

**First Presbyterian Church
Session Meeting
Monday, February 17, 2025**

A Session meeting of the First Presbyterian Church (Greensboro) convened in the Mullin Life Center on February 17, 2025, at 5:30pm. Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield served as moderator. There were 33 elders in attendance and 8 excused absences. In addition to Rev Duffield, attendees included Rev. Newton Cowan, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care, Tim Millisor, Director of Property and Operations, Rev. Matt Bussell, Associate Pastor for Outreach & Mission, Christine Ciaccio, Director of Finance, Donna Chase, Director of Christian Formation, Anne Albert, Director of Worship, Homer Wade, and Erwin Fuller.

Welcome

Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield opened the meeting at 5:30pm by reading Psalm 145 and offering a prayer, followed by a silent reading of the Session Group Covenant.

Consent Agenda

No changes were proposed, and the consent agenda was approved by acclamation.

- From the Clerk: Minutes of the January 27, 2025, stated meeting
- From the Discipleship Office: January 2025 membership reports
- Committee reports: Outreach and Youth Formation
- Upcoming Baptisms

Discipleship

Rev. Newton Cowan announced that Pam Sessoms and Keith Sessoms, Jr. have requested transfer to First United Methodist Church in Asheboro, NC. Chuck Coats as well as Ben, Beth, Dawson, and Mac McAlhany have requested to be removed from the FPC rolls. These membership changes were approved without objection.

Scripture Reading

Andrew Spainhour read Luke 15:11-32.

Faith Sharing

There was no faith sharing due to illness.

Prayers of the People

Rev. Newton Cowan offered Prayers of the People; both joys & concerns were shared.

Stewardship

Dan Goley, Chair of the Stewardship Committee, gave the Stewardship update.

2024

Total pledged amount	\$2,684,092
Pledges collected to date	\$2,634,680
Still to collect	\$151,185 (5.6%)
Overpayments	approx. \$100,000.

Those that haven't completed their 2024 pledge will receive a reminder in the mail. The remaining pledged amount is expected to come in to meet budget.

2025

Pledge goal	\$2,800,000
Total pledged to date	\$2,555,188
Total number of pledges	422

Mr. Goley noted that 60 pledging units that gave in 2024 still have not submitted pledges for 2025. The Stewardship Committee sent a letter to these members, and the Committee remains confident that we will reach our 2025 pledge goal.

Finance

Finance Chair Rob Peddrick reviewed January 2025 financial reports.

Regarding the recent \$3.2M undesignated bequest to the church, the Finance Committee recommends following the decision made by the Session previously which prioritizes how money from such bequests should be used:

- 1) Pay off any debt, then
- 2) Fully fund Neil's Meals ministry, then
- 3) Fully fund the Property Reserves Fund, then
- 4) Apply any remaining funds to the capital campaign.

Given that the church carries no debt and has fully funded both Neil's Meals and the Property Reserves Fund, the Finance Committee recommends that the bequest be applied to the capital campaign.

Extensive discussion continued:

- By giving the undesignated bequest to the capital campaign, we are giving 10%, or approx. \$320,000 to organizations other than FPC (i.e. United Way and Habitat for Humanity).
- Session members discussed whether it was the donor's intent that 10% would go to a separate charity.
- There are significant property repairs that will likely need to be completed in the short- or medium-term, as well as ministries within the church that could benefit from these additional funds.

Ultimately, the Session supported the Finance Committee's recommendation to follow the previously established guidelines on how to prioritize the use of undesignated donor funds.

Returning to the regular finance report, Mr. Peddrick shared that January is off to a good start with pledged gifts \$42k over what was projected for the month, and we are \$72k better than this time last year. Non-pledged gifts were down by \$22k in January putting us nearly \$7k behind last year.

Expenses were in a good position in January, helped in part by the delayed timing of the expenses for the women's retreat which will now be paid in February.

Mr. Peddrick also noted that we had nearly \$375k in pre-paid 2025 pledges that were paid in December but recognized in January.

Property

Homer Wade provided the Property Update.

Plans for the capital campaign work will be complete by the end of February, bids prepared in March, and GMP (Guaranteed Maximum Price) will be submitted to the PRC & Property Committees on April 14, 2025, which will be brought to Session during the May meeting.

