

**BRENHAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**Brenham, Texas**  
**Annual Congregational Meeting**  
**February 25, 2024**

Guest Pastor Mike Austin opened the meeting with prayer.

**Call to Order:** Moderator Elder Robert Lake, called the meeting to order at the conclusion of the 10 am worship service.

**Quorum:** A quorum was established.

**Purpose:** Session of Elders presented committee reports of 2023 activities to the Congregation.

**2023 Congregational Reports:**

**Committee Education Committee: Elder Betsy Newman**

Thank you to David Mahood for teaching the adult Sunday School Class.

Thank you to Sharon Boll, Lynn Mahood, and Sharon Suessmith for caring for BPC's youngest members.

Advent and Lenten materials were provided to the congregation.

The committee hosted a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast at the beginning of Lent.

**Worship Committee: Elder Betsy Newman**

Guest Pastors were recruited to preach on all Sundays in 2023.

The annual Nativity Pageant included singers from the Brenham Children's Chorus, BPC children and friends.

**Church Growth: Elder Geneva Winkelmann**

- An updated directory is currently in process. Please be sure to contact Susan Gray to confirm or submit your information if you have not already done so.
- We encourage members to invite people to church.
- Additional members are needed on the Committee.

**Fellowship: Elder Geneva Winkelmann**

- Men's Fellowship Group – meets every Wednesday morning for breakfast and fellowship.
- Presbyterian Women continue to meet on the second Tuesday of the month for fellowship and Bible Study (Tuesday Disciples).
- Gatherings and luncheons were held throughout 2022 including: Receptions following Barbara Triem and Pat and Ken Mosley's funerals, a Social Media luncheon, farewell reception for Ed Triem, and a small reception for the annual Christmas pageant.

· Additional members are needed on the Committee. If you do not want to be on the Committee, you can be put on a volunteer list to be called when extra help is needed for providing food or assisting with set-up & clean-up.

### **Congregational Care: Elder Elizabeth Lehrmann**

Knit/Crochet Ministry continues (Chair Sue Ruotsola)

Zoey Nonemaker sends Birthday cards to BPC members

Flower/bouquet Ministry when flowers are available (Phoebe Lake)

Prayer ministry: taking prayer requests for the Prayer Chain, individual calls and visits

Some members are trained to do home communion

**Stewardship Committee:** Chair David Mahood, Rosellyn McIver, Todd Gray (ex-officio), (Bob Wilson until mid 2023).

The Stewardship Committee met regularly during the fall to prepare for the 2024 giving campaign. The Stewardship Committee's goal was to receive pledge cards from 90% of past giving units. The pledge card was redesigned and distributed to the congregation.

A newly added Commitment Card, for regular visitors and non-members, was introduced and made available to interested attendees. The Stewardship Committee followed up with members that had not pledged, but typically do so.

93.5% of pledges for 2023 were received due to relocations and a few pledges not being fulfilled.

Pledging & Commitments 2024	\$199,500	42 Units
Pledged donations 2023	\$176,000	39 Pledging Units
Pledged donations 2022	\$150,800	36 Pledging Units

Pledging Units for 2023 (39) have grown to (42) in 2024. Commitment Cards in addition to Pledge Cards were introduced in 2023.

### **Mission and Benevolence Committee: Cathy Nitsch**

Your Mission and Benevolence committee thoughtfully distributed budgeted monies and donated funds from The Souper Bowl of Caring and the Fall Festival. The following organizations benefitted from your generous giving:

Brazos Valley Hospice

Burton Bridge Ministry

CASA for kids of South-Central Texas (Brenham area)

CUPS (Communities United for Health) both through a school supply campaign in July and a cash donation Thank you Rob Lake for taking the lead in securing the school supplies.

Humanitarian Respite Center on the Texas/Mexico boarder

Oak Rest Cemetery

Presbyterian Children's Homes (PCHAS)

Presbyterian Disaster Relief  
Presbyterian World Missions for Melissa Johnson in Zambia  
Margaret Blizzard Senior Center  
United Campus Ministry in Aggieland  
And of course, our partners in Food Insecurity, Bread Partners of Washington County and Faith Mission.

We held four blood drives in 2023, which helped many people. Each successful donation saves up to 3 lives, so we are very thankful for Susan Vander worth's leadership efforts to contact potential donors. There were **58** donations. She was ably assisted by Barb Owens and Sue Ruotsala.

Additionally, our wonderful Galilee Garden, under the guidance of Phoebe Lake, produced **895 pounds** of healthy organic vegetable for our neighbors at Bread Partners in Washington County.

The Souper Bowl of Caring lunch held in February 2023 garnered \$922 which was given to Bread Partners.

