

**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 C.S. Lewis's *Prince Caspian*. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 7:00 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: Bob Baarson Donald Browning, Marty Guice, David MacMillan, Bill Mallett, John Mercier, Robin Sego, Jane Delgado Semidei, and Sandy Snyder.

Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Aimee McCullough, Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson.

**EXCUSED:** Ruling Elders Al Jeffrey and Marlene Petro.

**GUESTS:** For the entire meeting, incoming Class of 2019 Ruling Elders Bill Reynolds and Tom Taylor were present. Guests arriving at 7:30 PM were representatives from Carlson Studio Architecture, the Church of the Palms Foundation, and the Open Palms Committee.

**QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER:** A quorum was established. Dr. McConnell served as Moderator and called the meeting to order. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO APPROVE the Agenda for the Meeting, with the addition of an item of New Business for The Garden, and the request that the Agenda items may be shifted so that Old Business begins when guests arrive at 7:30 PM.**

**OPENING PRAYER:** Elder Guice opened the meeting with prayer.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**Executive Director of Operations Aimee McCullough:**

- Ann McColgan will start work on March 29 as the new Congregational Care and Data Base Specialist.
- Referred to remainder of report as being contained on pages 15-16 of the Session package.

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- 30 outside community members sang with the choir for the Requiem and experienced Church of the Palms.

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

- Noted the recent deaths of several members.
- Congregational Care is doing well.

**Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:**

- Palm Sunday processional of children at the beginning of worship was great.

- Kudos to Carol Homeister for organizing the massive Easter Egg Hunt. 30 new families participated.
- April 15 is the confirmation class dinner. Confirmands will be received by the Session at the dinner. Additional information has been emailed by the Clerk.
- Starting the second round of interviews for the Student Ministry Director position.

**Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:**

- The program for Winter Leadership Forum “could not have been better.” Hoping that attendance increases.
- 12 new members added in March.

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

- Holy Week has arrived. Lots of opportunities for participation. Noon time prayer hour during the week.

**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 of Elder Roster of assignments for 2016-17 Session year distributed. Please review.
- Asked for Commissioners for next Presbytery meeting – see Omnibus item B.5. below.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE:** Administration and Finance Committee Chair Elder Mercier reported:

- Referred to finance report (Session package – page 43). Through Feb. 29, 2016, income is up approximately \$4600 over expenses, and giving is up \$22,600 vs. 2015 for the same period.
- The ECC budget (pages 51-52) is under control.
- Balance sheet (page 39). Designated Funds now have histories attached to them. Designated Funds will be reviewed regularly and policies established.
- Capital needs assessment (page 15) will be contracted to a third party.
- Bob Baarson reported on annual giving to date: 536 pledges received totaling \$1,383,256. More pledges than last year at this time, but \$50K less pledged; however, trend seems to be tracking with last year.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To PASS the Omnibus Motion (Items A-F), as presented in the Agenda.**

**A. To APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:**

1. Stated Session Meeting – February 22, 2016
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – March 13, 2016

**B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:**

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers w/the Pastors – Month of April – Jane Delgado Semidei
  - c. Session Meeting Opening Prayer – April 25 – Marlene Petro (for Marty Guice)
  - d. Deacons’ Diaconate Meeting – April 4 – Sandy Snyder
  - e. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – April 10 – Group 4 Elders
2. Membership Statistics (items 2-4 see attached Clerk’s Report)
3. Baptisms & Weddings
4. Home Communion
5. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the quarterly Peace River Presbytery meeting

(Northminster Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, FL – Thursday April 28). The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:

1. David MacMillan
2. Robin Segó
3. Marty Guice
4. Jane Delgado Semidei

**C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

1. Elder attending Deacons' Diaconate meeting in March – None (*miscommunication*)

**D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:**

1. Administration and Finance Committee – Ch. John Mercier (includes Building and Grounds Committee (Ch. Paul Ross) and The Generosity Team (Ch. Bob Baarson))
2. Mission Committee – Ch. Jane Delgado Semidei
3. Personnel Committee – Ch. Marlene Petro

**E. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MINISTRY TEAMS:**

1. Equipping Ministry – Dir. Carolyn Wilson
2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Early Childhood Center) – Exec. Dir. Laurie Haas
3. The Garden Leadership
4. Legacy Giving – Ch. John Mercier
5. Presbyterian Women
6. Stephen Ministry Leadership
7. Worship Planning

**F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**

1. Deacons' Diaconate – Ch. Joan Emrich
2. Memorial Garden Board – Ch. Maxine Colgate
3. Nominating – Ch. David MacMillan

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **The Garden 11:00 AM Service.** On behalf of The Garden Leadership Team, Bill Mallett and Laurie Haas announced that The Garden service at 11:00 AM had not quite reached its attendance goal of 50 regular attendees. The 11:00 service will be going on hiatus starting April 3, 2016, leaving the option open for reviving that service when the timing is right. The Team conducted a "postmortem" analysis. [*Clerk's Note: Written report provided is now part of the Session package records*].
2. **The Garden Communion Dates.** There is a need to change the communion dates for The Garden services to the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month so that a pastor can be there to preside. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO APPROVE the following dates for the service of Communion in The Garden: April 24, May 22, June 26, July 24, August 28, September 25, October 23, November 27, and December 25.**

**OLD BUSINESS:** Guests from Carlson Studio Architecture, the Foundation and the Open Palms Team arrived at 7:30 PM and were introduced.

1. **Open Palms Update.** Dr. McConnell reported that \$3.86 million in pledges has been received to date from 455-460 gifts. A general discussion was had on different aspects of the campaign and its outcome. The consensus was that the Session is committed to moving forward with all 3 components of the campaign (Building, Deferred maintenance, and Mission), but perhaps in a modified form. Active conversations will be had with the Foundation. Fund raising will continue.

