

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 around reading *The Most Loving Place in Town*. 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) and Congregational Care Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne.

Ruling Elders: Donald Browning, Marty Guice, Al Jeffrey, David MacMillan, Bill Mallett, Marlene Petro, Bill Reynolds, Robin Sego, Jane Delgado Semidei, Sandy Snyder, and Tom Taylor.

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

EXCUSED: Ruling Elder Bob Baarson.

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.**

OPENING PRAYER: Elder Jeffrey opened the meeting with prayer.

STAFF REPORTS:

Executive Director of Operations Kevin Kenny:

- See written report on page 47 of the Session package for details.
- 2017 Budget process completed.
- Employee W2s and member contribution statements have been sent out.
- ADP payroll outsourcing will be started by the end of the first quarter.
- Building and Grounds:
 - Part time custodian position is open.
 - Maintenance projects are being classified and scheduled. Budgeting is being closely analyzed so projects can be started as funds become available.
 - IT – 5 RFPs have been sent about cloud based services.
- Open Palms – Tracking budget vs. actual expenses.
- Viola Mast has joined COP as the new staff accountant. Great first week!

Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:

- Watching the congregation adjust to the 9-10-11 worship schedule. Sorting out the children attending Sunday school.
- The 2017 Confirmation class will be received by the Session at a dinner on Friday April 21. Confirmation Sunday is April 30. Please mark your calendars.
- All 3 high school trips are overflowing and there is a waiting list. Student sponsorship funding is down from last year and there is more demand. Discussion regarding funding.

Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:

- Advertising has begun for the Re-Ignite Retreat – please sign up!
- Classes for Lent and after are being set up.
- 90+ have been attending Dr. McConnell’s Letters from Prison lectures.
- Carolyn’s seminary studies are getting closer to ending – 2 to go!

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Musicians for special music has been a highlight.
- Growth in the choir – getting younger!
- The SILL Music Monday series at COP has been very popular.
- Suncoast Concert Band performed at COP last week.
- SYV is celebrating its 10th anniversary. A special commissioned piece will be performed at a celebration on May 7 at 4:00 PM.

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

- Stephen Ministers had a great retreat last week.
- 10 people started in the classes to become Stephen Ministers – pray that they all finish!

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:

- Proposed amendments to the Book of Order were emailed to the Ruling Elders. These will be voted on by the Commissioners attending the February Presbytery meeting.
- The Clerk’s Report now has a category entitled *Other Deaths*, to provide information on those deceased non-members with relationships to COP who will be added to the All Saints’ list. Clerk will revise January Clerk’s Report to omit Kathleen Schultz from this category – different person.
- Four Commissioners are needed to attend the February 23 Presbytery meeting. Please the Clerk know if you can attend.

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

- A great 2016! – Revenue was 99.2% of the year-end budget. Missed net income by just \$743. ECC income exceeded expectations by \$13,696. For further year-end details, see the A&F Financial Recap in the Session package.
- Administration and Finance is asking that a committee for the ECC be reinstated to maintain the momentum.
- The 2017 budget is cleaner and easier to read. Thanks to staff and process improvements, COP is on an excellent track to properly manage assets and missions.
- Thank you to God, staff and congregation. Special thanks to Elder Baarson for leading the year-end appeal so successfully. A great December in giving!

OMNIBUS MOTION:

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

A. To APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

1. Stated Session Meeting – 12/19/16
2. Special Session Meeting to Approve Palms Center budget – 01/08/17

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:

- a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors – Month of February – Al Jeffrey
 - c. Session Meeting Opening Prayer – 02/27/17 – Jane Delgado Semidei
 - d. Diaconate Exec. Comm. Meeting – 02/06/17 – Don Browning
 - e. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 02/12/17 – Group 1 Elders
2. Membership Statistics (items 2-5 see attached Clerk's Report)
 3. Baptisms & Weddings
 4. Home Communion
 5. Quarterly Worship Service Attendance Report
 6. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the quarterly Peace River Presbytery meeting (9:30 AM Thurs. 2/23/17 – Faith Presbyterian Church, Cape Coral). The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 7. Communion dates for 2017: 1/1, 2/5, 3/5, 4/2, 4/13 (Maundy Thursday), 5/7, 6/4, 7/2, 8/6, 9/3, 10/1, 11/5, 12/3.
 8. Ordination and installation of Elders and Deacons (orientation/training is scheduled before this date) – Sunday, March 26 – **NOTE – *Outgoing Elders still attend and vote at the March 27 Session meeting. New Elders take office after that meeting.***
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
1. Elder attending Diaconate Exec. Comm. meeting in January – Bill Reynolds
- 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 reports*
 2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Early Childhood Center) – Exec. Dir. Laurie Haas – *see staff reports*
 3. The Garden Leadership
 4. Legacy Giving – *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. Diaconate Exec. Committee – Ch. Don Schalekamp
 2. Memorial Garden Board – Ch. Sue Angle
 3. Nominating – Ch. David MacMillan – *no written report this month*

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Building Committee.** Elder Reynolds provided an update on the status of the site and building permits and the economic advisability of releasing the contractor to proceed with signing up the sub-contractors to lock in costs. He requested a revision to the motion that was passed at the January 8, 2017 special session meeting. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To authorize expenditures up to \$25,000 to allow engineering to proceed on the metal building, which is the longest lead-time subcontract, and to authorize the construction of the Palms Center for a guaranteed maximum price of \$3,302,477, less the \$25,000 mentioned above.**

2. **2017 Budget Approval.** On behalf of the Administration and Finance Committee, Elder Taylor presented the final 2017 budget proposal. Items of note: The Global Partners Committee requests have been fully funded, and the staff medical benefits expense was reduced because the amount needed was smaller. **MOTION COMING FROM THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE and PASSED: To adopt the 2017 budget as presented (includes the pastors' Terms of Call previously approved).**

3. **Questions from December Memorial Garden Report.** Elder Browning answered questions regarding the December Memorial Garden Report: Funds are available in the Memorial Garden accounts to construct the "wall" additions (which will probably be extensions on either side of the existing wall on the chapel). Preliminary investigation as to costs has been done and RFPs will be sought. Elder Browning agreed that the Memorial Garden finances should accompany the minutes and he will provide them. In addition, he will provide the color-coded changes to the bylaws so that the changes can be identified. *[Note from the Clerk: Follow up on these items at the February Session meeting.]*

4. **Samaritan Counseling Services Lease.** Director Kenny reported that the Administration and Finance Committee has recommended approval of an updated lease with Samaritan Counseling. The following changes were noted: The lease is now open ended so that it does not have to be renewed each year and may be terminated by either party on 180 days' notice. The square footage under lease has been updated. The profession liability insurance limit has been increased to \$5 million. **MOTION COMING FROM THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE and PASSED: To approve the 2017 space lease to Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast, Inc.**

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Question about status of Open Palms contributions - Director Kenny and Dr. McConnell reported that \$1.8 million has been received to date – approximately 50% of what was pledged has been received to date – good.

2. Dr. McConnell led further discussion on the concepts found in *The Most Loving Place in Town* and how Church of the Palms can best live into this vision. This discussion will continue.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Reading for February Session Dinner:
– *Traveling Mercies* by Ann Lamott. Read: *Overture: Lily Pads*.

2. Annual meeting of the Congregation and the Corporation and report from the Foundation – Sunday January 29 at 12:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:38 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)