



Session Update May 19, 2021

The **Rev. James Gale**, Executive Presbyter, shared some news and updates from the Presbytery of the Mid-South. He reminded us of support and resources available to us from the Presbytery, especially regarding curriculum, fund raising, conflict management, polity, etc. He expressed gratitude for the involvement of Idlewild members in the Presbytery and in the Memphis community. Rev. Gale announced that the Presbytery is updating its covenant with departed pastors and reminded us that departed pastors are expected to remain distanced from the operations and pastoral relationships of the church for a year, but he encouraged us to maintain any social connections per usual.

Vicki Cox, newly appointed Executive Director of CAFE, introduced herself to Session. Vicki has a wide experience in mental health and human development services, mostly in non-profit organizations. She shared that EEC enrollment is at its highest since the pandemic began. She shared excitement about the opportunities to engage with Idlewild members and to get to know the church as a partner with CAFE.

New members were introduced and received into membership:

Sarah and Reid Stuart – The Stuart family has recently moved back into Midtown but have lived in Memphis for several years. Sarah attended Idlewild as a student at Rhodes College and has connections with Elizabeth Doolin from that time. They are grateful to have a church community as new parents who are living apart from extended family and they appreciate the work the church does within the Memphis area along with the open, affirming environment. Sarah is an attorney and Reid is a teacher; they are parents to baby **Greer**.

Carolyn Louise Simpson - Beth Simpson's granddaughter grew up at St. John's (Memphis), and became active in RUF at Vanderbilt; returning to Memphis, Carolyn attended Idlewild with family and appreciated the accepting community and the appreciation for questioning and curiosity. Carolyn is currently in medical school.

Elders heard a faith statement update from Katie Cole with a reflection from The Book of Common Prayer. The attendees broke into small groups to further discuss the prayer, inspired by Katie's gratitude to God for revealing new things to us.



The Session heard a report from both pastors. The director of EEC has resigned to take a strong professional opportunity; the search for her replacement is just beginning. Jenni Brooks has recently been named Director of Operations and Communication (no longer transitional). David reported that COVID vaccines will be offered at MTAM tomorrow, but any willing person is invited to receive vaccination; both single-dose and two-dose vaccines will be available. David reminds us that Pentecost is this coming Sunday, followed by Trinity Sunday. Then he will begin a new sermon series on the Fruits of the Spirit; David encourages members to stay engaged over the summer.

Rev. Dorrien-Christians reported feeling very energized by the work done at the retreat for the Christian Formation leadership team; the purpose was to discern and rally around a new vision for Christian formation from a wholistic, life-long approach. As for outreach, Sara reported that in-person numbers far exceeded what we are seeing with "MTAM to go" under pandemic practices. This leaves her with curiosity and concern for those we haven't seen, many of whom do not have reliable contact information.

Treasurer Mary Tayloe provided the [financial report](#) to the Session.

The COVID Advisory Team (CAT) presented a summary from their of May 19 meeting to incorporate the latest COVID recommendations from the CDC. The CAT proposed revisions to the church's current COVID policies. The CAT is not changing the requirement for people to maintain 6 feet of distance and use of masks indoors at Idlewild. The following changes were approved by the session after discussion and vote:

- In worship:
 - Choral and congregational singing may resume (with masks).
 - Passing of peace and passing of offering plate may resume (with logistics to be determined by W&M).
 - Worshippers may be seated in transepts.
 - Worshippers may self-select seats in the sanctuary, observing distance requirements.
- Mask Use at Idlewild
 - Masks optional for vaccinated individuals outdoors.
 - Indoor groups of less than 25 may meet without masks provided that all attendees are vaccinated AND the group consensus is not to use masks.
- Campus facilities
 - All restrooms will open.
 - All water fountains will open.
 - Communal eating may resume.

Note that there may be some logistical and/or preparatory work that will need to be completed before all of these policies may be fully (re)implemented.

The Session then heard from Marjorie Reynolds and received her letter of resignation, effective June 4, 2021. Marjorie expressed love for the congregation and gratefulness for support from the families in the church. The Session shared words of encouragement and gratitude for her work with us and our children and participated in a virtual laying on of hands and a prayer of encouragement for Marjorie.

All stated business being addressed, a motion was heard to adjourn the meeting and the Session closed in prayer.