

Webster Presbyterian Church
Stated HYBRID Meeting of Session
October 25, 2022 at 7:00pm

Present: Pastor Keith Uffman, Kathy Dixon, Diane Kane, Jeannette Booher, Kristy Russell, Michael Cooper, Al Strahan, Erik Kinzler, Michael Bradley, Jamee Wilson, Tamar Wasoian, Pat Koester, Ralph Fixel, Gary Mossman

Non-members: Judy Ota, Kevin Snowden

Absent: Michael Bradley, Ed Tobias, Walker Strahan

Quorum established at 7:00pm

Opened in Prayer by: Mary Lawrence

Servant Leadership:

- Dr. Pastor Keith Uffman Richard Kleiman, Coco Motley and Kathy Braeuer have reformed the Welcoming Committee
- Christian education Committee has created a WPC Godreads Link that allows members to access the list of books by category that church members have recommended
- Keith will perform a funeral service for a non-member of the church. Session approved that fees would be waived

Omnibus Motion was approved with the change that Ralph Fixel be added to the list of those present

Approval of Minutes of the last regular called meeting

Approval of Agenda:

Clerk's Report

- Transfer of Church Membership to WPC of Don Willoughby, father of Laura Grady, from Trinity Presbyterian Church, 405 Trailblazer Drive, Travelers Rest, SC 29600
- Request to transfer membership of Elizabeth Noriega Coster to League City UMC, 1601 League City Parkway West, League City, TX 77537

Treasurer's Report:

Kevin Snowden reported that contributions were strong for September. We are \$48K in the black.. We still have 3 major expenses this month, however we received a 25% reduction on our insurance which is a savings of \$9K. As of Oct. 18, there is \$33K in the capital program. After expenditures of \$104K this year for AC, fellowship windows, bathroom renovations, refrigerator, roofing repairs and outside seating. As for the rest of the budget, there were no raises in personnel. There has been \$1100 contributions to the Ukraine second wave project. Motion was moved and seconded on the budget.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Keith reported that Richard Kleiman is certainly a keeper. Richard wants to focus mainly with CARE and will only attend session meetings when needed. Keith will be discussing a series of Stewardship sermons and a new Time/Talent sign-up that will take place in November.

Motions

- **Ad Hoc Committee:** The committee consisted of Al Strahan, Diane Kane, Jamee Wilson, Mary Lawrence and Al Brown. Al Strahan presented a motion to consider a loan of the Lunar Chalice and Church Seal to the MOTB. The loan period being from January 2023 to January 2024, to support and be displayed in a curated exhibit exploring Scripture and Science. The loan is contingent upon the MOTB covering the full cost of insurance for these two items during the entire time they are not in possession by WPC, including transport to and from the Museum. The committee had an appraisal of the items, lawyers also were consulted and discussion with members who were in attendance at the church who listened by Buzz Aldrin take communion on the moon with the chalice that after the flight became the possession of WPC which was purchased by Jack Kinzler and then given to WPC.
- Discussion and concern over the providence of the chalice and the committee does not have the letter that Aldrin wrote to the church; but does have proof of ownership through newspaper articles written at the time and the fact a member purchased the chalice and seal. Also, there are concerns of the loss of said items and the safety precautions whether lost or stolen in transit or during the display. Based on the curator's sharing major historical pieces that have been on loan to the MOTB, those in the committee were convinced all precautions will be taken into consideration.
- This motion is also contingent upon determination that a satisfactory Loan Agreement and security arrangements are in place with the MOTB.
- Session took a vote on this motion with the following results: 14Pro and 1Con.
- Keith recommended a congregational "gathering" to present this to the members. This gathering has no motions or minutes taken; rather it is to share information only.

Proposal to loan Lunar Chalice & Church Seal to Museum of the Bible (MOTB)



Pictures from the web, the left from a Houston Chronicle article in 2014

Action Items

Why Consider a Loan

Webster Presbyterian Church is an evolving spiritual community joyfully **servicing Christ as active disciples**. **We welcome ALL alongside us** to create a more loving, affirming, just and sustainable world, **valuing spiritual inquiry, civility of discourse, scientific ideas, and artistic expression**. (WPC mission statement)

“servicing Christ as active disciples” –

we are called to share that which we have with the world, not to hide it away, but to reach out and inspire all

“We welcome ALL alongside us” –

not all people or even all Christians share our views, we even differ in our own community, however this loan can be a way to welcome ALL alongside us