Even without firm bids, the joint committees are fairly certain FPC will be able to complete the tuck pointing on both the Sanctuary and Smith buildings. The PRC/Property committees will return to Session about how the remaining funds will be used, but they expect that it will go to Memorial/Corl.

The Session engaged in more discussion about the decision to give 10% of the bequest to Habitat/United Way given that there could presently be water damage in the Memorial building that could be fixed using the portion of the bequest that would go to outreach. Further clarification from the Finance Committee confirms that unless the Session changes its decision on how to allocate funds from undesignated bequests, we should apply any bequests using the 4 priorities (noted earlier in the minutes) which would give 10% to outreach.

Appointments Committee

Leigh Jones, Vice Chair of the Appointments Committee, provided Session with an update on the Committee's work to recommend members for the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee (15 members). Five are elders to be approved by Session, and ten are at-large members to be elected by the congregation at the March 2nd congregational meeting. The five elders, who have agreed to serve on the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee, are:

Ross Harris, Chair
Andrew Spainhour, Vice Chair
Tim Cook
Graham Farless
Tamara Slaughter

Mrs. Jones offered a motion to approve these 5 elder nominees to the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee. The motion was approved with no objections.

Outreach

Rob Peddrick reported on the topics discussed at the February 11, Salem Presbytery Meeting at North Wilkesboro Presbyterian Church.

- A land acknowledgement recognized that the land we occupy was originally owned by indigenous people.
- (13) Constitutional Amendments: 12 were easily ratified. The thirteenth amendment concerned the acceptance of LGBTQIA+ members by teaching elders, and there was a fair amount of respectful dialogue. Ultimately, the presbytery agreed that teaching elders can hold their own personal beliefs, but they must welcome these members as a part of our faith community. The vote to support this amendment passed 85-19.
- Ministers are encouraged to review their health insurance benefits as some errors have been reported.
- Donna Chase reported on Equip Support Team.

Rev. Matt Bussell, Associate Pastor for Outreach & Mission, thanks the Session for support of the Winter Emergency Shelter - from the guests, the City of Greensboro, and Greensboro Urban Ministry – as it has saved lives. FPC's winter emergency shelter is scheduled to end at end of March, and there are concerns about the well-being of shelter guests after that time. If Greensboro Urban Ministry (GUM) can secure the proper approval from the City of Greensboro, GUM requests that FPC extend the winter shelter through April with the same terms of reimbursement. Even with this extension, FPC would still be in compliance with the North Carolina rule that a temporary shelter can only be in place for 150 days.

All meals for FPC's winter shelter are completely covered through March. Volunteers have been less predictable, and other churches and Greensboro Urban Ministry staff have supported to fill in gaps.

The Outreach Committee moves that FPC extend the Winter Emergency Shelter in partnership with the Greensboro Urban Ministry one month through the end of April. The motion was approved with no objections.

New Business – For the Good of the Session

Rev. Dr. Duffield reminded Session of Confirmation Sunday on March 2. There will be a Session meeting 10am, then a congregational meeting at the close of the 11am service.

Closing Prayer

Rev. Jill Duffield offered the closing prayer from Charlie Meyers and adjourned the meeting at 6:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendi J. Cimino
Clerk of Session
2024-2025

**First Presbyterian Church
Greensboro, NC
Called Session Meeting
Sunday, March 2, 2025, 10:00am**

A called Session meeting of First Presbyterian Church (Greensboro) took place on March 2, 2025, at 10:00am in the Mullin Life Center for the purpose of hearing the faith statements of twenty-two (22) FPC 8th grade confirmands as they complete their journey to church membership.

Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield, Senior Pastor, served as moderator for the meeting. In addition to elders and Rev. Duffield, confirmands, confirmation mentors, and parents of the confirmands were in attendance. Rev. Newton Cowan, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care, Rev. Matt Bussell, Associate Pastor for Outreach & Mission, Donna Chase, Director of Christian Formation, Lisa Witherspoon, Director of Children and Youth Ministry, and Phaedra Smith, Associate Director of Children and Youth Ministry, also participated in the called Session meeting.

Having determined that a quorum was present, the Moderator opened with prayer and stated the purpose of the meeting.

With 2-3 confirmands at each table with 3-4 elders, the confirmands proceeded to share aloud their faith statements, written after nearly 5 months of confirmation activities. Following the time of sharing, Rev. Duffield suggested the Session recognize that the 8th graders had completed the requirements of Confirmation and accept the confirmands as full members of First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro. A motion was made, seconded, and approved.

