

### **FELLOWSHIP**

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the elders and staff members at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center for dinner and discussion around Chapters 5-8 of *A Generous Orthodoxy* by Brian McLaren. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at approximately 6:45 PM.

### **MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Teaching Elders: Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell (Moderator), Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne, and Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas. Ruling Elders: Andrea Jackson, Cliff McHenry, John McQueen, Bill Reynolds, Robin Sego, Sandy Snyder, Lou Stern, Sandi Stewart, and Dotti Tyle. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski.

**EXCUSED:** Rulings Joan Emrich, Marlene Petro, and Tom Taylor.

**QUORUM, CALL TO ORDER, AND OPENING PRAYER:** A quorum was established. Dr. McConnell served as Moderator. He called the meeting to order and opened with prayer. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

**STORYTELLING:** Elder Lou Stern opened the meeting with his story – *Grace is with me and it is in my DNA not to look back – A story of my ancestors*. Prayers were said for the storyteller.

### **STAFF REPORTS:**

#### **Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:**

- Update on various capital projects – paving, etc.
- Provided update on funds collected for the three special offerings – Hurricane Michael relief to PCUSA, annual Food Pantry offering, and continuing 2¢ a Meal.
- Working on filling the part-time custodian position.

#### **Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- *The Messiah* will be performed on December 1 – Genevieve’s 10th year!
- Cantata and Children’s Pageant will be performed on December 8.
- Caroling for veterans at the Food Pantry distribution on December 11 at 9:30 AM.
- Genevieve has finished her Old Testament class and loved it!

#### **Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne:**

- Congregational Life is going well.
- The Advent Devotional and cookie sharing – Sunday, December 2. Thank you to all who participated with devotions and cookies!
- Loves to lead the monthly new member classes.
- Shepherding Deacons – working on filling the slate for elections.
- Sanctuary Communion is going well under the new team. Thank you to Sandy Snyder for her dedication to managing the Home Communion! More home servers are needed.

**Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski:**

- Sermons posted on Facebook – going well.
- Started off the story telling moment on Sunday mornings with her story about mentoring at Wilkinson School. It has been a joy. The goal is for every 1<sup>st</sup> grader to have a reading buddy. There has been a good volunteer response.
- Working on a variety of videos – ex., showing what our Deacons are doing

**Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:**

- Contemporary Worship Leader Steve Sipes is holding rehearsals for his musical.
- Carol Homeister is working on the Children’s Pageant – has a big turnout from the Palms Preschool.
- Ethan Howell is building community relations at the Palms Center – Pickleball is popular and square dancing is up next.
- Contemporary Service – Prayers of the People moment. Worshipper shared a tender story about homelessness and the mental illness of a son.

**Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell:**

- Advent theme is *I’ll Be Home for Christmas*.
- The Presbyterian Gift Giving Catalog will be distributed with the Advent devotional
- Thanksgiving Eve service with Temple Sinai – Large crowd. Rabbi Hunting delivered the address.

**CORRESPONDENCE AND CLERK’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** *The Clerk to the Session emails to Staff and Elders pertinent correspondence received between Session Meetings.* The Clerk reported that:

- Peace River Presbytery 2019 Three Streams of Giving information received – forwarded to Executive Director, A&F Chair, and Global Mission Partners Chair 11/17/18.
- 2018 Clerk’s Annual Questionnaire completed by the Clerk and Executive Director of Operations - submitted to PCUSA 10/24/18.
- Foundation Grant Requests (attached to October Session minutes):
  - \$6,000 for Habitat for Humanity washers and dryers – approved.
  - \$33,075 for Global Mission Partners various partner fundings – approved.
  - \$100,000 for COP capital projects – approved. Plus, an additional \$24,103 to be added to the \$25,000 requested for planned Campus Center improvements.
- **NOTE: Session meeting will be 1 week early – December 17, 2018.**
- **MOTION MADE SECONDED, and PASSED: To set an additional service of worship on Sunday, December 30 at 10:30 AM in the Chapel.** [Note: This will allow a small service for the baptism of child Georgia Cotter, who has been ill.]

