

FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the elders and staff members at 6:00 PM for a tour of the soon to be completed Palms Center. Dinner was held in the Campus Center and discussion was based on *Stories Jesus Tells - The Parables* by John Claypool, the Palms Center, and the recent school shooting tragedy in Broward County. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at approximately 7:15 PM.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Teaching Elders: Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell (Moderator) and Congregational Care Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne. Ruling Elders: Andrea Jackson, Bob Baarson, Marty Guice, Bill Mallett, John McQueen, Bill Reynolds, Robin Segó, Jane Delgado Semidei, Sandy Snyder, Tom Taylor, and Dotti Tyle. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson, and Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski.

EXCUSED: Ruling Elder Marlene Petro.

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 Reynolds opened the meeting with his story that began in Clifton Forge, Virginia. Prayers were said for the storyteller.

STAFF REPORTS:

Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:

- Thank you for Session support at the Presbytery Meeting. She passed her examination! Ordination is set for May 6.
- Steve Sipes continues to do remarkable things for the contemporary service and the youth ministry.
- Carol Homeister has an eye for design and has been very helpful with the Palms Center interior.
- Confirmands Dinner with the Session is Friday, April 20. Details soon.

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- See written report on page 19 of Session package.
- Palms Preschool has a new certified teacher - Carol. Will work with the preschool director and do classroom fill in when needed.
- Kudos to Sarah Soboleski and Jackie Gomez for their communications and social media team work.
- Sanctuary roof is done. Drainage and landscaping in the courtyard will be tackled next - after Easter.

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Sunday, March 4 - Mass for the Children. Great to do a concert with a mission. Children's organizations will be present. Donations to UNICEF.

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

- 10 Stephen Ministers in training. Pray they all finish.
- Alan Rodda back to visitations on Fridays. Carolyn Wilson and Dr. McConnell are also covering visitations. Busy time of year.
- Wine tasting get together last Friday as a great social event. Thank you to Steve Soboleski!

Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:

- The church Library grand opening was last Sunday. Culmination of 1½ years of work by a dedicated team.
- Liz Barnett is the Welcome Center Team Leader. She is doing an excellent job in building up the team.

Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski:

- Mock up of the website has arrived. Will share next month.
- Jackie Gomez and her graphic design talents have been instrumental in creating new communications materials.
- The website and the welcome center will be the primary ways for people to connect. Looking forward to working with the team to share the message with the community at large. Excited to work on the Mass for the Children.

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

- Celebration activities on Commitment Sunday (Feb. 25) - a different way to start. Elder comment: Reaffirmation of baptism litany in the Sunday services was "awesome."
- Palms Center Grand Opening is scheduled for Palm Sunday, March 25, 5:30 to 7:30 PM.
- A list of possible uses for the Palms Center is being compiled by small groups of staff working together.
- Celebrating a joy – daughter Brittany's recent wedding.

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:

- Draft Minutes of 1/28/18 Annual Congregation/Corporation Meeting provided for information. No action required. Will be approved by congregation at the next annual meeting.
- Request to Receive New Members: A pastor was not available to moderate the 02/11/18 Special Session meeting to receive the February New Member Class. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive the February New Member Class into the membership of Church of the Palms on February 26, 2018.** [Note: See attached Clerk's Report for names].
- 2017 Statistical Report filed with PCUSA. In Omnibus Motion for approval.

Question from Elder about Hunger Task Force materials in Session package (page 55). Provided for general information. Work in progress.

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

- January finances were about break even. Too soon to see any patterns.
- Palms Center financing - Available cash of \$350,000 will be used before a line of credit is accessed. Please encourage fellow members to pay up their Open Palms pledges early!

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 - 01/22/18

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors - Month of March - Jane Semidei
 - c. Session Meeting Storyteller - March - Robin Segó
 - d. Diaconate Exec. Comm. Meeting – Monday 03/05/18 at 7 PM - John McQueen
 - e. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members - Sunday 03/11/18 at 11 AM - Group 3 Elders (B. Mallett, M. Petro, D. Tyle)
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached)
3. 2017 PCUSA Annual Statistical Report as filed 01/31/18.
4. Communion dates for 2018: 1/7, 2/4, 3/4, 3/29 (Maundy Thurs.), 5/6, 6/3, 7/1, 8/5, 9/2, 10/7, 11/4, and 12/2, and 12/24 (11PM Service only). No *Communion on Easter*
5. Ordination and installation of Elders and Deacons (orientation/training is scheduled before this date) – Sunday, April 8.

