

STATED MEETING OF SESSION

**New Hope Presbyterian Church
Tuesday, April 23, 2024**



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

Teaching Elders					
		Pastor Mike Jones	P		
		Pastor Paul Pepin	P		
Active Ruling Elders					
Class of 2024		Class of 2025		Class of 2026	
Scott Connell	P	Candy Engelman	P	Bill Ashworth	P
Sandy Knipe	Z	Jim LaRue	P	Bill Enslin	P
Mark Myers	P	Jon Witenko	P	Zane McMinn	P
Rodney Woosley	EA			Tiffany Myers	P
				Rob Watkins	P
P=In Person; Z=via Zoom; EA=Excused Absence; =Absent				Quorum:	Yes
Others					
Signe Pagel – Clerk of Session; Flo Antuono – Exec. Dir. Of Operations; Chuck Knox via Zoom					
Guests: None					

MINUTES

1. Pr. Mike read and taught from scripture in Ezekiel and Titus. We are called to go to “the rebellious people,” and lament, mourning, and woe may be inherent in that. But it is sweet because it is what God has instructed us to do.
2. The Stated Session meeting opened at 6:17 p.m. with prayer by Bill Enslin.
3. Moderator’s Report – Pastor Mike Jones
 - a. Pr. Mike announced that he has accepted a call to be the lead pastor at a church in the Atlanta, GA, area, and his last day at New Hope will be May 17. He distributed a copy of his letter of resignation to each of the elders, and the Clerk sent it via text to the two elders not in attendance as well as Treasurer Chuck Knox. Understandably, elders expressed their surprise and disappointment that Pr. Mike has chosen to leave New Hope and Pr. Mike offered to answer any and all questions from them. He noted that the church to which he is moving is undergoing some significant difficulties and thinks his background here at New Hope will be of value to them in working through those difficulties. Pr. Mike noted that one of the key benefits for him and Gina is that they will be located much closer to the communities in which their parents and their children live.

- b. Pr. Paul, Candy Engelman, and Flo Antuono agreed to collaborate on the details of a reception to be held on May 5 for Pr. Mike and his family.
 - c. There was considerable discussion about how best to communicate Pr. Mike's decision to the church members. It was determined that Pr. Mike will send an email to church members tomorrow (April 24) and there will also be an announcement from the front of the church on Sunday, April 28. Bill Enslen agreed to make that announcement immediately following the sermon.
 - d. As an aside to this discussion, T. Myers suggested that Pr. Sheldon be asked to record one or two short (one-minute) video messages which can be played at upcoming Sunday services, the tone of which would be friendly, encouraging, and anticipatory of his arrival at New Hope mid-May.
 - e. Elders participated in prayerful laying-on-of-hands for Pr. Mike and shared their love for him and appreciation for his leadership these past many years.
 - f. **Motion: Connell/LaRue/U** via email on April 24 - *"A Congregational Meeting shall be held on Sunday, May 5 at the conclusion of the 9:30 service, with one agenda item, that being to act on the dissolution of the call of Pr. Mike Jones."*
4. **Motion: LaRue/Connell/U** -- to move to Executive Session to discuss the severance requests of Pr. Mike. At this point, both Pr. Mike and Pr. Paul excused themselves from the meeting until the Session would reconvene.
 5. Executive Session Meeting was held.
 6. **Motion: M. Myers/LaRue/U** -- to dissolve the Executive Session and return to the Stated Session meeting. Pr. Mike and Pr. Paul re-joined the meeting.
 7. Assistant Pastor Report – Paul Pepin
 - a. Tonight's meeting of Session is the last one at which Pr. Paul will attend, as his time with New Hope concludes the day before Pr. Sheldon arrives in May. Pr. Paul expressed his love for the members of New Hope and his desire to stay connected here. His role here centered on Missions, Evangelism, and Discipleship.
 - b. Missions – the next trip to Cuba to train pastors there will be May 28 – June 2; five people from New Hope (or friends of New Hope) will go with Pr. Paul. Also, the Presbytery has asked Pr. Paul to serve on a committee to establish Latino churches in the Fort Myers area.
 - c. Evangelism – He has been meeting with many people in the Fort Myers area to share the gospel with them and has a passion for this. Moreover, he has worked with New Hope's Pathways program for potential and new members.
 - d. Discipleship – He contacts all first-time visitors to New Hope as well as those members who have reached out to him. Pr. Paul has a heart for these people and will continue to stay in touch with them.

