

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 based on *Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship* by Gregory Boyle. Guest for dinner were staff members Mike Murphy and Ethan Howell, who explained their respective roles as College Ministry Coordinator and Hospitality Coordinator. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 7:05 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: Joan Emrich, Andrea Jackson, Cliff McHenry, John McQueen, Marlene Petro, Bill Reynolds, Robin Segó, Sandy Snyder, Lou Stern, Sandi Stewart, and Dotti Tyle. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski.

EXCUSED: Ruling Elder Tom Taylor.

GUESTS: Elder Bill Mallett, who stayed through the Storyteller portion of the meeting.

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 Andrea Jackson opened the meeting with her story – “This is Me.” Prayers were said for the storyteller.

STAFF REPORTS:

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- Great Fall Kickoff was held on Sunday, August 26.
- 3 new staff members have been hired.
- Arena database training was held for 3 days – should result in better use of the tools it provides.

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

- Beth Moore simulcast Sept. 15 – 70+ registrants thus far.
- Adult Christian education plans are finalized.
- Shepherding Deacons needed for Class of 2021.
- Attended a church-wide gathering of Presbyterian Women.

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Steve Sipes is leading the High School youth group on Sunday evenings. The Middle School youth group is staying on Wednesdays. Ethan Howell is volunteering in that ministry. Students start out at Sunday worship services, then classes are at 9:30 and 10:30.
- Contemporary Service is growing – new communion table and baptismal font.

- Wednesday Night Life begins September 12 – a fun for everyone series that ends on October 10 with a Chili Cook Off.

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Sanctuary piano is being sent out for refurbishment for several months
- Choirs are re-starting for the season.
- Nice to enjoy summer preludes showcasing the talents of Jonathan Spivey.

Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski:

- Sarah and Jackie Gomez are working through the review and updating of printed materials. Finding opportunities to get the word out to the congregation and the community.
- New logos being developed for family and youth ministries.
- Working on analytics.
- COP is now on Instagram: PalmsStudents.

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

- Elder Tom Taylor is taking a temporary leave of absence from the Session – back pain.
- Task force on assessing Open Palms starts this week.
- Provided a photo of the proposed cross that will be featured over the stained-glass window frame in the rear of the Chancel. A donor will pay for the cost. This is part of the work the team is doing in its review of the Chancel space and use.
- Launching a sermon series that will lead into small group formations in October.

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:

- COP has received notice to schedule its Triennial visit from the Presbytery Committee on Ministry. Dr. McConnell will arrange for the 2-3 Elders needed to attend and work out some suggested times. Elder Bill Reynolds volunteered to be one elder.
- Presbytery Fall Gathering for the Northern Cluster is at 9 AM on September 6 at Oak Point PC, Bradenton. All are welcome. The Clerk and Elder Joan Emrich plan to attend.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie reported:

- See details in written report at page 39 of Session package.
- First 7 months are going well. To date contributions are 3.7% higher than last year. Expenses are running less than budgeted, but there will be some self-correction in August.
- The Line of credit for the Palms Center has been used, but the balance of about \$42,000 will be paid off shortly.

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 – 06/25/18
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 07/08/18
3. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 08/12/18

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:

- a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors - Month of September – Marlene Petro
 - b. Session Meeting Storyteller - September – Pam Gillespie
 - c. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. Meeting – Tuesday 09/04/18 at 7 PM -Cliff McHenry
 - d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members - Sunday 09/09/18 at 11 AM -Chapel Reception Room - Group 1 Elders (A. Jackson, C. McHenry, B. Reynolds)
 - 2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, Home Communion, and Quarterly Worship Service Attendance Report (see attached Clerk’s Report)
 - 3. Clerk’s appointment of Elder Commissioners who attended Special Called Presbytery meeting on 08/09/18: Joan Emrich, Marlene Petro, Robin Segó, and Judy Fulton.
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
- 1. Elder attending Deacons’ Exec. Comm. meeting in August – Robin Segó
 - 2. Commissioners attending the Presbytery Meeting on 08/09/18 – Marlene Petro
- D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:**
- 1. Administration and Finance - Ch. Andrea Jackson - includes Building and Grounds and The Generosity Team
 - 2. Global Mission Partners - Ch. Dotti Tyle
 - 3. Personnel - Ch. Marlene Petro
- E. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MINISTRY TEAMS:**
- 1. Equipping Ministry – *see staff reports above*
 - 2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Palms Preschool) – *see staff reports above*
 - 3. Contemporary Worship Service Leadership – *no written report*
 - 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. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. - Ch. Marie Bonifield
 - 2. Memorial Garden Board - Ch. Sue Angle – *no written report*
 - 3. Nominating - Ch. Robin Segó
- G. ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR SESSION APPROVAL**
- 1. Unit Charter Agreement between COP and Boy Scout Troop 895

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. **Building Committee** – Elder Bill Reynolds reported. The Building Committee has finished its work on the Palms Center project. The punch list has been completed and “as built” drawings have been received. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: With great appreciation for a job well done, the Building Committee is decommissioned.** Thank you from a grateful Session to a super committee with Bill Reynolds at the helm.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. **Foundation Grant Request for Faith and Society Forum** – Dr. McConnell presented a Congregational Life Grant Request for consideration by the Foundation to provide funding to inaugurate the Faith and Society Forum. This forum will invite Christian thought leaders to Church of the Palms to share insights on the public witness of our faith. This is a pilot program that may become a regular event sponsored by the Foundation. *For additional details, see Grant Request attached to the official minutes.* **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve**

submission to the Foundation of the Congregational Life Grant Request for \$25,000 (\$10,000 by 2018 year-end and \$15,000 by January 2019) to inaugurate the Faith and Society Forum.

2. **Staff Goal Setting** – Dr. McConnell provided an overview of the creative process the staff is working through as it sets goals. Based on Ephesians 4:15-16 (“We must grow up”) and the vision of COP to provide a growing and sustainable ministry. He used the image of a seed that is cast and planted, develops roots and a stem, and ultimately produces fruit. A full presentation of goals will follow at the next Session meeting.
3. **Reflections regarding Student Ministry Sunday** and the congregation’s response to a personal testimony given by gay student. Dr. McConnell provided a historical perspective on how issues, such as race, gender, and sexual orientation, have been addressed and evolved within the PCUSA and its churches. As COP lives into its vision of being *The Most Loving Place in Town*, it strives to be a safe place where all opinions are respected. COP is a diverse community where there is room to disagree.
4. **Palms Center fees.** Discussion was had regarding charging fees for various programs to be held in The Palms Center. Input from the Session regarding recoupment of expenses for costs of outside instructors, materials, etc., and possible reactions to fees from church member users of the facilities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Carolyn Wilson’s ordination and installation will be Sunday, September 2 at 4:00 PM at Venice Presbyterian Church, 825 The Rialto, Venice, FL.
2. Reading for September Session dinner: Continuation of *Barking to Choir*.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 9:35 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 (complete form attached after return by Foundation)