

**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 the power of stories and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. 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: Bob Baarson Donald Browning, Marty Guice, Al Jeffrey, David MacMillan, Bill Mallett, Marlene Petro, 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 Elder John Mercier.

**GUEST:** Open Palms Chair Andrew McFall.

**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 Semidei opened the meeting with prayer.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:**

- Prayer cards and dots for Open Palms were distributed.
- 9 families stayed and participated at the Lakewood Retreat Center last weekend.
- The Student Ministry Director search is continuing with telephone/Skype interviews.
- The attendance numbers for The Garden 11:00 AM service are not as high as expected. Will continue through the beginning of May and will be reviewed.

**Executive Director of Operations Aimee McCullough:**

- Her written report to the Administration & Finance Committee is on page 37 of the Session package.
- Offer made to candidate for the database position. Hire will start March 29.
- Front office coordinator position still open.
- Facilities Manager James Thompson took over managing the cleaning staff for the ECC facilities.

**Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:**

- Showed a wonderful video filled with Thank Yous for the First Impressions Team members.

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

- Due to the logistics of Open Palms Commitment Sunday, communion will not be served March 6. Communion will be served Maundy Thursday, March 24 and Sunday, April 3.

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

*[Placed here for convenience - received later in the meeting when Dr. Browne arrived]:*

- Stephen Ministry retreat held last weekend – theme: Your Place in Your Family and Your Place in God’s Family.
- There are ten new Stephen Ministers in training.

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

*[Placed here for convenience - received later in the meeting when Dir. Beauchamp arrived]*

- Approximately 30 community people have joined rehearsals with our choir for the March 13 Requiem performance. Great to be exposing new people to our church.

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

- *For information* – Draft Minutes of the January 31, 2016 combined Congregational/Corporate meeting provided.
- Letter received from Missionaries Leslie and Cynthia Morgan in Bangladesh.
- Presented the PCUSA 2015 Statistical Report – submitted to PCUSA. Thank you to Director McCullough for getting this done.
- Presented the PCUSA 2015 Investment and Loan Program Report – new for 2016 – submitted to PCUSA. **Hearing no objections, both reports to PCUSA were approved by COMMON CONSENT.**

**FINANCIAL UPDATE:** Elder Bob Baarson gave the following summary:

- Income and expense in January showed great numbers - both better than budgeted.
- Church income less expenses was \$12,391 better than budgeted.
- ECC income less expenses was \$4,616 better than budgeted.
- For the second year, prepaid pledges were significantly less than the historical average. Not a concern, but perhaps a trend. Prepaid pledges provide early cash flow.
- Cash flow is in good shape.
- Student Sponsorships are lagging behind last year. Discussion that the congregation may need a reminder after Easter. Announcement in bulletin.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To SET ASIDE FOR DISCUSSION OR CLARIFICATION, item E.3. of the Omnibus Motion as presented in the Agenda.**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To PASS the Omnibus Motion (Items A-F), less item E.3., presented in the Agenda:**

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

1. Stated Session Meeting – January 25, 2016

2. Special Session Meeting re property contract – February 8, 2016
  3. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – February 14, 2016
- B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:**
1. Assignments and Meetings:
    - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors – Month of March – Don Browning
    - c. Session Meeting Opening Prayer – March 28 [*Moved to **MARCH 21** - See Old Business Item 1 below*] – Marlene Petro
    - d. Deacons’ Diaconate Meeting – March 7 – Bill Mallett
    - e. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – March 13 - Group 3 Elders
  2. Membership Statistics (items 2-4 see attached Clerk’s Report)
  3. Baptisms & Weddings
  4. Home Communion
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
1. Elder attending Deacons’ Diaconate meeting in February – Don Browning
  2. Commissioner attending Presbytery Meeting in January – Sandy Snyder
- 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) [*pages 57-58 of Session package showing the Master Facilities timeline will be reprinted at legible size and emailed to Session by Dir. McCullough*])
  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 – *see Staff Reports*
  2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Early Childhood Center) – Exec. Dir. Laurie Haas - *see Staff Reports*
  3. The Garden Leadership – *received by separate motion below*
  4. Legacy Giving – Ch. John Mercier – *no written report*
  5. Presbyterian Women – *no written report*
  6. Stephen Ministry Leadership
  7. Worship Planning – *no written report*
- F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**
1. Deacons’ Diaconate – Ch. Joan Emrich
  2. Memorial Garden Board – Ch. Maxine Colgate – *no written report*
  3. Nominating – Ch. David MacMillan – *no written report*

