

### **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 *Tattoos on the Heart*. Those present participated in a laying on of hands for departing friends and colleagues Bruce Hedgepeth and Jeff McCauley. 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), Discipleship and Outreach Pastor The Rev. Bruce E. Hedgepeth, and Congregational Care Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne.

Ruling Elders: Bob Baarson, Donald Browning, Marty Guice, Al Jeffrey, David MacMillan, Bill Mallett, John Mercier, Marlene Petro, Robin Segó, Jane Delgado Semidei, and Sandy Snyder.

Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Aimee McCullough, Family Ministry Director Laurie Haas, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson, and Student Ministry Director Jeff McCauley.

**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 under new business of item 3 regarding the Downs property.**

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

#### **STAFF REPORTS:**

##### **Family Ministry Director Laurie Haas:**

- The Christmas Pageant was “awesome.” 80 kids participated, the adult choir sang. Afterwards, the Campus Center was filled with young families.
- Tony Camp will serve as the Interim Student Ministry Director while a search is being held. He will work approximately 24 hours a week.

##### **Student Ministry Director Jeff McCauley:**

- Having transition conversations. Excited for the youth in the COP student ministry.
- 60-62 students attended the Christmas party!
- Thank you to all.

##### **Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:**

- Great Advent series.
- Thank you to Elders Baarson, Petro and Snyder, and the Clerk for meeting with new member Kelly Amarnek last Sunday.
- The parking ministry volunteer spots for Christmas week are filled!
- James Leake and his talk *Following Jesus with a Rock and Roll Heart* will be going to McCurdy’s Comedy Theatre on January 26. Hopefully it will become a monthly event.

**Discipleship and Outreach Pastor The Rev. Bruce E. Hedgepeth**

- Food Pantry offering was a success and the fund is in good shape.
- Advent Dinner benefiting Samaritan Counseling was a success.
- The Siesta Beach Christmas “Eve Eve” service is set for December 23.
- He expressed his thanks to all for his 5 ½ years at Church of the Palms.
- Omar Picado and Rosa Baca, the husband and wife hosts of our mission team in Nicaragua, are coming to the United States for YL75 and will be staying in Sarasota on January 1.

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- Big month for musical events. The Messiah crowd was overflowing.
- Concert series begins January 17.
- SILL (Sarasota Institute for Lifelong Learning) begins January 4.

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

- Fun stuff – Deacons and Stephen Ministers had their Christmas parties.
- Please sign up for the Marjorie Thompson event to be held on January 23.
- Dr. Browne will be traveling home to Myanmar and will be away for 3 weeks beginning December 26. There is some danger -- please pray for her safe return.
- Elder Snyder is training to become a Stephen Minister leader.
- Based on a request by Dr. Browne: **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To CHANGE the service of Communion from Ash Wednesday to Sunday February 7, 2016.**

**Executive Director of Operations Aimee McCullough:**

- Year-end work continues, including on-going preparations for the Capital Campaign.
- Pages 91-92 of the Session package contains the report of the Building and Grounds Committee. Kudos to the Committee - they have done a phenomenal job this year.

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

- Next reading for the Session will be *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. Read the entire children’s book. Widely available for purchase online and in bookstores.

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

- The church office will be closed on Monday, January 18. Keep this mind when scheduling committee meetings.
- Referred to prior Memorandum from the Clerk regarding prospective member Kelly Amarnek who attended the new member class on December 13, but was unable to meet with the Session at that time. On December 20, 2015, Director Wilson introduced the prospective new member to the Clerk, Ruling Elders Baarson, Petro, and Snyder, and Teaching Elder Browne, and she affirmatively answered the questions for membership. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO RECEIVE Kelly Amarnek into the membership of Church of the Palms**
- Please volunteer to be a Commissioner to the January Presbytery meeting.

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

- \$64,000 is needed to reach the 2015 giving line.
- With expenses, approximately \$90,000 is need by the end of the year.

- Email sent out to those members aged 70 ½ + informing them of the beneficial IRA rules for charitable distributions that were recently made permanent by Congress. A tax favorable giving opportunity.
- Dr. McConnell - Kudos to Elder Baarson and Elder Mercier for their year-end efforts on Generosity and the budget.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To SET ASIDE FOR DISCUSSION OR CLARIFICATION, Omnibus Motion items F.3., D.1., and F.2.**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To PASS the Omnibus Motion (Items A-F below), less items F.3., D.1., and F.2.:**

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

1. Stated Session Meeting – 11/23/15
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Member Class – 12/13/15

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

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors – Month of January – Marty Guice
  - c. Session Meeting Opening Prayer – 1/25/15 – Al Jeffrey
  - d. Deacons' Diaconate Meeting – 1/4/15 – John Mercier
  - e. NO January New Members' Class - no Special Session Meeting
2. Membership Statistics (items 2-4 see attached Clerk's Report)
3. Baptisms & Weddings
4. Home Communion
6. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to attend the quarterly Peace River Presbytery meeting (Thursday 1/28/15 – 9:30 AM – Buckingham Pres. Church in Ft. Myers). The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**C. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM:**