**FINANCIAL UPDATE:** Administration and Finance Chair Elder Andrea Jackson reported:

- Finances are in good standing as of the end of October. Year-end giving appeals are being made to the congregation.
- See page 19 of the Session package for the financial operations summary.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To set aside for discussion or clarification, item F.3. of the Omnibus Motion as presented in the Agenda.**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To pass the following Omnibus Motion (Items A-F), less item F.3., as presented in the Agenda.**

- A. To APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:**
1. Stated Session Meeting – 10/22/18
  2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 11/11/18
- B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:**
1. Assignments and Meetings:
    - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors - Month of December – **Cliff McHenry**
    - b. Session Meeting Storyteller - December – **John McQueen**
    - c.. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. Meeting – Monday, 12/03/18 at 7 PM - **Lou Stern**
    - d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members - Sunday 12/09/18 at 11 AM -Chapel Reception Room – **Group 4 Elders (Sandy Snyder and Lou Stern)**
  2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk’s Report as updated) [*Item missing from Agenda – added before the vote*].
  3. Special Offerings announced: Hurricane Michael relief 10/14/18, Food Pantry annual fund drive 11/11/18, and 2¢ A Meal continuing monthly collection 11/18/18.
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
1. Elder attending Deacons’ Exec. Comm. meeting on 11/01/18 – Bill Reynolds
  2. Commissioner attending the Presbytery Meeting on 11/15/18 - Linda Getzen
- D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:**
1. Administration and Finance - Ch. Andrea Jackson - includes Building and Grounds Team and The Generosity Team
  2. Global Mission Partners - Ch. Dotti Tyle
  3. Personnel - Ch. Marlene Petro
- E. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MINISTRY TEAMS:**
1. Family & Student Ministries (includes Palms Preschool) – *see staff reports above*
  2. Contemporary Worship Service Leadership
  3. Presbyterian Women - *no written report*
  4. Stephen Ministry Leadership
- F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**
1. Deacons’ Executive Committee - Ch. Marie Bonifield
  2. Memorial Garden Board - Ch. Sue Angle
  3. Nominating - Ch. Robin Segó – *approved by separate motion below*

**ITEMS FROM OMNIBUS SET ASIDE FOR CLARIFICATION OR DISCUSSION:**

Item F.3. Nominating – Nominating Chair Elder Robin Segó asked for clarification regarding filling an unexpired term on the Deacons Executive Committee. It was determined that the vacancy will be filled by vote at the annual congregational meeting. Until that time, the nominee is invited to attend the Deacons Executive Committee meeting without a vote. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive Omnibus Motion item F.3.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Church-wide Goals for December 2019 - Dr. McConnell reported and led the discussion. Following up a request made at the October Session meeting, Dr. McConnell distributed a handout that outlined the statistical markers provided by the staff to measure the progress made on the following Churchwide Goals for 2019:
  - a. Increase by 100% the number of new people touched by our ministry
  - b. Increase by 20% the number of people using their gifts in ministry.
  - c. Increase by 100% the number of leaders involved in our ministry

- d. Increase by 50% those participating in adult spiritual formations (classes, small groups)
- e. Increases by 5% Sunday morning worship attendance as compared to December 2017.

It was noted that there are challenges in measuring the participation rates in different situations. All goals are geared toward providing a growing and sustainable ministry at Church of the Palms. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To accept the Church-wide Goals for 2019.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Open Palms Road Map – Dr, McConnell led the discussion and provided an overview of the general direction moving forward to finish strong on the Open Palms Campaign. The goal is to replenish cash to the church funds (+/- \$400K) and also provide funding for other capital projects (+/- \$500K). Conversations are being held to determine how the Foundation, the Congregation and the Session can work together to achieve this milestone.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Reading for December Session dinner - Chapters 8-12 of *A Generous Orthodoxy* by Brian McLaren.
- Candidate Liaison Elder Sandy Snyder reported that Candidate for Ordination Jordan Goodwin gave her sermon before the presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry and will be ready to receive a call. She has one more semester at Rutgers and is thinking about a PhD.
- After the staff was dismissed, the Clerk provided an update to the Ruling Elders on the personnel matter that was reported at the September Session meeting involving a non-church member participant who is overstepping her boundaries. The Clerk outlined the steps taken to date and the future steps that will be taken with the non-member if necessary. Senior staff is aware of the issue. Monitoring will continue. The Clerk and Chair of Personnel received the approval of the Ruling Elders to act as outlined.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 9:00 PM to a Circle of Prayer.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell  
Moderator

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda R. Getzen  
Clerk to the Session

Attachment to official minutes:  
Clerk's Report (statistics)