

Due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the elders and staff met via a video-conference Session meeting that began at 7:12 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 inspired by Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren.* **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

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 MEMBER:** Pastor Hmingi held another new member class in May -- for her assistant Ann McColgan! Sadly, Ann will be leaving the church staff because she is needed to support her family's business in these stressful economic times. However, she is a Stephen Minister and wishes to keep her ties with Church of the Palms. Ann was asked the required questions and affirmative answers were given. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive Ann McColgan as an Affiliate Member of Church of the Palms.**
- **CALLED MEETING OF PRESBYTERY:** A Special Meeting of Peace River Presbytery has been called for Wednesday, June 3, 2020, at 1:30 PM by video conferencing. The Clerk briefly explained the purpose of the meeting. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and PASSED: To appoint the following as Elder Commissioners to the Called meeting of Peace River Presbytery: Joan Emrich, Linda Getzen, Gerry Hailey, and Jason Morton. The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy.**

STAFF REPORTS:

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Small groups continue to thrive via video-conferences.
- Contemporary Service: Video airing of the Sunday service has commenced. 200+ views!
- Confirmands are working on their Faith Statements,
- Using this time for creativity.

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- Food Pantry: 250+ families are served each weekday via drive through, which has been moved to the larger and more shaded west parking lot.
- Facilities are getting a deep cleaning to prepare for re-opening of the campus.
- Payroll Protection Program – working with our bank to follow the ever-developing federal rules.

Director of Outreach & Families Sarah Soboleski:

- Communications – Very encouraging growth. Sarah provided a slide show summary of statistics. The number of visitors reached through various COP cyberspace platforms (YouTube, livestream, televised services, website, email) continues to increase.
- Family Ministry – 20-30 join the children’s video worship on Sundays. Youth groups are getting a little “zoomed out” on cyberspace meeting, but continue. Carol Homeister writes “real” letters to the children and they are writing back!
- Genevieve and Sarah have finished this semester of seminary. Hurrah!

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- The Chancel Choir and the Handbell Choir continue to meet via video-conference. Because of the need for social distancing due to the pandemic, a glimpse of what the future holds for singing together is ever changing.
- Thankful for the talented quartet that provides choral music for the Sunday televised services.
- In addition to music for the Sunday services, the daily devotions required 10 unique musical pieces to be performed for the taping on Friday. Genevieve and Jonathan Spivey have been busy.
- Genevieve also takes a turn provide the daily devotions.
- Two Chancel Choir members, Roberta and Bob, are getting married!

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

- Pastor Hmingi has postponed her sabbatical leave until next summer due to the pandemic.
- Congregational Care is busy. A lot of personal communication – writing and calling. 46 Stephen Ministers are doing one-on-one caregiving.
- Two Small Groups have been restarted based on *The Good and Beautiful Community*.

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

- The staff team continues to do amazing things! See various remarks below.

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: 04/27/2020

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of June: **Jeanne Asakura**
 - b. Session Meeting Storyteller: June 22: **Linda Calvert Tentative**
 - c. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. Meeting: June 1 at 7 PM: **Jeanne Asakura Tentative**
 - d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: Tentative Sunday, June 14 at 11 AM, Chapel: **Group 2 Elders (J. Emrich, J. Morton, M. Straeb)**
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk’s Report)

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Elder attending Deacons’ Exec. Comm. meeting in May: 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
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 *No written report this month*

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. Emergency plan updates:
 - a. Food Pantry: Pam Gillespie reported. See staff report above.
 - b. Palms Preschool: Dr. McConnell reported. Because the pandemic, flexibility on re-opening remains fluid. Staff is currently considering a mid-June start date. The Session has empowered the staff to make this decision.
 - c. Worship: Dr. McConnell reported. The Contemporary Service has been added to the cyberspace streams. He is grateful to the congregation for their consistent responses to the various worship services.
 - d. Rule of Life: Dr. McConnell reported. There is plan developing to provide a *Rule of Life* discipline, via our various cyberspace platforms, that would create new practices to help participants commit to growing more deeply in their faith. An example of this might involve participating in regular reading and studies of scripture that dovetail with the Daily Devotionals, perhaps starting with the Gospel of Mark.
2. Finance update: Administration and Finance Committee Chair Andrea Jackson reported. Contributions continue ahead of budget. Finances are in good shape. Watching the decrease in revenue due to the suspension of the pre-school. Pam Gillespie and the Administration and Finance Committee will monitor the re-opening of the preschool and its payroll numbers. Second quarter mission partner payments have been made. As Pam Gillespie mentioned above, a team is working through the Payroll Protection Program rules.
3. Facilities update: Pam Gillespie reported. See staff report above.

NEW BUSINESS:

Re-opening Discussion: Dr. McConnell reported. An advisory task force (which includes staff and Elder Straeb) has been convened and held its first meeting today. The purpose is to gather information and provide guidance regarding the phased re-opening of the COP campus. The larger size of the COP congregation and the need for social distancing are critical factors. Because of this, churches smaller than ours may be opening earlier. A first phase of re-opening COP involves Small Groups meeting either on campus or in homes. The second phase must be more proactive because it involves the re-opening the COP campus for larger worship services. Lengthy discussion was held about the above and also how to sensibly include those volunteers aged 65+ who want to be involved in church activities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS:

1. Reading for discussion at the June Session meeting. Continue *The Good and Beautiful Community* by James Bryan Smith at your own pace. Copies available in the church office.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:**
To adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:00 PM with prayer by Dr. McConnell.

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

By: _____
Linda R. Getzen
Clerk to the Session

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