1. Elder attending Deacons' Diaconate meeting in December - Jane Delgado Semidei

**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) *[received separately below]*
2. Mission Committee – Ch. Jane Delgado Semidei – *no meeting this month*
3. Personnel Committee – 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 Early Childhood Center) – Dir. Laurie Haas and Dir. Jeff McCauley– *see staff report above*
3. The Garden Leadership
4. Legacy Giving – Ch. John Mercier – *no written report this month*
5. Presbyterian Women – *no written report this month*
6. Stephen Ministry Leadership
7. Worship Planning – *no written report this month*

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

1. Deacons' Diaconate – Ch. Joan Emrich
2. Memorial Garden Board – Ch. Maxine Colgate *[received separately below]*
3. Nominating – Ch. David MacMillan (Carolyn Wilson) *[received separately below]*

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

**Item F.3. – Nominating Committee.** The 2015 report of the Nominating Committee that will be presented at the annual Congregational Meeting was received by the Session. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To RECEIVE Omnibus Motion item F.3.**

**Item D.1. – Administration and Finance Committee.** First, Elder Semidei inquired about the auditors' findings that the Honduras mission accounts should be managed separately from the church. Elder Mercier and Director McCullough will be having additional discussions with Maxine Perry and those involved in the Honduras mission team. Second, Elder Mercier and Director McCullough made the Session aware of various security issues on the church campus that have arisen over the last 6 months. Steps will be taken to reduce similar issues. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To RECEIVE Omnibus Motion item D.1.**

**Item F.2. – Memorial Garden Board.** Dr. McConnell made the Session aware of concerns by some families about delays in adding names of loved ones to the memorial wall. He will meet with the Memorial Garden Board in January to discuss improving communications. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To RECEIVE Omnibus Motion item F.2.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Master Facilities Plan.** Dr. Hedgepeth and Director McCullough – On January 13, 2016, the final approval for the Special Exception will be addressed by the County. At the end of January, task involved in the approval of the contraction phase of the plan will begin. Work is being done on a communication plan with the congregation
2. **Capital Campaign.** Dr. McConnell – The lead gifts phase of the Open Palms Capital Campaign is continuing. His visits and communications with potential donors have been going very well and commitments are being made. Another set of meetings are scheduled for the end of January. Affinity Groups will have meetings in early February.
3. **Downs Property.** Elder Mercier – The ad hoc committee of Dr. McConnell, Elders Mercier and MacMillan, and Chris Bonnet appointed last month has been meeting. Negotiations will be held with the representatives of the seller of the 4065 Lockwood Ridge Road. If an agreement is reached, the final purchase price and terms will be subject to approval by the Session. Elder Mercier introduced a corporate resolution allowing Linda Getzen as the corporate secretary to execute documents on behalf of the church corporation. Elder Mercier is president of the corporation, but due to his role as broker for the church in this transaction, he has a conflict of interest. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO ADOPT the corporate resolution, a copy of which is attached to these minutes and made a part hereof.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation.** **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO CALL THE ANNUAL MEETING** of the Church Corporation and Congregation for Sunday, January 31, 2016 at 12:00 PM, in the Sanctuary, and **TO DIRECT** that notice of the

**meeting be announced from the pulpit and placed in the church bulletin on consecutive Sundays in January.** Note: The annual report of the Foundation will also be presented.

2. **Lease to Samaritan Counseling. MOTION COMING FROM THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE and PASSED: TO APPROVE the 2016 annual space lease to Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast, Inc..** These are the same terms and conditions as the 2015 lease.
3. **Request to Foundation for Student Ministry Director Search Expenses.** A grant proposal coming from Family Ministry to the Foundation for the Church of the Palms was presented. The grant money will be used to contract with Youth Ministry Architects for a Search Package to find a Student Ministry Director. The Foundation will meet January 12, 2016. A copy of the grant request for the Foundation will be attached to the official minutes after the Foundation meeting. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To APPROVE submission to the Foundation of the Grant Request for \$2,250.00.**
4. **Discussion Regarding 2016 Budget.** Elder Mercier - Discussion was continued from the November meeting regarding 2016 budget. Elder Mercier reported that a balanced budget was achieved with a projection of flat income. The Early Childhood Center will become a department of the church and its finances are included in the 2016 budget. Director McCullough noted that a balance sheet approach was taken to the budget and she referred to page 77 of the Session package, which shows the various ministries and their portions of the budget. Staffing changes and a chart of the staff positions were presented by Dr. McConnell and Director McCullough. A job description for the position of Executive Director of Ministries was distributed. Director Laurie Haas has been appointed to that position. The staff directors were then excused from the remainder of the Session meeting, except for Executive Director McCullough. Additional discussion was held. In answer to a question about Mission, Dr. McConnell explained that Assistant Pastor Alan Rodda will assist and support Elder Semidei in this area. Director Wilson will be the liaison with the Honduras Mission Team. Director McCullough was then excused from the remainder of the Session meeting.