“valuing ... civility of discourse” –

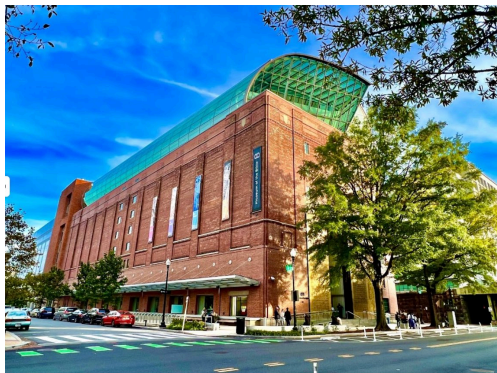
this is a way to reach out to the sponsors and the visitors to the Museum of the Bible, to encourage such respectable dialog

“valuing spiritual inquiry, scientific ideas and artistic expression” –

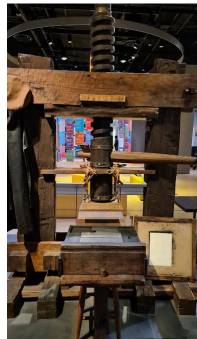
The Apollo 11 mission and its intersection with our own cherished communion is a great example of the pursuit of spiritual inquiry and scientific ideas, along with the potential to be presented in an artistic way

Background

- Ad hoc committee explored proposal for a loan
 - Diane Kane, Jamee Wilson, Mary Lawrence, Al Strahan - Allen Brown consulting
- Chalice to be featured in exhibit **‘Scripture & Science: Our Universe, Ourselves and Our Place’**
- Exhibit open from **Jan 2023 to Jan 2024**, curated by Anthony Schmidt (PhD History), Presbyterian background
- 55+ items including:
 - Papers/notes by Galileo, Augustine, Kepler, Copernicus, Galenos, Dante & others
 - Art including Greg Dunn (neuro art), Hippocampus and Genome drawings & others
 - Bibles from Dorothy Vaughn (Hidden Figures) & Francis Collins (Genome researcher)
 - Astronomical Quadrant, an early microscope, a Babbage engine sketch & others
 - Lenders include museums, universities across North America & Europe and the Vatican



2 blocks south of Air & Space Museum in DC



<https://www.museumofthebible.org/>

Some feedback

- Ultimately a Session decision - though sought inputs from congregation members, especially the **Apollo generation**. Consulted with
 - Members of Covenant Groups
 - Bible Studies
 - Residents of The Crossing
- Some hesitancy regarding risk of loss
- Still we are hearing more and more folks want to share our story, while we still have living memories to connect with it
- There is also a desire to discuss the long term future of these items regardless of whether we pursue an MOTB loan

Appraisal and Loan Agreement

- Initial Appraised Value by Allan Stypeck, expert appraiser for both historic and religious artifacts
 - Has worked with collections for Henry Kissinger, Pope John Paul II, Catholic Church, NASA, etc
- MOTB has verbally agreed to insure for these amounts
 - Lunar Chalice: **2 million**
 - UPCUSA Presbyterian Seal: **500 k**
- Allan expects their value to increase with public awareness and interest
- We are pursuing modifications to the Formal Loan Agreement - Anthony Schmidt has agreed to all in principle
 - Agreement will include these values and a clause allowing for a re-appraisal after some time
 - A clause that if ownership is contested, we will be informed and allowed opportunity to defend
 - We don't expect such
 - Allan and others indicate we have clear provenance from historical record
 - Agreement also states to return only to WPC
 - A clause to not develop any merchandizing or use of Chalice likeness without our consent
 - Two Lawyers, plus Allan Stypeck, have reviewed agreement
- After consultation with Stypeck, we are leaning towards recommending 'White Glove' transport
 - Secure transport, door-to-door, where we would not accompany
 - MOTB arranged safe/secure transport for 91 loans covering 400+ artifacts last year

Pros

- Speaks to several points in our mission statement
 - Being Active Disciples, welcoming all, having civility of discourse, exploring science & art...
- Shares our story, our values and our history with many
 - Many of the Apollo Generation would like now to share our story, while they are still alive
 - Items not always locked/hidden in a vault
 - There is renewed interest in Lunar exploration - NASA Project Artemis (hopefully flies before Jan)
- Could generate interest/awareness in our church
 - Possibly attract new members
- Motivate us to generate a longer term strategy for where to go with these items
 - We could do this even without following through on the loan

Cons

- Regardless of our best efforts, there is a risk the items could be lost or stolen
 - MOTB has a good security record - Still, there are nefarious actors who target such unique items
 - Whenever valuable items are moved, they are most vulnerable
 - If we are to loan items, we must accept some non-zero risk we will not see them again
- While majority appear supportive, there are a few congregants who oppose this loan
 - Still others who support it are generally nervous about loss
- New attention will likely require increased security
 - We should consider budgeting insurance in the future (15-20 k per year or more)
 - We may need additional security to transport and display items for Lunar Communion
 - Is our current storage location secure enough ?
 - Who do we arrange to have access in the future ?

