to eliminate the presence of Fort Myers Police

on campus for next year. This would save \$10,000/year. Please start thinking about this suggestion in preparation for that discussion.

- e. There are currently just a little over 400 giving units at New Hope.
  - f. **Motion (Milligan/Keno/U)** – The Steinway piano in the church office area will be placed for sale through a local consignment store that specializes in pianos. The estimated value is \$25,000 and the consignor will receive 50% of the sale price, plus expenses for moving the piano out of New Hope, tuning, etc.
9. Membership Committee Report – David Milligan – Elder Ken Walker has submitted his resignation from Session and requests his membership status at New Hope be moved to “inactive.” His family members attend a different church in the area and Walker will be worshipping with them in the future. We appreciate the years of service he has given to New Hope.
10. Personnel Committee Report – Candy Engelman (see attached report) – The church offices will be closed on Christmas Day, Monday, December 25. It is the recommendation of the Personnel Committee that Tuesday and Wednesday, December 26 and 27, 2023 also be declared a paid holiday for current staff in recognition of their dedication and commitment to the families of New Hope during this very challenging year.
- a. **Motion (Larue/Melton/U)** – The offices of New Hope will be closed for two additional days following Christmas Day, Monday December 25, 2023. Tuesday and Wednesday, December 26 and 27, 2023, will be considered a holiday for staff in recognition and appreciation of their dedication and commitment to the families of New Hope during this very challenging year.
11. Sr. Pastor Search Team Report – David Milligan – Elders are invited to view the page on the church website that describes the status of the search process. It is encouraging that N.L. Moore has identified some possible candidates and will begin the interview process soon.
12. Unfinished Business
- a. Deacons’ Handbook – David Carpenter – A revised Deacons’ Handbook was distributed for review by the elders in preparation for discussion and adoption at next month’s meeting. Pr. Mike drew attention to Sec.2. 1. Board of Deacons w herein it states “. . . at least eighteen (18) and a max of twenty-one (21). . .”. He noted that the church By-Laws state that the minimum number of deacons is twelve, thus the Deacon’s Handbook should be revised to reflect the minimum number as 12, not 18.
13. New Business
- a. Carolyn Melton commented that a prayer meeting was held at the church late this afternoon called “Concerted Prayer for Gospel Priorities.” It appears this will be held on an ongoing basis, and she suggested elders attend in the future as an affirmation of the importance of corporate prayer. In discussion, it became

apparent that only two elders knew about the prayer meeting, it had not been published to the general membership, and was seemingly organized by a handful of New Hope members. Both Antuono and Elliott said they would talk with the person(s) they thought organized the prayer meeting to obtain information that will be helpful in considering how this is represented going forward.

14. Other Reports from Committees/Ministries – see attachments, except where noted as “no report”:
- a. Deacons – Sue Morton, Secretary (no report attached)
  - b. Family Ministries – Michelle Myers, Director
  - c. Property Council – Ed Harger, Director
  - d. Finance – Brad Starner, Director
  - e. Missions/Outreach – Jim Mayer, Director
  - f. Worship Attendance (Files OL05 & OL08) – Angel Dobson
  - g. Sunday School Attendance (File SS00) – Angel Dobson
  - h. Membership Reports (File MS01, RPT09H, RPT14P, RPT09F, RPT09G – Angel Dobson
15. Motion (Larue/Elliott/U) – the meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by:  
Pastor Mike Jones, Moderator  
Signe Pagel, Clerk of Session