

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 *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) and Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas. Ruling Elders: Marcia Baarson, Linda Calvert, Joan Emrich, Gerry Hailey, Andrea Jackson, John McQueen, Robin Segó, Lou Stern, Sandi Stewart, Matthew Straeb, and Dotti Tyle. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen and Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp.

EXCUSED: Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne, Ruling Elder Cliff McHenry, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, and Community Engagement Director 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. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

STORYTELLING 2.0: Elder Lou Stern opened the meeting with his story – *Joy in a Bacon Sandwich*. Prayers were said for the storyteller.

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT: This month's spotlight shone on the Palms Center with a presentation by Rev. Laurie Haas and Recreation Director Susan Neisler about all of the wonderful programs that are engaging body, mind, and spirit, as well as the visions for the future. Susan led the Session in a yoga breathing lesson, complete with fragrant relaxing oils!

STAFF REPORTS:

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- New robes for the choir and updated Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary and Campus Center!
- Messiah performance will have a record 180 singers.
- The church has received a gift of a harpsichord.
- Temple Sinai annual joint service on Wednesday.
- Church Organist Jonathan Spivey's mother died.

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- See Ministry Spotlight above. Recreation Director Susan Neisler is a part-time staffer and amazingly efficient!

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

- Elder Cliff McHenry's father died. Services in WVA this week.
- Jordan/Israel trip. All 33 travelers arrived home safely.
- Senior Well Being ministry. A group is visioning how to create this.
- Wellspring Service. Two services held so far. A work in process.

- Adult Boy Scout Religious Award. Church member Theodore A. “Tab” Brewer has been nominated for the Boy Scouts’ Celtic Cross Award by Don Prieur, leader of the television ministry. Shh, it’s a secret! Tab has served COP in the sound booth as part of the church television ministry for the past 7 years. He is an adult Boy Scout volunteer. Memorandum provided by Don Prieur outlining many of the services Tab has provided to the Boy Scouts, Church of the Palms, and his community. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the nomination of Theodore A. “Tab” Brewer for the Boy Scouts’ Celtic Cross Award, and direct the Clerk to execute documentation for such on behalf of the Session.**

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:

- 2019 Necrology Report for Elders submitted to Presbytery – deceased in 2019: Carolyn Guyton and Ellen Cavanaugh.
- Clerk attended the annual Presbytery review of Session Records on 10/26/19. COP records approved without exception.
- Clerk is preparing a draft of the Session standing rules manual.
- Small typos located in Session minutes and the Clerk’s Report below will be corrected in final.
- **NOTE: December Session meeting is a week early – on Monday December 16.**

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Andrea Jackson reported:

- In good cash position. Annual year-end push is on to receive budgeted funds.
- Work continues on the 2020 Operating Budget – review by Session planned for December.
- **2018 FINANCIAL AUDIT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM INDEPENDENT AUDITOR AT KENNETH F. KANDEFER CPAs.** Presentation made by the auditor to the Administration and Finance Committee on 11/20/19.
- See page 21 of the Session package for report from Executive Director of Operations.

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 – 09/23/19 (no meeting in October)
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 10/13/19
3. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 11/03/19

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors - Month of November – **Linda Calvert**
 - b. Session Meeting Storyteller - November – **Lou Stern**
 - c. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. Meeting – Nov. 4 at 7 PM – **Lou Stern**
 - d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – November 3 (new date) at 11 AM – **Group 3 Elders (G. Hailey, S. Stewart, D. Tyle)**
 - e. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors - Month of December – **Cliff McHenry**
 - f. Session Meeting Storyteller - December – **Dotti Tyle**
 - g. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. Meeting – Dec. 2 at 7 PM – **Marcia Baarson**
 - h. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – December 8 at 11 AM – **Group 4 Elders (L. Calvert, J. McQueen, L. Stern)**

2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, Home Communion, and Quarterly Worship Service Attendance Report (see attached Clerk's Report)
 3. Ratify appointment of Elder Commissioners to the Stated Peace River Presbytery meeting (11/14/19 Peace PC, Lakewood Ranch). *The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:*
 1. Linda Getzen
 2. Joan Emrich
 3. Marcia Baarson
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in October– **Linda Calvert**
 2. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in November – **Lou Stern**
 3. Commissioners attending the Presbytery Meeting on 11/14/19 – **Joan Emrich**
- 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. 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
 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
 3. Nominating - Ch. Robin Segó

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Community Speaker Series. Dr. McConnell reported. Intentional consideration given to a wide range of speakers based on the mission of Loving God, Loving Neighbor. Some more provocative speakers may be outside of the usual "comfort zones."

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Conversations About Race. Dr. McConnell reported. A group is meeting to start this conversation about Church of the Palms and proactive engagement to address racial segregation in our worshipping communities. Discussion about reactions to the Brian McLaren Community Speaker Series talk on 10/16.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Reading for discussion at next Session Dinner: Pick up copies of *Tattoos on the Heart* by Father Gregory Boyle. Also available in audio, read by the author. The Foundation sponsored Speaker Series featuring Father Boyle and then Jen Hatmaker will also be possible fundraisers for a project at Wilkinson School and Samaritan, respectively - \$10 tickets for that purpose.
2. Elder Dotti Tyle is retiring as leader of Day of Hope. She reported that Continuing Hope funds were used to purchase school shirts for the children at Wilkinson and also support the summer reading program. Marlene Petro will assume the leadership role of Day of Hope.
3. Commissioner Elder Joan Emrich provided a report on the 11/14/19 Presbytery meeting. Congratulations to our Fred Chamberlain, who was elected Treasurer for the Presbytery.

4. Thursday, February 27, 2020, Church of the Palms will host the Peace River Presbytery stated meeting. Elders, please plan to assist and attend.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:45 PM to a Circle of Prayer, including prayers for Elder Cliff McHenry on the death of his father and for Church Organist Jonathan Spivey on the death of his mother.

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

By: _____
Linda R. Getzen
Clerk to the Session

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