

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 through chapter 2 of *The Good and Beautiful God* by James Bryan Smith. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 6:50 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: Marcia Baarson, Linda Calvert, Gerry Hailey, Andrea Jackson, Cliff McHenry, John McQueen, Robin Segó, Lou Stern, Sandi Stewart, and Dotti Tyle. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Planning and Outreach (new title) Sarah Soboleski.

EXCUSED: Ruling Elders Joan Emrich and Matthew Straeb.

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 2.0: Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp opened the meeting with her story – Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris – My old friend. Prayers were said for the storyteller.

STAFF REPORTS:

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Palms Center – excited to be working with new director Susan Neisler.
- Appalachian Trail – Enough interest that 2 trips have been planned – groups will be training together.
- Study leave coming up.

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Choir – Donation was given to update the choir robes. Choice of Michigan colors (blue and “maize”) is entirely coincidental! Old robes have been donated to choirs in need.

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

- Life Together – 21 groups have formed.
- Congregational Life – Beth Moore simulcast event on 9/28.
- Advent – Elders, please sign up to write a devotion for a day.
- Chili Cookoff – 10/23.
- Shepherding Deacons – working to fill slate.

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- The Good Journey - all 600 journaling books have been given out. All copies of *The Good and Beautiful God* have been sold. Staff has begun their small groups.
- Staff Transition – Tom Dieckhoff in the Facilities Staff is retiring. Thank you to Tom!

- Facilities – awaiting permit for lift in the Sanctuary. The architect is drawing plans for the Chapel and Sanctuary Chancel improvements. Finishing up Campus Center improvements.

Director of Planning and Outreach Sarah Soboleski:

- Website – updating in various areas.
- The Good Journey – thrilled to see it coming to life.
- Wilkinson School – enough members have volunteered for all 1st graders.

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

- Wednesday Night Life – dinner and classes are having good turnouts.

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

- Foundation approved June 2019 Grant Request for Leadership Theological Education 9/10/19
- For Omnibus Motion below – Item A.2. 09/08/19 Session Meeting Minutes – correction made to one new member’s name.
- Announcement of called meeting of Presbytery – see items B.4. of Omnibus Motion.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Andrea Jackson and Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie reported:

- Finances are strong.
- See details in Executive Director’s Report at page 15 of Session package.
- Extra Mile Campaign – pledging is going well. Important to show congregation the work being done for the Chapel and other improvements.

OMNIBUS MOTION:

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

A. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

1. Stated Session Meeting – 08/26/19
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 09/08/19

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors - Month of October – **Sandi Stewart**
 - b. Session Meeting Storyteller - October – **Sarah Soboleski**
 - c. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. Meeting – Oct. 7 at 7 PM – **Linda Calvert**
 - d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – October 13 at 11 AM – **Group 2 Elders (J. Emrich, R. Segó, M. Straeb)**
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk’s Report)
3. **2020 Communion Dates: 1/5, 2/2, 3/1, 4/9 (Maundy Thurs), 5/3, 6/7, 7/5, 8/2, 9/6, 10/4, 11/1, 12/6, & 12/24 (Xmas Eve 11 PM). Additional Communion Dates for Healing and Wellness services 10/13, 11/10, & 12/21.**
4. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to a called meeting of Peace River Presbytery – purpose – authorizing sale of Hope PC property (Thursday, September 26, 1 PM at Hope United Presbyterian Church, Ft. Myers). *The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:*
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in September– **Cliff McHenry**
 2. Commissioner attending Peace River Pres. Called Mtg on Sept. 14 – **Matthew Straeb**
- D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:**
1. Administration and Finance Committee (includes Building and Grounds Team and The Generosity Team) - Ch. Andrea Jackson
 2. Global Mission Partners Committee - Ch. Dotti Tyle
 3. Personnel Committee - Ch. Joan Emrich
- 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' Exec. Comm.- Ch. Carol Washchuk
 2. Memorial Garden Board - Ch. Sue Angle
 3. Nominating - Ch. Robin Sego
- G. TO ELECT MARLENE PETRO AS A CLASS OF 2023 DIRECTOR FOR THE FOUNDATION FOR THE CHURCH OF THE PALMS.** Note: Electing to a second term.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Senior Well-Being Team** – Dr. McConnell led the discussion. A team of staff, lay people, and community members brainstormed the weekend of 9/13-14 in a conference led by Ministry Architects. The task was to develop a ministry plan to assist those ages 65+ to achieve well-being in body, mind, and spirit. A Mission Statement and Values were established. Work was begun on 3 year goals (06/01/2022) and 1 year benchmarks (06/01/2020) in 4 goal areas: Care Center, Combating Loneliness and Isolation in Aging and Chronic Illness, Life Decisions, and Quality of Life at End of Life. Leaders in the goal areas have been recruited. In October, Ministry Architects will facilitate the creation of work plans for the goal areas.
2. **Personnel Transitions** – Dr. McConnell led the discussion. In addition to Tom Dieckhoff's retirement and the addition of Susan Neisler as Campus Center director (reported earlier), Dr. McConnell reported on strategic planning within the staff to address the goal of Physical Well-being. Rev. Laurie Haas will be spearheading this goal. One focus is on the uses of Palm Center. To provide new strategic emphasis – to be proactive on our strategic priorities -- Sarah Soboleski will be taking on some different responsibilities. Her new title is Director of Planning and Outreach. She will be working with the Family Ministry Team. Sarah will have planning responsibilities as well as providing leadership for the hospitality ministries. Jackie Gomez in the Communication Department will be getting additional support as Sarah takes on these new responsibilities.
3. **Wellspring** – Dr. McConnell reported. Wellspring - a service of healing and well-being - will be held the second Sunday of each month at 6 PM the Campus Center. It begins 10/13. It is a personal worship, liturgical based experience that includes communion. The goal is for participants who yearn for well-being to seek out the power and presence of God. The first benchmark is to have 20 participants and then see how it goes.

4. **October Session Meeting** – Dr. McConnell and 2 Ruling Elders will be away at that time. Discussion on whether to cancel the October Session meeting. Consensus was to let Dr McConnell make that determination if there is no pressing business for the agenda. He will notify the Session.
5. **Speaker Series** – Pastor/author Brian McLaren speaks on October 16. Not all will agree with his ideas on the emerging church movement, nor are they expected to. He will be challenging and thought provoking as he “pushes the envelope.”
6. **Sabbatical Leave Approval** – From the Personnel Committee Report received above. **MOTION COMING FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE and PASSED: To approve Dr. Browne’s sabbatical leave for May 1, 2020, through August 16, 2020.** Note: this period includes some of her personal vacation days.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Reading for discussion at the next Session Dinner: Through chapter 5 of *The Good and Beautiful God* by James Bryan Smith.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:27 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)