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Elder attending Deacons' Diaconate meeting in February - Bill Mallett
2. Commissioners attending the Presbytery Meeting on 02/22/18 - *no written report*

D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:

1. Administration and Finance - Ch. Tom Taylor - includes Building and Grounds - Ch. Paul Ross and The Generosity Team - Ch. Bob Baarson
2. Global Mission Partners - Co-Chs. Jane Delgado Semidei and Dotti Tyle
3. Personnel - Ch. Marlene Petro

E. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MINISTRY TEAMS:

1. Equipping Ministry - Dir. Carolyn Wilson - *see staff reports above*
2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Palms Preschool) - *S see staff reports above*
3. The Garden Leadership
4. Legacy Giving - *no written report*
5. Presbyterian Women- *no written report*
6. Stephen Ministry Leadership
7. Worship Planning - *no written report*

F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:

1. Diaconate Exec. Comm. - Ch. Barry Buchanan
2. Memorial Garden Board - Ch. Sue Angle
3. Nominating - Ch. Robin Segó - *no written report*

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Building Committee.** Elder Reynolds reported. See written report in the Session package. The building is heading toward completion. Dealing with last minute additional county requirements.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Acceleration of Foundation Open Palms pledge payments.** Elder Jackson reported. The Administration and Finance Committee requested that the Session ask the Foundation to consider accelerating the 4th and 5th payments on its pledge to the Open Palms Capital Campaign in the amount of \$220,000. In anticipation that such distributions may occur (and future distributions in 2018 as well), and cognizant of the Foundation requirement that, once the Foundation reaches its 2018 annual distribution guideline of \$220,387, consent by 75% of Foundation board members and 75% of Session members present at their respective meetings and voting in separate actions will be required for additional distributions, **MOTION FROM THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE**

COMMITTEE, and PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: To consent to a distribution by the Foundation of \$220,000 to the Open Palms capital campaign; representing the fourth and fifth payments on its 5-year pledge. In addition, the Session consents to additional distributions the Foundation may make during the year under its 2018 annual distribution guideline of \$220,387, so that the total distributable by the Foundation in 2018 without further consent is \$440,387.

Note: To be effective, a similar motion needs to be passed by at least 75% of the Foundation board members present at its meeting.

Elder Baarson noted that the assets of the Foundation have grown significantly, but the annual distribution percentage is relatively small. This has been noted by members of the congregation. Might this start to adversely affect giving to the Foundation? Request to start a dialog with the Foundation. Dr. McConnell will follow up with the Foundation.

2. **Foundation Grant Request from Administration and Finance Committee.** Director Gillespie reported. The main computer server in the church office is no longer supported by Microsoft and issues with upgrades to the church data based have caused considerable issues with speed and reliability. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and PASSED: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Administration and Finance Committee's Grant Request for \$20,204 to fund the church's new server project.**
3. **YMCA Proposal for Palms Center Use.** Elder Jackson and Dr. McConnell reported. In keeping with the body, mind, and spirit approach to use of the Palms Center and the rest of the church campus, activity proposals from outside organizations are being considered. Revenue generation is one of several factors. The Administration and Finance Committee reviewed a proposal from the YMCA for use of the Palms Center. Because it involves committing the Center for an all-day summer camp program running many weeks, the Committee voted down the proposal. Although it would generate income to offset Center expenses, it was decided that such extensive use did not fit within the church's strategic goals. Discussion by Session.
4. **Community Threats.** Continuing the conversation began at the Session dinner about how Church of the Palms might respond when crises like the Parkland School shootings occur.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Reading for March Session Dinner: *Blood Done Sign My Name* by Timothy B. Tyson - read through chapter 4.
2. Incoming Elders Joan Emrich, Cliff McHenry, Lou Stern and Sandi Stewart will be invited as guests to the March Session dinner and meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 9:15 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)
Foundation Grant Request for Computer Server Project