

### FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Laurie Haas welcomed the elders and staff members at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center for dinner and discussion around Chapters 9-12 of *A Generous Orthodoxy* by Brian McLaren and the viewing of a video of Church of the Palms 2018 activities. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 6:55 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: Joan Emrich, Andrea Jackson, Cliff McHenry, John McQueen, Marlene Petro, 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:** Ruling Elder 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 John McQueen opened the meeting with his story – *The “Principal(s)” of Life*. Prayers were said for the storyteller.

**STAFF REPORTS:** Dr. McConnell is grateful for the energy of the staff this Advent/Christmas season – we are blessed to have them.

#### **Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski:**

- Jackie Gomez is finalizing the many bulletins for the various services this season.
- Jackie and Sarah are working on the 2018 annual report.
- Working on communications about the new Speaker Series.
- The Wilkinson Mentoring mission is going well. Teacher needs glue sticks! 4 other classrooms will start with mentoring in January

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

- The Contemporary service is thriving.
- Doing more pastoral care.
- Hospitality Coordinator Ethan Howell has asked about pricing at the Palms Center for activities such as pickleball. Discussion regarding difference in prices for members and non-members – some discomfort here. Pam Gillespie will work with staff on this.

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

- Parking lot repaving is completed – deferred maintenance item.
- Preschool renovation of flooring, baseboards, bathrooms, etc., is being completed. Parents have noticed!
- Comcast is still running the prior week’s 9 AM service and not a live broadcast. Issues may be resolved in February (or sooner) – Comcast is running a new line.

- The church is fully staffed. Welcome to new part time facility person John Scott. A preschool worker is out on maternity leave.

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

- Wednesday night life is going well – weekly attendance range has been 95-205.
- 137 dozen Christmas cookies!
- 90 Shepherding Deacons had their Christmas celebration on Saturday.
- The Stephen Ministers Christmas celebration is Tuesday night. 4 additional names needed to fill upcoming Stephen Ministers openings.
- Palliative Care and Chronic Illness workshop will be held on December 29.
- The December new member class brought 9 new members. *[Note from the Clerk: See note on Clerk's Report about 11-year-old granddaughter of new members.]*

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- Many, many Advent/Christmas events with the choirs and SYV!
- Genevieve passed her Old Testament class. Yay! Thankful for the continuing education allowance provide by COP.

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

- A beautiful memorial service for The Rev John Cairns, interim pastor at COP (with Rev. Paul Eckel), was held at First PC today. So thankful for his leadership.
- Speaker Series starts in January– Michael Gershon will be the first speaker.

**CORRESPONDENCE AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** *The Clerk to the Session emails to Staff and Elders pertinent correspondence received between Session Meetings. No additional report.*

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

- See Executive Director's Summary on page 12 of the Session package.
- Hopefully expecting a surplus – a ways to go to collect by year end.
- **MOTION FROM THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE and PASSED: To release the final \$5,000 from the Open Palms mission account and allocate it to the Session mission program for mentoring at Wilkinson Elementary School.**
- The Administration and Finance Committee approved the following by the end of the year:
  - As approved in the 2018 Operating Ministry Budget, \$25,000 will be transferred to Missions at year-end if total revenue will fund this amount.
  - As approved in the 2018 Operating Ministry Budget, up to \$75,000 will be transferred to the Capital Reserve fund, if funds allow.
  - After these two transfers are made, any surplus (total revenue over expenses) will be used to "pay ourselves back" for the Open Palms deficit.

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

**A. To APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:**

1. Stated Session Meeting – 11/26/18
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 12/09/18

**B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:**

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors - Month of January – Joan Emrich
  - b. Session Meeting Storyteller – January – Dotti Tyle
  - c. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting – Monday 01/07/18 at 7 PM - Marlene Petro  
[Clerk's note: John McQueen will substitute]

- d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members - Sunday 01/13/18 at 11 AM  
-Chapel Reception Room - Group 1 Elders (A. Jackson C. McHenry, B. Reynolds)
- 2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)
- C. **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
  - 1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. mtg on 12/02/18 – Lou Stern - *no written report*
- 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- *no written report p*
  - 3. Presbyterian Women - *no written report*
  - 4. Stephen Ministry Leadership- *no written report*
- F. **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**
  - 1. Deacons' Executive Committee - Ch. Marie Bonifield
  - 2. Memorial Garden Board - Ch. Sue Angle- *no written report*
  - 3. Nominating - Ch. Robin Segó