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

**Item E.3. – The Garden Leadership.** Elder Jeffrey reported a request from the Garden Leadership Team that the church goals, Session minutes, and Nominating Committee proposed slate of officers be posted on the church website. The Clerk noted that Session minutes are not approved until the next month’s Session meeting, but they can be posted in arrears for the prior month after the following Session meeting. After discussion and hearing no objection, Dr. McConnell advised that the staff will be asked to work on implementation.

**Item E.3. – The Garden Leadership - MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To RECEIVE Omnibus Motion item E.3.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Open Palms Update.** *[Open Palms Chair Andrew McFall arrived for this part of the meeting].* Chair McFall was thankful for the support of the campaign by so many volunteers and staff. He gave a brief re-cap of the campaign activities to date. The results of phases 1 and 2 will be announced on Sunday February 28. March 6 is Commitment Sunday. March 20, Palm Sunday, is Celebration Sunday. Dr. McConnell gave a summary of the status of the campaign. He asked that the Session continue to be joyful and prayerful about God’s plan for Church of the Palms. Discussion as to whether a special Session meeting earlier in March would be needed for planning. It was determined that the March Session meeting date needed to be moved anyway to accommodate the church office closing on Easter Monday. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To RESCHEDULE the March Session meeting to Monday, March 21, 2016, same time and place.** The business of the March Session meeting will focus primarily on the results of this phase of Open Palms. *[Dr. Browne and Director Beauchamp arrived from their other duties during the above discussion].*
2. **Master Facilities Plan Update.** Director McCullough reported that there have been updates to the RFP timeline. Two teams are being built - one to develop an inside design for the Palms Center, and one to work on financing and cash flow. Staff and committees are listening to the congregation about the building plans and are open to hearing all options.
3. **Downs Property Contract.** Elder MacMillan reported that the Right to Cancel the contract on the Downs property has been carried out. Discussion held on need for overall plan regarding surrounding properties.

**NEW BUSINESS: None**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Session Retreat – Saturday, April 30 – 8:30 AM-noon.
2. New Elder Training – Saturday, March 12.
3. Leadership Forum for ALL church leaders – Saturday, March 12 - 8:30 AM-noon.
4. Officer Ordination/Installation – Sunday, April 24.
5. Read *Prince Caspian* by C.S. Lewis (whole book) for next dinner discussion.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO ADJOURN the meeting** at approximately 8:35 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)

**MINUTES**

A Special Meeting of the Session of Church of the Palms was held in the Chapel at 11:00 AM on Sunday, March 13, 2016.

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

**PRESENT:** Congregational Care Pastor The Reverend Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne, Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson. Ruling Elders: David MacMillan, Bill Mallett, and Marlene Petro.

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 Petro 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>
Asakura	Jeanne D.	Reaffirmation of Faith	
Baskett	David Todd, Jr.	Affiliate	St. Paul's Church, Brookfield CT
Baskett	Phyllis V.	Affiliate	St. Paul's Church, Brookfield CT
Knudson	Gregory I.	Reaffirmation of Faith	
Knudson	Heidi Lynn	Reaffirmation of Faith	
Lambert	Maxine W.	Certificate of Transfer	1 <sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church Sarasota
McQueen	Mary Jordan	Reaffirmation of Faith	
Shepherd	Barbara Jane	Certificate of Transfer	1 <sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church Sarasota (Elder)
Zamary	George David	Certificate of Transfer	Poland Presbyterian Church, Poland OH
Zamary	Nancy Carol	Certificate of Transfer	Poland Presbyterian Church, Poland OH

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:05 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
Marlene Petro  
Clerk Pro Tem