Confirmands were asked to come to the front of the Life Center and respond in the affirmative to five (5) Questions of Faith, at which time mentors presented confirmation gifts. Three confirmands were also receiving the sacrament of baptism as part of confirmation, and they received an additional acknowledgement.

Closing Prayer

Rev. Dr. Duffield closed the called Session meeting with prayer and adjourned at 10:25am.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendi Cimino
Clerk of Session
2024-2025

**First Presbyterian Church
Greensboro, NC
Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, March 2, 2025, 12:00pm**

On March 2, 2025, a congregational meeting of First Presbyterian Church convened immediately following the end of the 11:00am traditional sanctuary service. Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield, Senior Pastor, served as moderator for the meeting until her own terms of call were discussed, at which time, Rev. Newton Cowan assumed the role of moderator.

Purpose

Session called the meeting to:

- Provide a stewardship and finance update;
- Elect at-large members of the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee;
- Elect a Trustee of First Presbyterian Church, Class of 2030;
- Elect elders for the class of 2028; and
- Vote on a change of call for pastors.

Rev. Dr Jill Duffield opened the congregational meeting with prayer, stated the purpose of the congregational meeting, and recognized that a quorum was present. Rev. Duffield stated that information on the Nominating Committee nominees has been available on the FPC website, around campus, and linked in weekly emails beginning the week of February 3. Rev. Duffield then noted that Wendi Cimino, Clerk of Session, would serve as Secretary of the congregational meeting.

Stewardship Update

Dan Goley, chair of the Stewardship Committee, provided a 2024 and 2025 stewardship update.

2024

Total pledged amount	\$2,684,092	
Pledges collected to date	\$2,644,131	(98.5%)
Still to collect	\$141,735	
Overpayments	\$101,000	(4% of total pledged amount)

2025

Pledge goal	\$2,800,000
Total pledged to date	\$2,601,000
Total number of pledges	429

Mr. Goley noted that 50 pledging units that gave in 2024 still have not submitted pledges for 2025, and the Stewardship Committee is in the process of reaching out to these members. The Committee remains confident that we will reach our 2025 pledge goal.

Elect at-large members of the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee

Randy Jackson, chair of 2024-2025 Appointments Committee, recognized members of the 2024-2025 Appointments Committee:

Randy Jackson (Chair)	Libba LaFave
Leigh Jones (Vice-Chair)	Dean Norman, Jr.
Nancy Moore (Nominating Chair)	Billie Pope
Ross Harris (Nominating Vice-Chair)	Ashley Staton Scott
Jane Brabham	Tom Tilley
Elizabeth Brumbeloe	Hugh Williams
James Gentry	Adrienne Woods
Jean Goodman	Jill Duffield (Staff Liaison)
Harrison Hood	Debby Foster (Staff Support)
Vince Keys	

The Appointments Committee is responsible for recommending to the congregation annually a slate of people to serve as members of the Nominating Committee, this year five of whom are elders elected by Session and 10 members at-large elected by the congregation. The Nominating Committee shall be comprised of active members of the church, including both men and women, giving fair representation to persons of all age groups.

Elders currently serving on Session shall be designated by Session to serve as chairs of the committee. **Ross Harris** will be the chair of the upcoming 2025-2026 Nominating Committee, and **Andrew Spainhour** will be vice-chair.

Elders to serve on the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee were voted on by Session in February. In addition to the chair and vice-chair, those elders are:

Tim Cook
Graham Farless
Tamara Slaughter

Mr. Jackson nominated the following active members of the congregation to serve as at-large members of the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee:

Lisa Anderson	Al Lineberry
Elizabeth Bostian	Sharon Norman
Louise Bristol	Taylor Ott
Walt Howell	Elizabeth Payonk
Zell Jester	Doug Stone

Rev. Duffield opened the floor for nominations for at-large members of the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee. If there are any such nominations, those people nominated must have already agreed to serve if elected. There were no nominations from the floor. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to close the nominations for at-large members of the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee and elect the nominees by acclamation.