**OLD BUSINESS: NONE**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. **Major Update to Employee Handbook.** Personnel Chair Elder Marlene Petro and Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie reported. The Session was asked to review the changes to the Employee Handbook and be prepared to discuss and vote on the updates at the January Session meeting. A summary has been provided in the December Session package (pages 39-40). Session members were asked to send questions and comments to Elder Petro, Director Gillespie and/or Elder Joan Emrich before the next meeting. The church's employment lawyer has reviewed the entire Employee Handbook and her recommendations have been included. The entire Employment Handbook will be emailed to Session members as a PDF – many pages!
- 2. **2019 Budget:**
  - a. **Contract with Visitation Pastor.** Personnel Committee Chair Elder Petro reported. The proposed \$16,186 contract (salary with cell phone allowance) with The Rev. Dr. Alan Rodda for 2019 for his part-time services, which will cover his visitations, usually on Fridays. His voluntary participation in church services on Sunday morning is very much welcomed and is at his option. **MOTION FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE and PASSED: To approve the 2019 contract with Visitation Pastor The Rev. Dr. Alan Rodda.**
  - b. **2019 Operating Budget.** Administration and Finance Committee Chair Elder Andrea Jackson presented an overview of the 2019 budget (see pages 45-46 of Session package), including a written narrative prepared by Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie (see pages 42-44 of Session package). Thank yous to Pam Gillespie, Elder Jackson, and the Administration and Finance Committee for a job well done. Elder Jackson commended the very deliberative and well thought out process. The Session reviewed and discussed the 2019 annual budget presented by the Administration and Finance Committee. *See paragraph 5 below for vote.*

3. **Call for Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation.** Dr. McConnell reported. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To call the annual meeting of the Church Corporation and Congregation for Sunday, January 27, 2019 at 12:00 PM, in the Sanctuary, and to direct that notice of the meeting be announced from the pulpit on consecutive Sundays and placed in churchwide communications.** Note: The annual report of the Foundation will also be presented.
4. **2019 Terms of Call for Pastors.** The pastors and staff excused themselves from the meeting. The Clerk to the Session moderated the remainder of the meeting. The Ruling Elders discussed the terms of call for the called pastors, Stephen D. McConnell, Lal Hmingliani Browne, and Laurie Haas, as those terms pertain to the 2019 budget. Chair of the Personnel Committee Elder Petro presented the committee recommendations, explained that figures from other large churches in the presbytery for similar pastor positions had been reviewed, and explained the rationale for each pastor's combined salary and housing figures. The pastors have directed their housing allowance allocations. **MOTION FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE and PASSED: To approve for the 2019 budget a 4% increase in the combined salary and housing allocation [includes the pastor's 403(b) contribution] for Dr. McConnell [of the total, \$52,266 was allocated by the pastor to his housing allowance].** The terms of call for Dr. Browne were then discussed. **MOTION FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE and PASSED: To approve for the 2019 budget a 4% increase in the combined salary and housing allocation for Dr. Browne [of the total, \$50,934 was allocated by the pastor to her housing allowance].** The terms of call for Rev. Haas were then discussed. **MOTION FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE and PASSED: To approve for the 2019 budget a 4% increase in the combined salary and housing allocation for Rev. Haas [of the total, \$30,000 was allocated by the pastor to her housing allowance].**
5. **2019 Operating Budget Vote.** **MOTION FROM THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE and PASSED: To adopt the 2019 operating budget as presented.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Reading for January Session dinner - Chapters 13-16 of *A Generous Orthodoxy* by Brian McLaren.
- Elder Tyle announced that the Mission Fair is scheduled for Sunday 02/03/19, and the Session is invited to the luncheon at 1:00 in the Campus Center for all participating Mission Partners.
- Prayers for Elder Tom Taylor and his upcoming surgery.
- Note from the Clerk: This announcement was inadvertently omitted at the meeting and was emailed by Pam Gillespie. It is added here for the record: Dr. McConnell has requested to lead a tour to Israel in 2019 and will receive complimentary travel for at least one person. He will be communicating the tour to the congregation beginning early 2019. He will also be taking some extra time off to lead this tour. He had requested that this information be shared with the Session, so the Session is aware of this before communication is shared with the congregation.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:37 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)