Pro & Con

- Loan requests could come from other museums/organizations
 - We recommend a Session committee review/negotiate each request on an individual basis
 - We don't always have to loan for a year, even if we do this time
 - Perhaps consider a desired loan interval (example only loan out 25 % of the time)
- This could generate more attention than we are ready for
 - It has been suggested we designate a person to support interview requests
 - Also suggested we prepare a 'throw down' press-release/statement available upon request
 - Perhaps also a new heading on our website

The Future

- We should have a follow-up committee explore these questions
 - Future security, insurance and who has access
 - How share with the world - what story do we want to tell going forward
- Also consider how care for these long term - hundreds of years and more
 - Items are tarnished
 - MOTB fine with this though willing to provide a professional assessment and advice
 - Loan agreement prevents any effort to alter or even clean items without our approval
 - Description plates have scuff marks
 - They did not travel to moon, though still looks bad
 - Consider better more protective handling and storage protocols
 - Don't believe we should remove dents, though we should endeavor to prevent more

Motion background

- Remaining work
 - Still finalizing MOTB Loan Agreement
 - We do not anticipate issue, however we are not ready to sign today
 - We would like another Lawyer review, then a final review with the MOTB
 - Anticipate this lasting another 2 - 3 weeks
 - Also, who signs for WPC, Clerk of Session ?
 - Would like to pursue one more round of security discussions
 - Expand on specifics of transport - perhaps codify more specifics in Loan Agreement
 - One more review of MOTB on site access and security
- In order to support MOTB exhibition schedule (opens Jan 19th), the MOTB would like an agreement 'in principle' that WPC Session supports the Loan of the Lunar Chalice and Seal to the MOTB, understanding there is still final negotiations on the agreement and security
 - This allows them to proceed with preparation, though still with some risk that we don't sign
 - Also allows for specifics of secure transport and insurance acquisition to start

MOTION

We, the Webster Presbyterian Church (WPC) Session, support a temporary loan to the Museum of the Bible (MOTB) in Washington DC, the following church artifacts pending the negotiation of a secure loan agreement:

- 1) Lunar Communion Chalice used by Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin to celebrate Communion
- 2) UPCUSA Church Seal

Both being WPC property that travelled to the Surface of the Moon and the Sea of Tranquility on July 20, 1969, and were returned to the possession of WPC after the flight.

The loan period being from Jan 2023 to Jan 2024, to support and be displayed in a curated exhibit exploring Scripture and Science.

This motion is contingent upon the MOTB covering the full cost of insurance for these two items during the entire time they are not in possession by the WPC, including transport to and from the Museum.

This motion also is contingent upon determination that a satisfactory Loan Agreement and security arrangements are in place with the MOTB.

(end of motion)

- **Nominating Committee**

- Schedule a congregational meeting to vote on the slate for 2023
- Nominating committee had a difficult time securing candidates. Session needs to consider organizational issues such as the number of officers that we need moving forward so the 2023 Nominating Committee will not have such a difficult task.
- Dennis will present to session policy changes
- **WAM:** Election of 3 commissioners to the Nov. 19 Presbytery Meeting at Pines Presbyterian Church. Mary Lawrence, Diane Kane and Michael Cooper will be commissioners. Also Tamar will be presented as a candidate and then she will be preaching at WPC on Sunday, Nov. 20th. Anyone may attend but we have 3 votes during the business meeting. Diane, Michael and Mary will attend as voting members. Jeannette and Judy will attend as alternates.attending will be Pat Koester, Jeannette Booher, who will be alternates. Clerk of Session, Judy Ota, will also attend.
- Elders volunteering to be on communion list included: Mary Lawrence, Erik Kinzler, Michael Cooper, Kristy Russell and Pat Koester. Servers are needed as it has been difficult for many of the members to take communion elements by intention. We will go back to serving the elements and therefore need more servers for each communion.
- The solicitation of 7 communion servers for Nov. 6, Dec. 4 and Christmas Eve 5:00pm service. Erik, Al, Mary, Michael Cooper, Jamee, Ralph are volunteered. Pat and Diane are alternates although it is preferable not to pull them from the choir.

Did a circle prayer of the strengths of this church

Motion for Adjournment and Closing Prayer: 8:35pm. Closed in prayer by Pat Koester