

**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 based on *The Last Battle* by C.S. Lewis. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 7:08 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, Bill Reynolds, Robin Segó, Sandy Snyder, and Tom Taylor.

Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas, and Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson.

**EXCUSED:** Ruling Elder Jane Delgado Semidei and Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp.

**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 Reynolds opened the meeting with prayer.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:**

- Family Ministry – Trunk or Treat is October 29. Children in the neighborhood are invited.
- Student Ministry Director Jacob Orr had a great event with 22 middle schoolers.
- The Garden did “prayers of the people” during worship. The worshippers seemed to learn a lot about each other through those prayers. 110+ attendees in The Garden. 30-40 have moved with Pastor Joe Davis at GraceLife Sarasota. Some of those continue to attend The Garden too.

**Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:**

- Family Promise – 2 families participated to different degrees
- Really good adult classes – *The Wired Word* led by Kyle Quattlebaum is a hidden gem. Also, *Entrusted* led by Jan Hunt.
- Two volunteers have been quietly and faithfully automating the church library. These ladies do great work in steadily sorting, culling, and bar coding the collection. There will be a celebration soon.

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

- The Rev. Margaret Towner was honored by COP as the first woman to be ordained as a Presbyterian minister in the United States 60 years ago. 107 came to the celebration to hear her speak. Also speaking were her “spiritual sisters” in ministry - Dr. Browne, Carolyn Wilson, and Laurie Haas.

- Recruiting members for the Stephen Ministry Class of 2017.
- Deacons held their annual luncheon for those members who are 90+. Well attended!

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

- Noted the passing of long time member and community statesman Elder Robert (Dr. Bob) Windom. His memorial service is November 5 at 3:00 PM.
- Prayers for Elder Jane Semidei as she undergoes more hospital tests on Wednesday.

**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:

- The Foundation approved all four Grant Requests/Withdrawals submitted by the Session in September. Copies are in the Session package.
- Add the Clerk to B.6. of the Consent Agenda as the 4th Commissioner to Presbytery meeting. Carolyn Wilson and Laurie Haas will appear before the Presbytery to be examined as candidates for ordination.
- Chart of Sunday worship attendance averages through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2106 is in the Clerk's Report. Elder Baarson from The Generosity Team noted that average weekly attendance appears to be down by about 30 or so.

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

- He reviewed specific points regarding budget vs. actual income/expenses. For details, see the September Financial Recap found on page 23 of the Session package.
- Needed building repairs and maintenance expenses are exceeding budget projections. Not abnormal. More accurate budgeting will be done in 2017.
- The staff is doing a good job of spending carefully.
- Cash on hand situation to date is good.
- The usual last quarter push to receive contributions and fulfill pledges is starting.

**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 – September 24, 2016

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

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers w/ Pastors – Month of November – Bill Reynolds
  - c. Session Meeting – November 28 - Opening Prayer –Bill Mallett
  - e. Diaconate Meeting – November 7 – David MacMillan
  - f. Special Session Mtg. to Receive New Members – November 13 – **Elder Group 3**
2. Membership Statistics (items 2-5 see attached Clerk's Report)
3. Baptisms & Weddings
4. Home Communion
5. Sunday Average Attendance Report through 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2016
6. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the quarterly Peace River Presbytery meeting (Thursday Nov. 10 - Bonita Springs). The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:
  1. Marlene Petro
  2. Pat Kindt
  3. Wayne Kindt
  4. Linda Getzen

**C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

1. Elder attending Diaconate meeting in October – Robin Segro

**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 – *no written report this month, but see an overview of Mission budgeting under Old Business below*
3. Personnel – Ch. Marlene Petro

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

1. Equipping Ministry – *see Staff Reports above*
2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Early Childhood Center) - *see Staff Reports above*
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 ELECTED BODIES/COMMITTEES:**

1. Diaconate – Ch. Don Schalekamp
2. Memorial Garden – Ch. Sue Angle --*No written report this month*
3. Nominating – Ch. David MacMillan

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Building Committee Update.** Elder Reynolds reported:
  - Details are set forth in the Building Committee Report at page 68-69 of the Session package and detailed reports on acoustics and other contrition items at pages at 51-67.
  - The second project cost estimate by Jon F. Swift increased about \$79,000 over the first estimate, due primarily (\$74,000) to addition of acoustical ceiling panels. The estimated total project cost is now about \$4 million. It is projected to come in under \$4.2 million as discussed at the September Session meeting. Final budget numbers will come in by the December 19th Session meeting for approval.
  - Required submissions are being made to Sarasota County. The building permit request will be submitted in late November.
  - Dr. McConnell distributed an updated Open Palms Core Budget chart.
  - Change items – the Committee and staff will be doing a cost benefit analysis of a list of larger ticket items to determine what can be included in construction, what must be omitted, and what can be delayed. Discussion continued on the complex issue of the grease trap.
  - Representatives from The Y have shown interest in what COP is doing with the Palms Center project. Possible opportunity for partnering in wellness activities. Possible sports activity uses for the fields behind the building. We are paying attention to opportunities to meet needs in the neighboring community.
- **2017 Budget Update.** Elder Taylor reported that the Administration & Finance Committee continues to work on various details of the 2017 budget. The proposed budget will be sent to

Dr. McConnell for comment in a couple of weeks. Keeping an eye on sustainability as well as funding for current operations. Coming up with good realistic projections.

Dr. McConnell presented a summary of Church of the Palms' Mission built around Loving God and Loving Neighbor. There was a detailed discussion of the cash and in kind support for Partnered Community and the different focus areas of the Partnered Community were explained. *[Note from the Clerk: The summary is attached to the official minutes for reference].*

- In 2016, approximately \$501K (cash/in kind) will support Mission Partnered Communities – Program Outreach, Home Grown Partners, and PCUSA – Councils, PCUSA Partner Support, and Global Partners. About 20% of the budget goes to campus based mission and global mission.
- COP has been steadily adding missions and rarely removing missions.
- Question of how COP goes about sustainable partnerships and sustainable mission.
- Do not want to lose COP opportunity to grow.
- Recommendations will be coming to the Administration and Finance Committee from the staff and then will go to the Session.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Reading for (December) Session dinner: *The Most Loving Place in Town*. Books will be provided. The November Session dinner discussion will not be based on a reading. This will give the staff a chance to catch up in their reading.
- The search for a new Executive Director of Operations continues. Elder Baarson reported. Over 30 applications were reviewed. On-site visits are occurring. In the interim, Dr. McConnell is acting as Executive Director of Operations. He is amazed at the way the staff is rising to the occasion.
- Elder Petro reminded the Session that October is Church Staff Appreciation Month.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:30 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)  
COP Mission Summary