- e. Elders expressed their appreciation for Pr. Paul and for his concern for the members of New Hope.
- 8. Clerk of Session Report – Signe Pagel
 - a. **Motion: LaRue/Engelman/U** – to approve the Minutes of the April 2, 2024, Stated Session meeting.
 - b. Items (**for March**) recorded herein for submission to EPC:
 - i. Lord’s Supper – celebrated on March 3 at each worship service.
 - ii. Ordination/installation of new deacons/elders – none
 - iii. New members – none
 - iv. Dismissal/deletions from membership – none
 - v. Births/adoptions/marriages/baptisms – none
 - vi. Congregational meetings – March 10 to approve Terms of Call for Sheldon MacGillivray
- 9. Finance Report – Scott Connell
 - a. David Milligan and Bob Ritterbusch have been added to the group that counts the offering on Mondays.
 - b. Connell gave a clarification of the report made at the meeting of Session on April 2 concerning the fund out of which the payment to R.L. Moore will be taken. It will come out of account #30001, which is called the “General Fund” on the financial statements and is a cash-flow checking account. This fund has been referred to as a “reserve fund” by some in the past, but that is a misnomer and has caused confusion.
 - c. The Finance Committee members will visit with the various staff ministry teams to identify financial needs (and wish lists).
 - d. Bill Ashworth and Kevin Dotson are the newest members of the Finance Committee.
 - e. Finance Committee member, Jennifer Porter, is exploring where to invest the money received from the sale of the Bliem house.
- 10. Personnel Committee – Candy Engelman – It is imperative that we note how thankful Session is for Pr. Mike’s service these past years.
- 11. Executive Director of Operations – Flo Antuono
 - a. There will be a reception for Pr. Sheldon on Sunday, May 19, and the Board of Deacons will handle the details of the reception. Antuono asked Session to consider if there should be one combined service that Sunday or both a traditional and a contemporary service.
 - b. **Motion: LaRue/Enslin/U** – Worship on Sunday, May 19, shall be combined into one service at 10:00 a.m.
- 12. Membership Committee Report – Jim LaRue

- a. An ad hoc committee headed by Pr. Mike heard the profession of faith of Ellen Whitten and Mike Whitten and they have been accepted into membership of New Hope.
 - b. LaRue distributed a list of members who requested to be removed from membership at New Hope.
 - c. Motion: LaRue/Myers/U – to dismiss from membership the 28 people who have requested removal.
 - d. Connell prayed for our two new members and for those who are departing to other congregations.
13. Student and Family Ministry – Jon Witenko
- a. The Family Ministry team is recruiting participants and volunteers for FamCon.
 - b. The Student and Family Ministry team is currently interviewing two candidates for the position of youth director and is optimistic about these candidates.
 - c. Cadence will return as an intern for the summer, and we are in need of one more.
 - d. T. Myers prayed for the Student and Family Ministry team.
14. Unfinished Business – None
15. New Business
- a. T. Myers and Witenko both request that a change be made at the end of the 11:00 service to invite the elders who are available to pray with people to the front of the room before the benediction rather than after the benediction.
 - b. Witenko suggested Session discuss, at a later time, the rationale for services at 9:30 and 11:00 rather than at 9:00 and 10:30 as scheduled a few years ago. This is noted and elders may wish to bring it up for discussion some time after Pr. Sheldon arrives.
16. Motion: LaRue/Witenko/U – to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m. Zane McMinn closed the meeting in prayer.

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