Elect a Trustee of First Presbyterian Church, Class of 2030

Nancy Moore, Chair of 2024-2025 Nominating Committee, recognized members of the 2024-2025 Nominating Committee:

Ross Harris (Vice-Chair)
John Atkinson
Larry Bowden
Ty Buckner
Nicole Chandler
Stephanie Farabow
Jeff Hatcher
Griffin Jones

Ashley Mills
Mindy Oakley
Emily Scott
Jonathan Wade
Brantley White
Elizabeth Wilson
Jill Duffield (Staff Liaison)
Debby Foster (Staff Support)

The Nominating committee met weekly from mid-September through mid-December and received and discussed nearly 100 names. The Committee looked for potential nominees who are active in the life of the Church in addition to Sunday worship, while keeping in mind the gender, age and talent diversity of our congregation. The Committee sought people of strong faith, who possess leadership skills, a cooperative spirit, and a deep love for this Church, and who have supported the Church financially and with their time and talents. The Committee also sought to balance the slate with nominees who provide a good blend of experience and new ideas and whose combined involvement in the life of our Church covers the full range and breadth of our programs and ministries.

Ms. Moore nominated **Louann Clarke** on behalf of the Nominating Committee for the office of Trustee of First Presbyterian Church (responsible for the L. Richardson Trust) in the Class of 2030.

Rev. Duffield opened the floor for nominations for the office of Trustee of First Presbyterian Church (responsible for the L. Richardson Trust) in the Class of 2030. If there are any such nominations, those people nominated must have already agreed to serve if elected. There were no nominations from the floor. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to close the nominations for the office of Trustee of First Presbyterian Church (responsible for the L. Richardson Trust) in the Class of 2030 and elect the nominee by acclamation.

Elect elders for the class of 2028

Nancy Moore, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, nominated the following persons for the office of Elder in the Class of 2028:

Andy Brantley
Allison Cochran
Tom Gillespie

Alice Moore
Anne Wagoner
Hugh Williams

Rev. Duffield opened the floor for nominations for Elder in the Class of 2028. If there are any such nominations, those people nominated must have already agreed to serve if elected. There were no nominations from the floor. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to close the nominations for Elder in the Class of 2028 and elect the nominees by acclamation.

Vote on a change of call for pastors

Ralph Davison, Chair of Human Resources, shared that the Committee recommended a 3% cost of living raise for all FPC employees. This was included in the 2025 budget passed by the Session earlier this year. All of the staff, including the other pastors, have already received this increase. However, the Book of Order requires the congregation to vote on any change in the terms of call for called and installed pastors.

Mr. Davison moved that the congregation approve a 3% cost of living salary increase for Rev. Matt Bussell, Associate Pastor for Outreach and Missions, increasing his annual salary from \$43,000 to \$45,340 and increasing his total compensation package (including benefits) from \$116,387.00 to \$122,260.01. The motion to approve was made, seconded and passed.

Mr. Davison moved that the congregation approve a 3% cost of living salary increase for Rev. Newton Cowan, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care. If approved, this would change his annual salary from \$62,000 to \$60,640, and his total compensation package (including benefits) would decrease from \$132,052.00 to \$123,717.96. Newton's salary went down due to his increase in housing. Housing and salary are grouped together as a whole, therefore, if one increases the other decreases. Newton's total compensation package went down due to the Board of Pensions new medical benefit plan that took effect in 2025 which allows pastors to choose plans based on their needs for coverage for spouse and children in lieu of an all-inclusive package. Rev. Cowan's cost went down due to lower rate of his election for member only coverage. The motion to approve was made, seconded and passed.

Rev. Dr. Duffield turned the meeting over to Rev. Newton Cowan to moderate the rest of the meeting.

Mr. Davison moved that the congregation approve a 3% cost of living salary increase for senior pastor, Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield, increasing her annual salary from \$113,816.00 to \$118,430.48 and her total compensation package (including benefits) from \$221,964.52 to \$218,343.46. Rev. Duffield's total compensation package went down due to the Board of Pensions new medical benefit plan that took effect in 2025 which allows pastors to choose plans based on their needs for coverage for spouse and children in lieu of an all-inclusive package. Jill's cost decreased as she did not need coverage for a family member for 2025. The motion to approve was made, seconded and passed.

Closing Prayer

Moderator Cowan closed the congregational meeting with prayer and adjourned at 12:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendi Cimino
Clerk of Session
2024-2025