

**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. 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, Bill Mallett, Marlene Petro, Bill Reynolds, Robin Sego, 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 Elders David MacMillan and Jane Delgado Semidei.

**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 Mallett opened the meeting with prayer.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

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

- Attended continuing education on intercultural theology in Connecticut.
- 24 Shepherding Deacons have accepted so far for the slate.
- Need 7 more Stephen ministers to accept.

**Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:**

- Went to Agape Flights with Elder John Mercier to present a \$13,000 mission gift. Agape Flights provide flights for missionaries and to Haiti and Cuba.
- Planning for a March 2017 retreat – 40 can attend.
- New 3-week Advent Series: “The King is Coming” led by Dale Vollrath.

**Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:**

- Children’s Ministry Director Carol Homeister’s sister died from cancer. Carol has been with family. She is working on the Christmas pageant.
- Student Ministry Director Jacob Orr is doing a great job – 70+ attendance. Lot of energy. Having a lock-in for high school students – at their request – they want to hang together.

**Executive Director of Operations Kevin Kenny:**

- Welcome to Director Kenny.
- Hiring a part time staff accountant - many applications. This will allow roles in the staff finance team to be modified for efficiency.

- Working with Elder Reynolds on the Palms Center building project.

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- 2 recent events allowed new people to come to the church campus - Riverview High School choral concert and the QOL Quartet concert.
- Messiah performance is Saturday, December 3. Hoping for a sellout.
- Choirs are growing and spirits are high.

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

- Rabbi Michael Churgel, the new Rabbi at Temple Sinai, preached at the joint Thanksgiving Eve Service.
- Provided an update on the 2016-17 strategic goals. The Arena database has been used to provide statistics that can be used as a baseline to help measure the goals.
- On June 6-19, 2017, Dr. McConnell will lead a "Pilgrimage to Scotland and Narnia" (and Oxford and London) for 25-45 people.

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

- A last-minute revision to the Clerk's Report to add a baptism request. The revised November Clerk's Report is attached to the official minutes.
- A memo regarding the November New Member Class. A Moderator was not able to be present at the new member meeting, so a vote was not taken. Prospective members were met by three Ruling Elders. The new members affirmatively answered the required questions for membership. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and PASSED: To receive the following persons into the membership of Church of the Palms, effective November 28, 2016 [See names listed on Clerk's Report attached to the official minutes].**

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

- Finances had a good October. Exceeded budget goals. [See report on page 17 of the Session package for details]. The Early Childhood Center is at capacity and made a profit. It is very important to meet the giving goals for the last quarter. Expenses are running over budget in a few instances, but the staff is managing money wisely.

**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 – October 24, 2016

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

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors – Month of December – Bob Baarson
  - c. Session Meeting Opening Prayer – December 19 – Robin Segó
  - d. Diaconate Meeting – December 5 - Bob Baarson will substitute for Jane Delgado Semidei [5:30 at Dr. Browne's house]
  - e. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – December 11 – Group 4 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 Diaconate meeting in November – David MacMillan
  2. Commissioners attending the Presbytery Meeting on November 10 – Linda Getzen
- 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
  6. Stephen Ministry Leadership
  7. Worship Planning – *See under Old Business below*
- F. **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**
  1. Deacons' Diaconate – Ch. Don Schalekamp
  2. Memorial Garden Board – Ch. Sue Angle
  3. Nominating – Ch. David MacMillan

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Congratulations** to Carolyn Wilson and Laurie Haas, who became Candidates at the last Presbytery meeting. This is their next big step toward ordination. [*Awesome!*]
2. **Building Committee Update**. Elder Reynolds provided a written report and gave an update. We are getting closer to beginning the building phase of the project. Groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for January 15. A meeting was held with the architect and the construction manager to review the final construction documents. The Building Permit application will be made this week. Subcontractor bids will be received in December and a guaranteed maximum price will be provided by the construction manager the first week of January. A Special Session meeting to vote on the price is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, January 8 at 12 PM.
3. **2017 Budget Update**. Director Kenny provided a copy of the draft budget to date and reported on the status. The 2017 draft budget is before the Administration and Finance Committee and some areas are being worked on. Dr. McConnell stressed that the approach to the budget is one of strategic sustainability. It is vital to continue to be healthy in our staff and volunteers, and in maintaining the campus, which has had some neglect in the past. The Global Partners Committee has been apprised about the broad scope of the church mission [*Clerk's note: See attachment to October Session minutes regarding COP Mission structure*]. The committee is aware that some global mission partners may be reduced or dropped. Elder Baarson confirmed that a 5% increase in giving is the 2017 goal.
4. **Worship Schedule**. Director Haas reported. It is important to maintain a bridge between The Garden worshippers and the Sanctuary worshippers. One way is to have one voice coming from one preacher each Sunday. In this regard, beginning in January, The Garden service will move to 10:00 AM on Sundays. This will allow the same preacher to provide the sermon at all three

worship services. The change was received well by The Garden Leadership Team. A reminder – on Sunday, Christmas Day there will be one live service at 10:00 AM in the Sanctuary. The television feed will re-broadcast the 7:00 Christmas Eve service at the 9:00 AM time slot.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Election of Session Appointed Foundation Directors - MOTION was MADE, SECONDED and PASSED: To elect Marlene Petro and Bruce Steves as Class of 2020 Directors for the Foundation for the Church of the Palms.**
2. **Terms of Call.** The Teaching Elders and senior staff members excused themselves from the meeting at 8:04 PM, and the Ruling Elders discussed the terms of call for Teaching Elders, Stephen D. McConnell and Lal Hmingliani Browne, as they pertain to the 2017 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 rational for each pastor’s combined salary and housing figures. The terms of call for Dr. McConnell were then discussed **MOTION COMING FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE, and PASSED: To approve for the 2017 budget a 3% increase in the combined salary and housing allocation for Dr. McConnell.** The terms of call for Dr. Browne were then discussed. **MOTION COMING FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE, and PASSED: To approve for the 2017 budget a 4% increase in the combined salary and housing allocation for Dr. Browne.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Reading for December – Advent Devotional booklet.
2. Elder Jane Delgado Semidei is recovering from surgery and getting her strength back. Bob Baarson will take her place at the Dec. 5 Deacon’s meeting – *See Clerk’s Report above.*
3. Pastor Alan Rodda had back surgery and is recovering well.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: TO ADJOURN the meeting** at approximately 8:22 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)