

The session of Westminster Presbyterian Church (“WPC”) convened for a called meeting on 25 March 2009 in room 105 of the Holderness Mission Center to discuss and act on a proposal for “Westminster Presbyterian Church’s 2009 Economic Stimulus Plan”.

Moderator Chris Tuttle was present and called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M. Clerk of Session Doug Wellemeyer was present.

Associate Pastor Betty Berghaus was present.

Elders Sam Bryan, Kathryn Bunch, John Dancy, Mitch Dozier, Claudia Draffin, Dana Lange, Holly Huffman Schmidt and Sara Pottenger were present.

Elders Bruce Cunningham, Jan McCallum, Shayne Ruffing and Eric Wolf were absent and excused.

WPC staff members Barbara Fletcher and Nancy Rozak were present.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by the Moderator.

The Moderator declared a quorum present.

#### **WPC’s 2009 ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN**

The Moderator explained a written proposal circulated earlier in the week for “Westminster Presbyterian Church’s 2009 Economic Stimulus Plan” (copy attached), and there was thorough discussion about the timing, scale and beneficiaries of the proposed local mission effort.

The sense of the session throughout discussion was that such a spontaneous plan is a clear and appropriate sign of commitment to be led by faith and not fear in these difficult economic times.

**Motion:** On a motion by Claudia Draffin, the session approved the plan as proposed.

A general concern was then raised in the spirit of further discussion, thought and prayer by the session regarding the church’s many and varied fundraising efforts. There was brief additional discussion about the relative merits and faults of formally coordinating or limiting mid-year requests for monetary gifts from the membership, but no further actions were proposed or taken.

There being no further discussion of these matters, the Moderator declared the meeting adjourned.

The meeting was closed with a prayer by the Moderator at 6:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Doug Wellemeyer  
Clerk of Session

Chris Tuttle  
Moderator

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Westminster Presbyterian Church's 2009 Economic Stimulus Plan:

We have watched with dismay as economic distress has spread throughout our land. Mortgages become unmanageable, jobs are lost, credit becomes more scarce, and many families are trapped in a vicious downward spiral. The Stock Market is half of what it was three years ago, dropping 20% in the past year. Unemployment recently topped 8%, the highest level in over twenty-five years.<sup>1</sup> It is a difficult time, and no family has been left untouched.

But I believe we, the leaders of Westminster Presbyterian Church, must live in faith, refusing to give in to our fears. Communities such as ours have an opportunity, perhaps even an obligation, to step forward, seeking to bear witness to the Christ who is the Lord of the Church. We are judged, Jesus tells us, by one simple metric: what we did for those who were hungry and hurting (Matthew 25:31-46). Therefore, we I want to call us to recommit ourselves to the mission and ministry in Durham that has been the hallmark of this place for so long. I propose we do that by:

- 1) Embarking on a season of prayer for our nation, our leaders, and those most deeply affected by these difficult times
- 2) Cataloging the many members who serve in various capacities throughout this community, so we might get more people involved;
- 3) Recommitting ourselves to hands-on service through a Community Workday on 5/2
- 4) Commissioning an effort to raise \$50,000 this Easter season entirely for community organizations helping those most in need. We will keep no money ourselves. This money will go to organizations that address immediate, short-term needs for food, clothing, and shelter, as well as those that intentionally seek to address causes at the root of this crisis. A special subcommittee of the diaconate is gathering information on helping organizations to investigate the best uses for our money (I will have the names for you at our meeting Wednesday, and have been working with a few local clergy to gather helping agencies together to assess where they stand in these difficult times).
- 5) Challenging other communities of faith in Durham to do the same, at whatever level they choose.

I am, with some help, gathering a group at breakfast on Thursday that I hope will help 'seed' this fund, with the goal of kicking this effort off at the 'Sharing Our Mission' time on Palm Sunday.

To some this may seem a strange endeavor. When times are tight, why ask people for more? Why do something this bold, and not simply keep doing the good work we have been doing? If not us, who? If not now, when? We believe our faith sometimes calls us to do things that appear foolish, in order to bear witness to the One whom we serve all of our lives. Communities of faith are called to step up and lead, not follow along, solemnly shaking their heads as people go hungry, as more people are laid off, as more families lose their homes. Not everyone can give – that is a sad reality – but that is the purpose of community. One may not be able to, but another most certainly can. God has been profoundly generous to us. When times get hard, how will the church respond?

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<sup>1</sup> From the Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.us.htm>,  
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/jec.nr0.htm>