During the Christmas season, you provided holiday gifts for 25 citizens at the Brenham State Living Center and **21** coats for children being served by Presbyterian Children's Homes. This effort was led by the very capable Susan Gray.

We also coordinated the four church –wide special offerings for the Presbyterian Church. They are the One Great Hour of sharing, the Pentecost Offering, the Peace and Global Witness Offering, and the Christmas Joy Offering. We contributed to each special offering.

It recalls the Bible Verse “The Lord loves a cheerful giver” So thank you for your generous giving and to our committee members: Phoebe Lake, Rob Lake, Linda Newton, Charles Nitsch, Barb Owens, Milton Ressmann and Susan Vanderworth.

**Finance Committee:** Chair Paul Ehlert, Elder Robert Lake, Bob Charlton, Fort Flowers, Todd Gray (ex-officio)

Main efforts for this year have been to monitor income, keep bills paid and explain the financial health of BPC especially for a new pastor. For 2024 committee focused on how best to use new cost reduction from Brenham Children's Chorus and develop an interest income. An Interest-bearing account with Texas Presbyterian Foundation Money Market is established. The “Pastor Annual Support Account” of \$20,000/in 2023 and the establishment of a “Reserve for Replacement Fund” of \$16,000/in 2024 have been approved by the Session.

Designated Reserve funds for unforeseen issues of long-term maintenance and replacement have increased by a Historic Repairs account at end of 2023 of \$40,000.

**Buildings and Grounds: Elder Tom Newman**

- Replace Water Heater that services the kitchen in the Blinn Room
- Replaced Air Conditioner that services the Old Pastor's Office
- Fellowship Hall HVAC Compressor repair

- Sanctuary HVAC Repairs
- Fellowship Hall floor polish
- Regular lawn service
- Tree trimming
- Power washed stairs and sidewalks
- Building Emergency Fund
- Assisted in planning and execution of "Phase 1 Repairs and Renovations"

**Sanctuary & Education Building Repair and Renovations Commission:** Todd Gray, Tommy Upchurch, Elder Tom Newman, Jeff Damon, Jerrel Branson (Elder Bob Wilson until mid 2023).

Cost plus contract with Scott Eason Contracting was completed per the initial Phase Scope of Sanctuary Repair/paint and beginning of Education Wing Renovations/Hardie Plank. Donated funds received in 2022 plus the \$20,000 contingency loan from Presbytery were sufficient to cover estimated costs. Before work was completed in 2023 additional donations covered all cost plus \$5000 without the use of the \$20,000 contingency loan. Funding for completion of Hardie siding on the south and west elevations has \$10,000 funds with a second grant from Presbytery to finish the Hardie siding. Additional funds may become available the end of the first quarter to start this last phase of lower floor Hardie Siding.

**Presentation of 2024 Budget to the Congregation: Interim Treasurer Todd Gray**

Budget for 2024 is a balanced budget supporting a full-time pastor with compensation of 10 years of experience including a supporting secretary for two days a week. The 2023 budget was for a half time pastor and secretary. Without these positions filled 2023 reserve funds were developed. These 2023 reserves created a “Pastor Annual Support Account” and are available for new pastor expenses that might exceed the present PNC reserve fund, such as candidate & family interview travel, moving expenses, and additional compensation if required. Budgeted Income \$246,000 equal budget expenses \$246,000. Budgeted expenses have been increased to minimum 2023 spending levels or invoices for 2024 rates. Additional reserves are possible in 2024 as the funded new pastor & secretary will not be in place for at least the first quarter. Our regular pulpit supply costs are significantly below pastor/secretary cost. Improved 2024 compensation for building use from BCC for the full year, increased pledges, developing an interest income stream allow the step change to full time pastor.

**Action:** Hard copies of 2023 Annual report with 2024 Budget were distributed to the congregation.

**Report from Pastor Nominating Committee:** Jerry Newman, Chair

Our Pastor Nominating Committee was convened in May last year, and was ably assisted by Rev. Matt Morse, as our designated Presbytery liaison. We put together our church’s

Ministry Discernment Profile, which was accepted by Session and posted online in September.

Since then, we have sifted through 11 potential matches generated by the Church Leadership Connection, a kind of clearing house for matching churches with applicants. Matches continue to come in. At the same time, Beth Flowers, through her connection with Austin Presbytery Seminary has provided us with 14 other names who might have an interest. We have followed up with each of them, and continue to do so.

With so many churches seeking so few candidates, we recognize this will not be a quick process. We ask for your patience and prayerful support as we continue to search for the pastor that God has already chosen for our Church.

**Adjournment:** Elder Robert Lake closed the meeting with a prayer.

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Rosellyn McIver  
Clerk to Session

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Robert Lake  
Ruling Elder