

**First Presbyterian Church
Session Meeting
Monday, December 15, 2025**

A Session meeting of the First Presbyterian Church (Greensboro) convened in the Garden Room on December 15, 2025, at 5:30pm. Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield served as moderator. There were 23 elders in attendance, 5 excused absences and 3 not present. In addition to Rev. Duffield, attendees included Rev. Newton Cowan, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care, Dr. Erin Bowers, Associate Pastor for Christian Formation, Tim Millisor, Director of Property and Operations, Christine Ciaccio, Director of Finance, Matt Bussell, Associate Pastor for Outreach, and Erwin Fuller.

Welcome

Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield opened the meeting at 5:30pm. Rev. Duffield read Psalm 24 and offered a prayer, followed by a 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 November 17, 2025, stated meeting
- From the Discipleship Office: November 2025 membership reports
- Committee reports: Hospitality
- Memorial Tribute for Roy Phipps Jr., revised

Discipleship

Rev. Matt Bussell welcomed Ryan and Lauren Beale transferring from University Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill. Emma Merritt Baggett is to transfer her membership to Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte. A motion was made and these membership changes were approved without objection. A small gift was given by the Discipleship Committee to the families present.

Strategic Planning

Ralph Davison reports that Ginger Booker, Ross Harris and himself were appointed to find a firm to create a strategic plan for the church. Much work was done and three firms were interviewed and he brought a proposal from the committee. The HR committee moves that the session engage Ministry Architects for an 18 month strategic planning process to bring in the first quarter of 2026 at a cost of \$37,240 and will be funded by the Memorial Fund. The motion came from committee and did not require a second. The motion was passed.

Time to Connect

Rev. Jill Duffield led an activity based on The Presbyterian Outlook article, "Aligning Money with Mission: The Future of Church Space". We broke into groups to discuss.

Scripture Reading

Alice Moore read Matthew 5:38-47

Faith Sharing

Dave Thompson shared his faith journey.

Prayers of the People

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

Finance

Dave Thompson, Chair of the Finance Committee, reviewed the November 2025 financial reports (attached).

- The budget is on track to lose \$234,000, which is an improvement from November projections. With one month to go, there is a good chance it could only be at a loss of \$175,000
- Recommend for the session to approve a budget deficit of \$330,000 budget for 2026
- Interest is down from capital campaign and reduction of \$50,000 coming to the church but not in the operating fund
- Expenses increased 10% over 5 years (2% per year)
- Income will always help
- Rob Peddrick was invited to share:
 - March 2024 session passed a motion of gift bequest
 - Not a formal motion and open for discussion, Peddrick proposes to remove 4th priority of undesignated bequest and give to greatest need of the church determined by the finance committee
- Over the last 10 years, 8 budgets have been approved with a deficit and 7 of the last 10 years have been positive/ balanced.
- Reasons for the budgets ultimately being balanced is in part due to PPP loan and "Covid" fun money
- As we finish the year 409 college elders 454 current giving units
- Calls on elders (leaders of the church) to give a year end gift; if each 409 gave \$500 it would end with a positive budget
- Mr. Thompson shared a letter that will be sent to the college elders and closed in prayer
- Vibrant discussion amongst elders with concerns shared for passing a deficit budget for 2026
- Vote to table the discussion of approval of budget
- Request that elders send what details they would like about the budget to the finance committee, so that can be shared before January session meeting

Stewardship Committee

- Tom Gillespie shared reasons why people are not turning in a pledge card
- 342 pledge cards have been returned

- 100+ people who gave last year and have not turned in pledge card
- Average giving increase by 7.1% for next year (data from current pledge cards)
- Ministry opportunity to figure out why people are not giving, committee plans to ask people why they are not giving, thanking those who are giving and find ways for all to be involved throughout the year.

Property

Tim Millisor gave the renovation update. They have found the brick and it has arrived. 3 types of mortar have been tested, they have chosen the correct one and it will arrive before Christmas and it will be mixed on site.

Scaffolding is almost done. Over the next couple of weeks, mock up areas will be designated where they will ask the people who are tuck pointing to show their skills under the watchful eye of an engineer and make sure they are certified to complete the job.

10 resumes of people who will be doing tuck pointing in the mock up areas, no one will be able to work on property without demonstration of abilities.

Brick has been cleaned prior to tuck pointing. Cooper down spouts have been taken down and stored and have been replaced with plastic pipes. They have put heaters behind tenting and a temporary pole from Duke Power has been installed, so that they are not using the building power. Heaters have thermostats to make sure the temperature stays above 55 degrees. Step up transformer installed instead of generator due to noise concern. Hope to begin soon with first tuck pointing work with work area 1 (Greene St).

Appointments

Leigh Jones gave the update. Same reminders as last month, please submit names by this Friday for appointments and talent inventory was due last Friday.

Housing Allowance for Pastors

Rev. Jill Duffield presented the housing allowance for pastors. No objections and approved.

New Business – For the Good of the Session

Nancy Abrams shared information about bequest forms and had copies at the meeting.

Closing Prayer

Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield offered the closing prayer and adjourned the meeting at 7:43 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Lorie Jones
Assistant Clerk of Session
2025-2026