

**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 chapters 3-5 of the current reading, *Stories Jesus Tells – The Parables*, by John Claypool. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 6:55 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: Andrea Jackson, Bob Baarson, Marty Guice, Bill Mallett, John McQueen, Marlene Petro, Bill Reynolds, Robin Segó, Jane Delgado Semidei, and Dotti Tyle. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson, and Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski.

**EXCUSED:** Ruling Elders Sandy Snyder and Tom Taylor.

**QUORUM, OPENING PRAYER, AND CALL TO ORDER:** 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** – Director Laurie Haas opened the meeting with her story of Practicing Living into the Grace of God. Prayers were said for the storyteller.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:**

- Just returned from seminary – 2 weeks of intensive study and a community immersion trip to Madison, WI.
- Preparing for Ash Wednesday service.
- Feb 21- Mar 21 - Wednesdays- 5-week small group study led by Charlie Haeussner.

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

- 10 Stephen Ministers in training for 2018. Prayers that they all finish. 53 current Stephen Ministers.
- 50 Shepherding Deacons will be elected at the annual meeting.
- Allan Rodda in recovering from his foot surgery and will resume visitations on Friday. Thank you to Laurie Haas, Steve McConnell and Stephen Ministers for helping with visitations in Alan's absence.

**Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:**

- Working on 2017 year-end financial matters. 2017 Annual Report is in a new format that showcases the great ministries at COP.
- Sanctuary roof redo is nearing completion. Drainage and landscaping should be completed before Easter.
- Kudos to Pam from Bob Baarson on an excellent job revising the stock gift reporting form.

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- Westminster College Choir performance – a very positive experience.
- Songs without Words and Words without Songs – last one is this Sunday – featuring Genevieve and Jonathan.
- Carmina Burana will be performed at COP on 2/3/18. Features SYV.
- Mass of the Children at COP on 03/04/18. Promoting understanding issues of at-risk children in our community.

**Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:**

- The Beach service on Christmas Eve was well attended 700-800. Thank you to Bill Mallett for his Christmas for Sarasota promotion.
- New Student Ministry leader Steve Sipes has the gift – great energy and maturity.
- Confirmation Class is starting – Dinner and special Session meeting to receive the class is Friday 04/20/18. More information to come.

**Community Engagement Director Sarah Soboleski:**

- Working with Jackie Gomez on website development. Photographer is on campus. Planning to test run the new site in 2-3 weeks. Will be user friendly!
- Reviewing all print material. *Connect* publication will be moving to bimonthly or quarterly issues. Generosity brochure, visitor materials, pastor video -- all in the works.

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

- I love to come to work! So blessed to be with incredible people.
- February 25 is Commitment Sunday – *My Cup Overfloweth*. Focus on love overflowing. Love. Life. Celebrate. Special worship service in the Sanctuary at 9 AM (combined with 10 AM service) and second service at 11 AM. Fair under the tree with games.
- Grand opening of the Palms Center – March!

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

- Request to Receive New Member: **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive EILEEN JOYCE LINXWEILER into the membership of Church of the Palms on January 22, 2018, by Certificate of Transfer.** [Note: See Clerk's Report for information].
- Request for Commissioners: See Omnibus Motion below for names of Commissioners volunteering to serve at the next presbytery meeting. Thank you from the Clerk!
- Received: Foundation Grant Request Guideline for 2018 is \$220,387.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE:** Administration and Finance Committee Vice Chair Andrea Jackson reported no additional information since special Session meeting on the budget last week.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

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

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To pass the following Omnibus Motion (Items A-F), less item E.2., as presented in the Agenda:**

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

1. Stated Session Meeting – 12/18/17
2. Special Session Meeting re 2018 Budget & APNC etc. – 01/16/18

**B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:**

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors – Month of Feb – Andrea Jackson
  - c. Session Meeting Storyteller – 02/26/18 – Bill Reynolds
  - d. Diaconate Exec. Comm. Meeting – 02/05/18 – Bill Mallett
  - e. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 02/11/18 – Group 2 Elders (M. Guice, J. McQueen & J. Semidei)
2. Membership Statistics (items 2-4 see attached Clerk’s Report)
3. Baptisms & Weddings
4. Home Communion
5. 2017 Worship Service Attendance Report
6. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the quarterly Peace River Presbytery meeting (February 22 at 1<sup>st</sup> Pres. Sarasota). The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:
  1. Marlene Petro
  2. Bill Mallett
  3. Jane Delgado Semidei
  4. Dotti Tyle

**C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

1. Elder attending Deacons’ Diaconate meeting in January – Marlene Petro

**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 Mission Partners – Co-Chs. Jane Delgado Semidei and Dotti Tyle [*Note: page 45 of the Session package is a remnant from the December package and should be disregarded.*]
3. Personnel – Ch. Marlene Petro

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

1. Equipping Ministry – Dir. Carolyn Wilson
2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Palms Preschool) – Exec. Dir. Laurie Haas - *Received on separate motion below*
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. Comm. - Ch. Barry Buchanan
2. Memorial Garden Board – Ch. Sue Angle
3. Nominating – Ch. Robin Segó

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

**Item E.2. – Family & Student Ministries.** John McQueen reported that the Early Childhood Center Committee and Director Sandy Shockley have proposed that the name of the center be changed to *Church of the Palms Preschool*, which is more in keeping with how it is known in the community. Its nickname “Palms Preschool” will also work well in the overall communications plan for the church.

**There being no objection, the new name *Church of the Palms Preschool* was approved by consensus.**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive Omnibus Motion item E.2.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Building Committee** – Bill Reynolds: See page 59 of the Session package for detailed reporting. Funds remain in the two contingency funds. Current estimates are that the building project should come in at or under budget. Parking lot will be paved starting 1/29. A fence will be put up to help shield the neighbors on Nelson Avenue from car lights – working on county approval for that. Basketball court floor will be installed on 2/15.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Review of Annual Meeting Agenda** – Steve McConnell: Review of the 2017 Annual Report and the agenda for the annual congregational meeting to be held on Sunday February 28.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Reading for January Session Dinner – *Stories Jesus Tells - The Parables* by John Claypool – Chapters 6-10.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:**  
**To adjourn the meeting** at 8:45 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)