

**Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) Valdosta, GA**

Stated Session Meeting Minutes

19 October 2025

| <b>Class of 2025</b>             | <b>Class of 2026</b> | <b>Class of 2027</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Britanny DiGiammarino<br>(Clerk) | Mark Ferguson        | Jeff Bickers         |
| Beth Reid                        | Zirkia Snyman        | Doug Maxwell         |
| Glennie Wicks                    | Grant Wright         |                      |
| Bryan Wright                     |                      |                      |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Moderator</b>       | Bradley Walker   |
| <b>Clerk</b>           | Britanny DiGiammarino  |
| <b>Members Present</b> | Britanny DiGiammarino (clerk), Bradley Walker (moderator), Mark Ferguson, Doug Maxwell, Jeff Bickers, Glennie Wicks, Bryan Wright, Grant Wright, Zirkia Snyman, Beth Reid      |
| <b>Members Excused</b> | None   |
| <b>Guests:</b>         | Executive Presbyter, Rev. Deb Tregaskis – Bill Wicks- Kelly Wicks- Patsi Peacock- Sonja Guilbeau – Jennifer Sheppard (upcoming TPC moderator) – Paul Guilbeau (worship leader) |

## 1. Reflection and Opening Prayer

A quorum being present, the Moderator called the meeting to order at 3:09 PM. Brad opened with a devotional from *Rhythms of Growth* by Linda Dowdy titled “Housecleaning and Harmony,” which compared the ordinary tasks of housekeeping to spiritual renewal and balance. He then opened the meeting with prayer.

## 2. Approval of Agenda and September Minutes

*A motion was made and seconded to approve the Agenda and September Minutes. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote, with no discussion.*

## 3. Consent Agenda

*None.*

## 4. Reflecting on Our Future with Clear Eyes and Hopeful Hearts

Rev. Deb Tregaskis, Executive Presbyter

Rev. Brad Walker, Visiting Pastor

*The following notes reflect the voices of those present in this workshop-style conversation. The discussion was recorded to help Session and the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) reflect and follow up on these topics in the months ahead.*

Visiting Pastor Bradley Walker welcomed guest elders, members of the PNC, TRE Jennifer Sheppard (who will become moderator upon his departure), and Executive Presbyter Rev. Deb Tregaskis.

Executive Presbyter Rev. Deb Tregaskis began by recognizing and thanking the PNC for their ongoing work. She reminded the group that the \$80,000 annual bequest currently supplementing TPC's budget will conclude in 2028, prompting early conversation about future staffing and funding.

She then invited the PNC to share how they are feeling and what they are observing in the search process.

### **Statements from PNC Members:**

- One member shared that the PNC maintains a bright outlook despite occasional disappointment in candidates. Some applicants look promising on paper but do not align in interviews. The group remains unified and discerning, committed to waiting on the right person in God's time rather than rushing or settling.
- Another member affirmed that while conversations can be hard, particularly around candidate fit, the PNC works through these moments together with a shared sense of purpose and understanding.
- A third member added that the committee values its diversity of thought and works well together.

The **PNC Chair** provided a historical overview, noting that since 2021, six candidates have advanced beyond the first round of interviews. Three of those have visited TPC in person, and others were interviewed via Zoom. The committee has reviewed and tracked hundreds of

**Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) Valdosta, GA**

Stated Session Meeting Minutes

19 October 2025

candidates through the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) system, with most drawn to TPC's strong outward mission.

Three main factors typically prevent the committee from moving forward with candidates:

1. **Salary limitations** (meeting the minimum requirements for a solo pastor),
2. **Language barriers** (accents difficult for some congregants to understand), and
3. **Differences in theological perspective** (liberation theology cited specifically).

The Chair mentioned a recent conversation with an individual from Cherokee Presbytery who serves as a part-time pastor. He is interested in a 5–6-year part-time call, though this is beyond the PNC's current scope. The Chair suggested that the congregation may benefit from considering part-time pastoral leadership as an option.

Deb affirmed the idea, noting that TPC's total staff compensation currently totals about \$200,000. She asked whether the Session might be open to exploring part-time pastoral leadership models.

**Financial Considerations:**

A member inquired about how the \$80,000 bequest is managed. Others responded that the funds are applied annually to the operating budget and support building improvements, utilities, and staffing. Even with the bequest, TPC previously ran a deficit when employing two pastors.

Deb reminded Session that any major staffing or budget changes should be planned well in advance. Another member suggested forming a working group to review finances and explore budget options in depth.

Deb emphasized that Session, as the governing body, would be the right place for such discussion.

One member noted that funds remain in the budget for a pastor, and that the candidate who offered to serve part-time proposed \$30,000 annually. This might offer a cost-saving opportunity worth sharing with the congregation.

Another member expressed that having pastoral leadership in place soon would bring needed stability for proactive decision-making.

**Discussion on Leadership Structure:**

Brad shared updates from the ENC's recent discussions, noting new presbytery guidance

**Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) Valdosta, GA**

Stated Session Meeting Minutes

19 October 2025

discouraging the placement of paid staff on Session. Two staff members will rotate off Session at year's end, with a third rotating off the following year. The ENC also advised discretion regarding placing family members (spouses, siblings, parents, or children) on Session simultaneously.

A member asked whether that meant the Clerk of Session would no longer be a staff member. Discussion followed about the difference between a **Clerk to Session** (not a Session member, no voice or vote) and a **Clerk of Session** (serving as both Session member and Clerk).

Deb affirmed these distinctions before redirecting the discussion back to pastoral leadership, asking whether the PNC and Session were open to exploring varied leadership models, including part-time arrangements.

**Comments from Members:**

Members agreed that while the PNC is elected by the congregation, it reports to Session and can recommend calling a congregational meeting to present new options. The congregation ultimately looks to both Session and PNC for direction.

