

Joint Session Meeting
First Presbyterian Church of Bainbridge and United Presbyterian Church of East Guilford
In person at Bainbridge and virtual on Zoom
June 9, 2022

Attending: Michael Davidson, Paul Cliffe, Billie Jo Northrup, Don Cole, Judy Ives, Sandy Egli, Al Clune, Gordon Spreutels, Paula Banks, Cheryl Nages, Bainbridge Clerk of Session Dorian Bunting-Cliffe, Rev. Dr. Ken Simurro and Moderator Patty Wolff.

Excused: East Guilford Clerk of Session Kathy Schmidt
Meeting began at 6:31 with prayer.

The purpose of the joint meeting is to meet with Rev. Dr. Ken Simurro to get to know him, ask him questions and discuss his possible future employment with our churches.

There is no formal agenda, the meeting began with Rev. Dr. Ken Simurro introducing himself. He can be casual and/or formal, whatever the congregations need. Has been an ordained Lutheran pastor for over 38 years, the current elder on the Bishop staff. His conference is east and north of here. Lives in Hobart, married. He has been an interim pastor in Sidney and will be available as of July 1st. He has wide, varied experience. Doctor in ministry. He is an outreach person, likes to get socially involved in communities as much as congregations will allow. Does not preach for a long period of time, "If I can't say it in 10 or 15 min, I can't say it in a half hour." Some of his best experiences have been ecumenical. He does not mind the travel from Hobart. He also shared a few experiences he had in the past with generating VBS interest and a street fair.

Each session member then introduced themselves.

Patty has given Ken our documentation that shows what our minimum salary is. Currently we have the preaching schedule for the month of July set.

- July – 1st Sunday – Ken
- Next 4 – Marsha Muller will do
- As of August we are open

Questions for Ken (Questions are in bold)

- **In your role as an interim pastor and living in Hobart, would you be available for Bible studies and things like that?** Ken – he can do almost full time, he does have some obligations with the Lutheran conference. He can lead our session meetings (after some "learning" about Presbyterian polity from Patty.)
- **Salary** – The Lutheran church has a "grid", which can make it more difficult for pastors with experience. The Presbyterian church does not have a "grid". Patty is at the minimum salary for a full-time salary which has been split between the churches.

Patty – There have been changes over the past few years due to Covid, but it really depends on what we want. If we just want someone to show up for the services on Sunday with programs, Power Point, etc., that is about 16 hours of time. The rest is meetings, pastoral emergencies, visits, and so on.

- **When Patty first started she was doing two services, would that be something that Ken would consider?** Ken said that if that is what we want, he would be ok with it.
- **When you were at the Lutheran church at Sidney, how did you fit in to what they were doing in the community?** It was a different assignment, an intentional interim. His role was to keep things level and process some of the dynamics in the congregation, figuring out issues in the congregation, and helping them out. He had "holy conversations", asking questions, that was his role with an eye to stepping out in a period of time. (A year and a half.) Ken was in the ministerium while he was in Sidney. He is open to being a part of the community. He will ask the congregations about what they are willing to do, is there a sense of

wanting to take risks, innovations, especially when it feels uncomfortable. Asking who your neighbors are, what are they struggling with, what are their needs. How does a congregation empower your community? If the congregations really wish to do this, he needs to know it. It takes time to build to trust.

Bainbridge will be purchasing equipment to manage the Zoom and try to make it as unobtrusive as possible. There was a discussion on using Zoom. Ken shared his thoughts on technology and Zoom. Ken – I would like to see people in the buildings, but also understand that it is a generational thing. If we want younger people, their go to methods of communication is different. So, using technology can reach that particular group. If you want people participating from a distance, technology “brings” them in. It is expensive, but folks can connect with you and participate in the congregation's activities. The more opportunities you provide may bring them in. In order to slowly increase the comfort level, you need to allow people to take small steps at their own pace. It allows them to be off camera, but they can see you, over time they may want to be closer and you can see them face to face.

Discussion of technology needs for each church.

- **Outdoor services, would Ken be willing?** Yes. East Guilford is moving their gazebo to make the outdoor services possible again.
- **Would one service or two make a difference in salary?** No.
- **Will you pick the hymns?** He prefers to do it collegially, working with the worship and music people.
- **Ken's preferred method of contact** – phone or email is fine.
 - ksimurro@msn.com
 - 917-572-8200

At this time there were no other questions and Ken was excused with thanks. 8:00 p.m.

New Business (Bainbridge):

- Last Saturday Billie Jo's stepdaughters apartment building burned down. She lost everything. **Motion** to provide assistance for Billie Jo's, Meghan Northrop, \$1,000 donation. **MSP**
- Next step with Ken - Would we like to engage him, for how long? A temporary contract cannot be longer than a full year. If we do a contract until the end of the year, it can be renewed at the end of the year. This allows for reevaluating salary each year.
- We are looking at a full time split between the congregations. Discussion of having two services, or one. Maybe we need to give them a try to see. A decision was made to leave things as they are right now and revisit this at another time.
- Payment of Ken – Our treasures would go on the board of Pensions website and the Board does the math and sends the bill.
- **Motion for Bainbridge**– We extend a contract to The Rev. Dr. Ken Simurro beginning August 1st through December 31st, 2022 at our minimum salary including applicable benefits. Costs will be split evenly between the two churches. **MSP**
- **Motion for East Guilford** – We extend a contract to The Rev. Dr. Ken Simurro beginning August 1st through December 31st, 2022 at our minimum salary including applicable benefits. Costs will be split evenly between the two churches. **MSP**

Next meeting – June 21st East Guilford starts at 6:00 p.m., Bainbridge will join at 6:30 p.m. Joann Aymar will moderate the session meeting in July (\$50 plus mileage.) Motion to adjourn at 8:36 **MSP**. Closed with prayer. (Don Cole)

Respectfully submitted,

Dorian Bunting-Cliffe
Bainbridge Clerk of Session