



Session Update October 20, 2021

The Session meeting of October 20, 2021 was moderated and opened in prayer by Rev. Powers. The agenda was reviewed and approved.

The Session received three new members into our congregation. **Catherine Carroll** became involved in the life of Idlewild when a friend brought her to several church activities. She developed an appreciation for the social consciousness and the way members treated one another. She envisions that Idlewild will be “a place where [she] can grow.” **The Hardins (Katlin and Randle)** recently moved to the Memphis area for Katlin to begin the SLP program at U of M. Randle teaches history at West Junior High School. Caitlin and Randle expressed their love for serving the elderly and promoting justice in the community.

The Session heard from **Alex Chambers**, a seminarian that has been under Idlewild’s care for several years. She became involved at Idlewild as a student at Rhodes, and later briefly served on Idlewild’s staff before moving to Nashville to further her education. Alex shared some of her journey to ministry, which includes significant work with incarcerated women and development of a support group, Free Hearts, which unites formerly incarcerated women to provide support, education and advocacy to families impacted by incarceration. She will be reviewed by the Mid-South Presbytery for advancement to the phase of candidacy. Her liaison is Julie Markham.

Megan Ford presented her updated faith statement to Session with a message based on Lamentations 3:22-23 and Elders divided into small groups for time of devotion.

David gave a brief report which included gratitude for Sara Dorrien-Christian’s recent return following parental leave, and for Jeanene’s willingness to temporarily fill the role of Director of Children’s Ministry while we recruit a permanent replacement. David has resumed his planned introductions with leaders of the Memphis community and has recently started a monthly service with communion at Trezevant Manor. At the upcoming service of installation, David will be surrounded by invited friends and colleagues for this special occasion.

Mary Tayloe [reviewed the budget numbers](#) with the session. In general, revenue for September was very close to budget; expenses are under budget.

The Session next voted on the [consent agenda](#), which passed unanimously.

An update to the Stewardship and Generosity campaign was given by Ben Clark. At this time, approximately 20% of expected commitments have been received. This year’s season of generosity has emphasized for members to collectively offer their committed gifts on October 31, and more details will be available after that date.

Dr. Heather Chauhan gave a brief update from the COVID Advisory Team (CAT). There was an inquiry about resumption of the 8:30 service, which depends on COVID guidelines, availability of the chapel,



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and

input from Worship and Music Committee. A plan to resume the 8:30 service has not been arranged at this time. David noted that the offering plates will return to Sunday service this week and Heather will bring the question to the CAT about resuming traditional communion service.

Elizabeth Alrutz provided a detailed report from the special committee for Discerning Organizational Growth (DOG). At this time and after much research and discernment, the DOG recommended that the Diaconate be reduced in size to 12-18 members. This recommendation requires a change in the Idlewild bylaws, which was discussed at length during this meeting. Of relevance is that our Diaconate is larger than most and currently serves in roles that are not specifically designated for Deacons by the Book of Order. Furthermore, it was noted that the work of Deacons should be a good match for the abilities and personalities of the person serving the role, and that specific training could be provided to better provide the ministries of care, prayer, and welcome as defined in the Book of Order. There were concerns of how to fill the responsibilities that the Deacons currently provide, and it was acknowledged that this restructuring will have trickle-down effects throughout all committees in the coming year and beyond. Several solutions to these concerns were suggested but have not been formalized. The motion passed. The DOG will continue its work in evaluating the size and structure of committees and lay leadership duties at Idlewild over the coming months.

Chad Braddock gave an update from the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC). The APNC is currently working on discernment of what the new pastor's role will look like. Chad reports that the APNC intends to keep the congregation well informed on the steps of this process. Chad requested prayers of support in their work.

Commissioners for the upcoming Presbytery meeting were elected: Katie Cole, Mike Bruno, Stephanie Rodda, and Michael Peeler. The meeting will take place at Idlewild and via Zoom on Nov. 9, and it is expected for Elder Charles Key to assume the role as vice-moderator of the Presbytery during this meeting.

Session then voted to designate the offering from Installation Sunday for the UKirk ministry, at David's suggestion.

Concerns of the congregation were shared, and these were brought in prayer which adjourned the meeting.