

Due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the elders and staff met via a video-conference Session meeting that began at 7:00 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: Jeanne Asakura, Marcia Baarson, Linda Calvert, Joan Emrich, Gerry Hailey, Andrea Jackson, Cliff McHenry, Jason Morton, Lou Stern, Sandi Stewart, Matthew Straeb, and Pam Williams. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Outreach & Families Sarah Soboleski.

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 and a devotion based on Revelation 22:1-5. The Tree of Life and the healing of nations. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting as presented.**

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

- New Members: Congregational Life Pastor Hmingi Browne held more new member classes in August. At that time, the attendees were asked the required questions and affirmative answers were given. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive Eunice J. Gick, Michael W. Gick, and Carol A. Brown as Members of Church of the Palms.**
- Inquirer Liaisons: **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To confirm that Jeanne Asakura is appointed as Liaison for Inquirer Genevieve Beauchamp, and Marcia Baarson is appointed a Liaison for Inquirer Sarah Soboleski.** The Moderator happily reported that both Inquirers have been accepted by the Presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
- The Congregational Advocate Program piloted by the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry has now been adopted for use throughout the Presbytery. Judy Bremer is COP's Congregational Advocate and Joan Emrich is her Session Liaison.
- The called meeting of the Presbytery will be held via teleconference on September 12.
- The July Grant request for \$50,000 for the Digital Ministry was approved by the Foundation.

STAFF REPORTS:

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- See written report in Session package for financial details
- Palms Preschool – attendance has doubled. VPK begins August 31, so attendance should rise again. No COVID-19.
- Food Pantry – Staging will be moved back to the East parking area starting September 14. 5 days per week 10-1 PM.
- Linda Evans is cancelling the Tutoring Ministry sessions for this semester due to COVID-19. Some tutors may arrange through parents to tutor via teleconference.
- Extra Mile capital renovations around the campus are continuing.

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

- Congregational Life: 48 callers still devoted to reaching out to our elderly and homebound.
- Small groups and Tables of Six are meeting again – in various ways. The Grief Support group meeting by teleconference.
- Nominating Committee is looking for candidates to serve as Shepherd Deacons.

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- The choir is rehearsing via teleconference – to be ready for that time when they can perform together.
- SYV is starting up again in 6 week segments.
- She is involved with the Social Justice Task Group – currently working to raise awareness of issues in children’s lives.
- Kudos to Yoko and Jonathan Spivey for their tireless work, especially in manning the hot Food Pantry delivery drive thru during the week!

Director of Outreach & Families Sarah Soboleski:

- Communications:
 - The new media equipment paid for by the Foundation grant is arriving and installation has started in the Campus Center. Training will begin shortly.
 - Jackie Gomez has the Connect Magazine ready for distribution on Sunday. The digital version will be interactive.
- The Wilkinson School Ministry is on hold due to COVID-19, but there will be some projects to provide off campus support for teachers.
- Family Ministry:
 - Curriculum for Children and Student Ministries is approved and ready for the start of the school year. Will be adjusted depending upon COVID-19 issues.
 - Student Ministry search for the new Youth Director has begun. The search committee is working with facilitator Ministry Architects.
 - Beach send-off for the new college freshmen was a success.

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas

- The Fall Kickoff Drive Thru is this Sunday, August 31. Bring peanut butter and your pet.
- Teaching:
 - Spiritual practices workshop on Lectio Divina with Anita Lustrea via teleconference.
 - Different small groups are discussing the books *Be the Bridge* and *The Soul of the Pilgrim*.
- The Palms Center:
 - Exercise classes will begin again after Labor Day – with social distancing practices in place.
 - The Eagle Scout’s outdoor project complete with fire pit has been finished.
 - Work should start soon on the walking trail.

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: 06/22/2020
2. Special Session Meeting: 07/08/2020
3. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 07/21/2020

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of September (until further notice, please email prayers before Thursday taping of service): **Gerry Hailey**
 - b. Session Meeting Storyteller: **None scheduled**
 - c. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting: Tentative Mon. Sept 14 at 7 PM: **Cliff McHenry**
 - d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: Tentative Sunday, Sept 13 at 11 AM (subject to change by Pastor Hmingi Browne to different date and via teleconference: **Group 1 Elders (M. Baarson, A. Jackson, C. McHenry)**)
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report *as revised at meeting*)
3. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the Peace River Presbytery stated meeting (Saturday, September 12 via teleconference). The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:
 1. Linda Getzen
 2. Linda Calvert
 3. Jason Morton
 4. Joan Emrich

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in August: Cancelled.

D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:

1. Administration and Finance: Ch. Andrea Jackson (includes Building and Grounds Team)
2. Global Partner Mission: Ch. Matthew Straeb *No written report this month*
3. Personnel: 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 *No written report this month*
3. Presbyterian Women *No written report this month*
4. Stephen Ministry Leadership

F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:

1. Deacons' Executive Committee: Ch. Carol Washchuk
2. Memorial Garden Board: Ch. Sue Angle *No written report this month*
3. Nominating: Ch. Marcia Baarson *No written report this month*

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Finance update: Administration and Finance Committee Chair Andrea Jackson reported. Monthly giving vs. expense is leveling off as predicted, but church revenue is ahead of budget. Preschool tuition is now coming in. Overall a great positive response. Applying for forgiveness of the PPP federal government loan. The kitchen roof in the Campus Center has a leak and may need replacing. The 2019 Audit has been completed and a copy will be in the September Session package. Extra cash on hand will be used to purchase Certificates of Deposit to spread funds under the FDIC limits. Payments to Mission Partners for the third and fourth quarters have been approved.
2. Reopening Plans. The Moderator facilitated a broad discussion about plans for re-opening for in-person church services. Some of many issues: Maintaining social distancing, face masks, music but no singing by the congregation, offerings left by the doors, service of communion. The in-person service may be shortened, but have the same sermon as the full digital service. The team continues to assess trends, and the ever-changing COVID-19 situations in our local communities. They will be soliciting feedback via an emailed survey. A decision about a September reopening will be made by the end of this week.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Foundation Board Member. A Session appointed director for the Foundation was needed to fill the unexpired term of Bruce Steves who has resigned and moved to Minnesota. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To elect Andrea Jackson as a Class of 2023 Director for the Foundation for the Church of the Palms.**
2. Strategic Goals 2020-2021. Dr. McConnell reported and led the discussion about the churchwide Strategic Goals for 2020-2021 that have been developed and proposed by the Leadership Team. [Note: A copy is attached to the official Session minutes]. There is a new emphasis on intentional inclusivity. It was noted that there are challenges in measuring the participation rates in different situations, particularly due to the inability to meet in person due to COVID-19. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To endorse the Strategic Goals for 2020-2021.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SENIOR PASTOR'S CONCLUDING REMARKS:

1. Senior Pastor: The Conversations Around Race group continues to meet and is eager to make a difference. Upcoming presentations include a teleconference discussion about *Strength to Love* by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and another about the movie *Selma*. They are looking forward to positive engagements with the local Light of the World Church.
2. Session reading is the churchwide reading: *Love Does* by Bob Goff. The book will be distributed at the August 31 Kick-off Drive Thru. Read at your own pace.
3. Prayer concerns were expressed for various church members and loved ones.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:45 PM with prayer by the Moderator.

By: _____
The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell
Moderator

By: _____
Linda R. Getzen
Clerk to the Session

Attachment to official minutes:
Clerk's Report as revised (statistics)
2020-2021 Strategic Goals