There was also mention of potentially reducing Session size in future years.

A member suggested that the PNC recommend Session call a congregational meeting in January 2026 to explore the part-time pastoral option.

Deb proposed that Session and PNC consider hosting a congregational conversation in early 2026 to update the congregation on the ongoing search, explain the pending loss of the \$80,000 annual bequest, and gather input about leadership models. She asked whether Session might also create a small study group to analyze staffing and finances over the next six months.

A member recommended inviting the **Presbyterian Foundation** to offer outside guidance on budget and staffing considerations. **Deb agreed, and this was noted for follow-up on next month's agenda.**

Members expressed that external support could be valuable for long-term growth planning. As one member stated, "If we can't grow in faith, we won't grow in numbers." The group agreed that consistency in leadership — even on a part-time basis — is essential for stability and congregational care.

Discussion followed about how to advertise for a part-time pastor. Deb explained that the CLC can accommodate part-time postings and that flexible job descriptions can attract retired or local candidates seeking shorter-term calls.

**Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) Valdosta, GA**

Stated Session Meeting Minutes

19 October 2025

She summarized that both the PNC and Session are seeking flexibility, reliability, and consistency — qualities that could be found in part-time leadership. She encouraged setting a date for a congregational meeting and identifying presenters.

**Those Named to Lead the Congregational Conversation:**

Bill Wicks (PNC Chair), Zirkia Snyman (volunteered), and Mark Ferguson and Bryan Wright (Finance Committee Co-Chairs).

The Session agreed that the congregational meeting will take place in **January 2026**, with Deb offering to assist in preparation.

A member noted the potential for outreach growth as **Moody Air Force Base** expands in the coming years, bringing new families to the area.

Brad encouraged prioritizing the search for a part-time interim pastor to provide consistent leadership and help guide Session through transition. He also noted that an interim could help evaluate alternative models, including Commissioned Ruling Elders.

Deb concluded the session by providing two handouts outlining Flint River Presbytery's role in assisting congregations and explaining how presbytery contributions fund support to all churches within its bounds. (Documents attached; also available at [www.flintriverpresbytery.com](http://www.flintriverpresbytery.com) → Committees → Committee on Ministry.)

## 5. Standing Committee Reports

### Finance

- Finance Report (Needs Approval)
- The Finance Chair noted that when hiring a pastor, the Benevolence (Missions) fund would be the first area affected. That fund functions as a pledge, with payments typically made at year's end.
- A member asked whether, given possible budget reductions, TPC should still pledge \$30,000 to FRP. Deb replied that communicating any potential change early would help FRP plan accordingly, and that the presbytery would understand if adjustments were necessary.
- One member remarked that in tight financial seasons, it's natural to seek short-term relief by reducing areas with minimal impact.

## Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) Valdosta, GA

### Stated Session Meeting Minutes

19 October 2025

- A question arose regarding the \$150,000 balance in the Synovus checking account. Members discussed that these funds are used for operating expenses, though one member expressed concern that the amount appears consistently high. Suggestions included transferring excess funds into higher-interest accounts.
- *A motion was made to move **\$75,000** to the **Presbyterian Savings and Loan Investment Account**.*
- Discussion followed about maintaining sufficient funds for unexpected expenses. Brad suggested analyzing giving and spending trends over the next month to establish a reasonable baseline for the checking account.
- Finance agreed to prepare a three-year spending report, including graphs and notations for unusual expenditures (e.g., hurricanes, air conditioning repairs).
- *A motion was then made to **postpone** the transfer of funds until an appropriate checking threshold could be determined. The motion passed by voice vote.*
- *The Finance Report was **approved as information**, motion seconded and passed unanimously.*

## Worship & Education

- Report received for information.

## Missions & Care Share

- Committee recommends continuing financial support to Flint River Presbytery in 2026. Report received.

## Building and Grounds

- Report received for information.

## 5. Old Business

- None noted.

## 7. New Business

- **FRP Stated Meeting:** Saturday, November 1 (Zoom).  
*A motion was made and seconded to elect **Glennie Wicks** as Commissioner to represent Trinity. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

## Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) Valdosta, GA

Stated Session Meeting Minutes

19 October 2025

- **Clerk Transition:** Brit announced her intent to resign as Clerk of Session upon the conclusion of her term. The new Clerk will begin in January and may be either a current Session member or an appointed non-member.

Brad reminded the group that Session must elect both a Clerk and Treasurer each year. The current Treasurer stated he is willing to continue serving in 2026. Elections for officers will take place during the installation of new elders.

- **ENC Report:** Two individuals have agreed to serve on Session, with the ENC continuing to recruit two additional nominees.

## 8. Reminders & Prayer Requests

• *Calendar & Newsletter: Approved updates available at [trinitypresval.org](http://trinitypresval.org) and in printed/digital newsletters.*

### • **Upcoming Events:**

- Kirkin' o' the Tartan – Sunday, October 26
- Trunk or Treat – Wednesday, October 29
- Church Bonfire - November 8, 6:30PM
- Church Greening – Sunday, November 23
- First Sunday of Advent – Sunday, November 30

## 9. Communications

- The Clerk shared a thank-you note from a **Rise Against Hunger** representative, which was not on the original agenda.

## 10. Adjournment & Closing Prayer

A member suggested using the **November 16** Stated Meeting to discuss the leadership options Brad had previously drafted but which were not covered due to time constraints.

*A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM.*

Rev. Deb Tregaskis closed with prayer and blessing.

**Next Stated Session Meeting: November 16, 2:00 PM**

**Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) Valdosta, GA**

Stated Session Meeting Minutes

19 October 2025

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brittany DiGiammarino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Britanny DiGiammarino