

**CHURCH OF THE PALMS – PRESBYTERIAN (USA)  
STATED SESSION MEETING**

**SARASOTA, FLORIDA  
August 22, 2016**

**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 about those who have nurtured and loved us unconditionally. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 7:03 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, Al Jeffrey, David MacMillan, Bill Mallett, Marlene Petro, Bill Reynolds, Robin Segó, Jane Delgado Semidei, Sandy Snyder, and Tom Taylor.

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

**EXCUSED:** Ruling Elder Marty Guice and Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp.

**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 as amended to add New Business item 2 - Candidacies of Inquirers Laurie Haas and Carolyn Wilson.**

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

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:**

- The new Director of the ECC is Sandy Sinkfield, who has been serving as the interim Director and was the very best of the candidates interviewed.
- A Worship Leader has been found for The Garden - Chris Edwards. He is a Manatee County school teacher. He will be developing a youth band.
- Thank you to the Jeffreys for hosting 50 kids at the back-to-school tubing party.

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

- As of July 16, the Shepherding Deacons are divided into small groups of 12 to get to know each other. Going well.

**Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:**

- Getting ready for the Fall Kick Off next Sunday.
- New Wednesday night program on how ordinary people do extraordinary things.
- A visitor welcome center is being established in the Narthex.

**Executive Director of Operations Aimee McCullough:**

- Staff Changes - Sandra Leake is the new Front Office Coordinator. To use their skill sets to best advantage, as of August 1, Kevin Kenny will become the Financial Director and Wendy Ghezzi will become the Staff Accountant.
- The Gateway Bank line of credit is closing in September.
- Deferred maintenance projects - painting the Campus Center and the Sanctuary has begun.

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- In her absence, Dr. McConnell reported that the choir and Sarasota Young Voices are ready to begin the new season.

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

- The Kick Off of the new season will begin with a joint worship service for Sanctuary and Garden worshippers at 9:00 AM on Sunday with blended worship styles. Hats off to the staff for all of their hard work in launching the new season.
- Worship will return to the Narrative Lectionary series - a sweep through the Old and New Testaments.
- The theme for this year will be "Built on Love."

**CORRESPONDENCE AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** *The Clerk to the Session emails to Staff and Elders pertinent correspondence received between Session Meetings.* The Clerk referred to:

- Notice regarding Presbytery Fall Gatherings.
- Memorandum regarding statistics about the Clerk's annual membership review and results of correspondence to non-participating members.

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

- Financial Recap on page 25 of the Session package. The higher expenses incurred were anticipated. The finances are typical for this time of year.
- The ECC finances are back under control.
- Page 39 of the Session package is a new report called the Budget Baseline. This contains information about known budget adjustments and will be used to proactively plan for the budget for the next year.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:** To set aside for discussion or clarification, items B.2. and B.6. of the Omnibus Motion as presented in the Agenda.

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:** To pass the Omnibus Motion (Items A-F), less items B.2. and B.6, presented in the Agenda.

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

1. Stated Session Meeting – June 27, 2016

**B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:**

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors – September – Marlene Petro

- c. Session Meeting Opening Prayer – September 26 – Bob Baarson
  - d. Deacons’ Diaconate Meeting – September 5 – Al Jeffrey
  - e. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – Sept. 11 – Group 1 Elders
- 2. *Approved separately below as revised* - Membership Statistics (items 2-4 see attached Clerk’s Report)
  - 3. Baptisms & Weddings
  - 4. Home Communions
  - 5. Quarterly Worship Service Attendance Report
  - 6. *Approved separately below* - Appointment of Elder Commissioners to a called special Peace River Presbytery meeting on September 8 at 1 PM - Oak Pointe Church (*formerly Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church*) 7045 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 34243. The stated purpose of the meeting: Examining Candidates for Ordination and Approving Pastoral Relationships/Validated Ministries. The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:
    - 1. Linda Getzen
    - 2. Bill Mallett
    - 3. Wayne Kindt
    - 4. Pat Kindt (*3&4 filled by Clerk*)
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
- 1. Elders attending Deacons’ Diaconate meeting in July & August – Jane Delgado Semidei and Sandy Snyder
- 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 Partners – Ch. Jane Delgado Semidei
  - 3. Personnel – Ch. Marlene Petro
- E. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MINISTRY TEAMS:**
- 1. Equipping Ministry – Dir. Carolyn Wilson – *see staff report above.*
  - 2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Early Childhood Center) – Exec. Dir. Laurie Haas – *see staff report above.*
  - 3. The Garden Leadership
  - 4. Legacy Giving – *no written report this month*
  - 5. Presbyterian Women – *no written report this month*
  - 6. Stephen Ministry Leadership – *no written report this month*
  - 7. Worship Planning – *no written report this month*
- F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**
- 1. Deacons’ Diaconate – Ch. Don Schalekamp
  - 2. Memorial Garden Board – Ch. Sue Angle – *no written report this month*
  - 3. Nominating – Ch. David MacMillan – *no written report this month*

**ITEMS FROM OMNIBUS SET ASIDE FOR CLARIFICATION OR DISCUSSION:**

**Item B.2. – Membership Statistics.** The Clerk presented a few recently received updates to the membership statistics. The Clerk’s Report as revised is attached to the official minutes

and will be emailed to the Session. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive Omnibus Motion item B.2. as revised.**

**Item B.6. – Elder Commissioners.** The Clerk announced the called special meeting of the Peace River Presbytery and asked for volunteers to be Elder Commissioners. The Clerk and Elder Mallett will attend. Two additional commissioners are needed. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive Omnibus Motion item B.6. as revised.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Building Committee Update** – Elder Reynolds provided an update on the Palms Center Project. Cost estimates will be higher, primarily due to rising labor costs. Increased construction in the Sarasota area is driving up costs. Changes have been made to the façade, skylights, and other parts of the original plan to reduce costs. The contractor will develop a formal estimate by October 17. Elder Reynolds outlined three estimate scenarios. Attached to these minutes are the recommendations that were discussed. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To authorize the Building Committee to continue to develop the building design not to exceed the total cost of \$4.2 million for the entire Open Palms Project; and to direct the Administration and Finance Committee to investigate and present to the Session proposals for additional funding.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Personnel** - Dealt with in the staff report announcements concerning new personnel.
2. **Candidacies of Inquirers** – Inquirers Carolyn Wilson and Laurie Haas are ready to be enrolled into the Candidate phase of their preparation for ministry. Dr. McConnell explained that both of them display incredible competencies each and every day. He emphasized that Church of the Palms is very blessed to have multiple candidates in the ministry process, including Aimee McCullough, Leslie Hazlett, and Jordan Goodwin. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To endorse the requests of Laurie Haas and Carolyn Wilson to be enrolled as Candidates under the care of Peace River Presbytery, and to continue the appointments of their respective liaisons Elder Marlene Petro and Elder Judy Fulton.** The Committee on Preparation for Ministry will meet to consider their requests on September 14. If approved, the Candidates will be presented for examination at the November 10 presbytery meeting.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Reading for next Session dinner - *The Magician's Nephew* by C.S. Lewis.
2. COP rescued bunny available for adoption. Leash trained. See Elder Segó.
3. Elder Jeffrey asked for prayers for The Garden Leadership Team as they say goodbye to Pastor Joe Davis and they embrace the many changes that are taking place in The Garden leadership.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:36 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 as revised (statistics)  
Building Committee Recommendations