*[Clerk's Note – The following issue as to timing distribution of part of the mission component for Beth El Ministries was addressed near the end of the meeting but is put here for clarity].* Dr. McConnell informed the Session that Beth El Farmworker Ministries is depending on the \$30,000 to be received from the Open Palms capital campaign to continue their own construction project. A timing issue has arisen, and there is an acute need by Beth El for church funds now. Chair of the Mission Committee Elder Semidei confirmed that the Mission Committee is aware that the mission component of the Open Palms campaign may fluctuate as the entire campaign fluctuates, and that there is no guarantee that the entire \$100,000 component will be funded in full. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO APPROVE the release of \$30,000 from the Open Palms capital campaign funds to Beth El Farmworker Ministries for their construction project.**

2. **Facilities Master Plan.** Dr. McConnell led the discussion on moving forward with different possibilities regarding the building plan. Bill Reynolds was introduced as the chair of the Building Committee. Chris Bonnet from the Foundation and Elder Don Browning are also on this committee. The options included: A revised smaller plan for The Palms Center, continuing with the original building plan, changing course to a different part of the Facilities Master Plan, waiting for more gifts, borrowing money, rehabilitating an existing building, and/or adopting a phased plan for the Palms Center. Carlson Studio Architecture has been working on options for a smaller, one story Palms Center that would be financially feasible (approx. \$3.5 million) within the scope of the 3 part Open Palms plan, with a manageable increase in pledges. Architect Michael Carlson from Carlson Studio Architecture was introduced. He presented a one story option for the Palms Center that is based on a very similar building now at Faith Baptist Church. Questions and variations on this modified Palms Center were discussed. The consensus was that the Session is in favor of pursuing a modified Palms Center plan. It was stressed that that the other financial numbers be clearly defined - campaign costs, financing costs, and maintenance costs. Elder MacMillan offered to organize a field trip for elders to visit the Faith Baptist campus and tour their building. The Session and staff will continue to work on the revised plan with Carlson Studio Architecture so that a report can be given to the congregation sometime in May.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. The memorial service for Elder Sego's mother will be April 4 at 2:00 PM in the Chapel.
2. Elder Jeffrey's mother has passed away. Her service will be at First Presbyterian.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO ADJOURN the meeting** at approximately 9:08 PM to a Circle of Prayer and laying on of hands for Elder John Mercier who will retire from the Session after 4 years of devoted service.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell  
Moderator

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda R. Getzen  
Clerk to the Session

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

**MINUTES**

A Special Meeting of the Session of Church of the Palms was held in the Chapel at 11:00 AM on Sunday, April 10, 2016.

**PURPOSE:** To receive the April 2016 New Member Class into the membership of Church of the Palms.

**PRESENT:** Congregational Care Pastor The Reverend Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne and Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson. Ruling Elders: John Mercier, Robin Segó, and Sandy Snyder.

A quorum being present, Dr. Browne served as Moderator and opened the meeting with prayer. In the absence of the Clerk to the Session, Elder Segó was appointed as Clerk Pro Tem for the meeting.

**BUSINESS:** Dr. Browne introduced the prospective members to the Elders present and asked the required questions. Affirmative answers were given. **MOTION WAS MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED to receive the following persons into the membership of Church of the Palms:**

<b><u>Name:</u></b>		<b><u>Received by:</u></b>	<b><u>From:</u></b>
Cox	James W.	Reaffirmation of Faith	
Cox	Wendy J.	Reaffirmation of Faith	
Modras	Irena	Reaffirmation of Faith	
Brantley	Diane Kathryn	Affiliate	Remnant Church of Sarasota
Hartley	Luz C.	Affiliate	Remnant Church of Sarasota

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15 AM. Dr. Browne closed the meeting with prayer, and the new members were greeted by the Elders.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne  
Moderator

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Segó  
Clerk Pro Tem

**MINUTES**

A Special Meeting of the Session of Church of the Palms was held as part of the Confirmand/Session annual dinner in the Campus Center on Friday, April 15, 2016. The event began at 6:30 PM and was opened with prayer by Dr. Browne. The meeting portion began at 7:35 PM.

**CALLED PURPOSE:** To receive the 2016 Confirmation Class into the membership of Church of the Palms.

**SESSION PRESENT:** Teaching Elders: Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell and Congregational Care Pastor The Reverend Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne. Ruling Elders: Bob Baarson, Donald Browning, Marty Guice, Al Jeffrey, David MacMillan, Bill Mallet, John Mercier, Marlene Petro, Robin Sego, Jane Delgado Semidei, and Sandy Snyder. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen.

A quorum being present, Dr. McConnell opened the meeting and served as Moderator.

**BUSINESS:** All confirmands were present and introduced themselves. Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas recognized the confirmation leaders and mentors. Dr. McConnell recognized the ruling elders of the Session. Dr. McConnell asked the required questions of the confirmands and affirmative answers were given. **A MOTION WAS MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED** to receive the following confirmands into the membership of Church of the Palms by Profession of Faith:

<u>Last Name:</u>	<u>First and Middle Names:</u>
Barth	Stephanie Carolyn
Blom	Julia Xiao Ye
Collins	Brooke Elizabeth
Egan	Lauren Elizabeth
Gardner	Alexander Vincent
Leaver	Andrew George
Ligon	Jamie Kendall
McKeehan	Connor John
Rentz	Adam Stephen
Romine	Jared Alan
Schwab	Nicholas Charles

Dr. McConnell welcomed the new members and emphasized this significant step in their journey of faith that began at baptism. There being no further business, the meeting portion was adjourned at approximately 7:45 PM and closed with prayer by Dr. McConnell.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell  
Moderator

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda R. Getzen  
Clerk to the Session