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO EXTEND the Order of the Day to 9:30 PM.**

Discussion continued on the budget. Areas discussed were: Marketing/PR/communications, fund development, membership, and the effective use of volunteers.

**BY COMMON CONSENT, the Order of the Day was extended to 10:00 PM.**

5. **Contract with Visitation Pastor. MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO APPROVE the 2016 contract with Visitation Pastor Alan Rodda.**
6. **Contract with Mobile Preacher.org. MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO APPROVE the 2016 contract with Joe Davis of MobilePreacher.org as Lead Teacher for The Garden.**
7. **Terms of Call.** The Teaching Elders excused themselves from the meeting, and the Ruling Elders discussed the terms of call for Teaching Elders, Stephen D. McConnell and Lal Hmingliani Browne, as they pertain to the 2016 budget. The Clerk to the Session moderated the remainder of the meeting. Chair of the Personnel Committee Elder Petro presented the committee recommendations, compared figures from other churches in the presbytery for similar pastor positions, and explained the rationale for each pastor's combined salary and housing figures. She also discussed Dr. McConnell's travel expenses incurred through his service as a trustee for Westminster College – a PCUSA college in Pennsylvania. He has been paying those expenses from his own funds. The Session agreed to assist Dr. McConnell in his ordination vows to support the larger church by providing an increase in Dr. McConnell's expense allowance for

2016 to cover some of his travel costs. **MOTION COMING FROM COMMITTEE and PASSED: To APPROVE for the 2016 budget a \$3,500.00 increase in Dr. McConnell's expense allowance [note: budget item #5198 will become \$6,200.00], with his combined salary and housing allocation to remain the same as 2015.** The terms of call from Dr. Browne were then discussed. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To APPROVE for the 2016 budget a 3% increase in the combined salary and housing allocation for Dr. Browne.**

8. **Approval of 2016 Budget.** Additional discussion was had on the 2016 budget and the expenses of staffing changes. Two actions were taken regarding the 2016 Budget:

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: For 2016, prior to backfilling any vacant W-2 positions, the financial implications should be reviewed by the Administration and Finance Committee.**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO ADOPT the 2016 budget as presented, which includes the Terms of Call approved above.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Tutoring Director Judy Armitage is doing well after double knee replacement surgery.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO ADJOURN the meeting** at approximately 10:05 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)

Corporate Resolution

Foundation Grant Request for \$2,250 – Student Ministry Director Search

**MINUTES**

A Special Meeting of the Congregation of Church of the Palms – Presbyterian (USA) (“Congregation”) called by the Session, was held at 10 AM on Sunday, January 3, 2016, in the Sanctuary. The called purpose of the meeting was to act upon the request for dissolution of the pastoral relationship between Dr. Bruce Hedgepeth and Church of the Palms effective January 31, 2016.

**QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER:** A quorum was declared by Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen. Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell served as Moderator and called the meeting to order.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Dr. McConnell opened the meeting with prayer.

**REQUEST FOR DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP:** The Moderator explained that Discipleship and Outreach Pastor Dr. Bruce Hedgepeth has accepted a call to become the pastor of South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida. Dr. Hedgepeth has requested that his pastoral relationship with Church of the Palms be dissolved by Peace River Presbytery. The Moderator called upon Elder Bill Mallett who expressed words of thanks to Dr. Hedgepeth on behalf of The Garden.

**The Moderator introduced Elder Marty Guice from the Personnel Committee who made the following motion coming from the Session:**

**On behalf of the Personnel Committee of the Session and in gratitude for his Spirit-filled ministry among us, I move to dissolve the pastoral relationship between The Rev. Dr. Bruce Hedgepeth and Church of the Palms effective January 31, 2016, in order for Dr. Hedgepeth to accept and commence a new call with the congregation of the South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida on February 1, 2016. MOTION COMING FROM THE SESSION WAS PASSED BY THE CONGREGATION.**

There being no further business to come before the Congregation, upon **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and PASSED, the meeting was ADJOURNED** at approximately 10:13 AM with a closing prayer by Dr. Bruce Hedgepeth.

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

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

**MINUTES**

A Special Meeting of the Session of Church of the Palms was held in the Sanctuary Reception Room at 8:45 on January 17, 2016.

**PURPOSE:** To receive two new members into the membership of Church of the Palms.

**PRESENT:** Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell, Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson, and Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen. Ruling Elders: Marty Guice and Bill Mallett.

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

**BUSINESS:** Dr. McConnell 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:**

Patterson	Frances A.	Reaffirmation of Faith
Patterson	Robert R.	Reaffirmation of Faith

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 AM. Dr. McConnell closed the meeting with prayer, and the new members were greeted by the Elders.

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

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