

**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 Magician's Nephew* by C.S. Lewis. Farewells were said to Executive Director of Operations Aimee McCullough. 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, Bill Reynolds, Robin Segó, Sandy Snyder, and Tom Taylor.

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

**EXCUSED:** Ruling Elder 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 Baarson opened the meeting with prayer.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

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

- Recruiting members for the Stephen Ministry Class of 2017.
- Shepherding Deacons will meet on October 1.

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- New Chancel choir members – getting more of an age mixture.
- SYV is 1 of 5 choirs invited to perform in November at a state conference. An honor!
- SYV October 30 concert with Riverview High School women's choruses. Good opportunity to introduce new faces to COP.

**Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:**

- Fall season of adult classes has begun – 3 Sunday classes. Wednesday nights – *The Hero Effect* class – had a panel of 5 inspiring church members of various ages who are heroes.
- Planning retreat (*Re-Ignite*) for people in the "second half" of life.

**Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:**

- Family Ministry – 60 students are coming on Wednesday nights. 50 parents and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders met with Carol Homeister on 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Bible Sunday.
- The Garden – Had a beautiful send-off of for Pastor Joe.

**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:

- There were two last minute revisions to the Clerk's Report. The revised September Clerk's Report is attached to the official minutes.
- Presbytery – 2016 Review of Session records held 09/08/16 – Clerk passed.
- The Clerk provided a memo regarding the September New Member Class. A Moderator was not able to be present at the 09/11/16 new member meeting, so a vote was not taken. Prospective members were met by Ruling Elders Jeffrey, Petro, and Reynolds. 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 September 26, 2016: [See names listed on Clerk's Report attached to these minutes].**

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

- Finances are within 1% of target budget.
- Addressing the ECC budget and bookkeeping issues reported in the 2015 audit.
- Working on the budget forecast for 2017.
- The new campus electronic sign is in operation.
- Restroom remodels have been approved for the Sanctuary and the Campus Center.
- Gateway Bank Line of Credit for Palm Center project will be executed offshore this week.
- The Administration and Finance Committee received the Independent Auditor's Reports for FYE 12/31/15 for the church and the Early Childhood Center. Reports dated 06/06/16 were prepared by Kenneth F. Kandefer CPA. See reports beginning at page 39 of the Session package.
- Search and interviews will begin for Auditor for FYE 12/31/2016.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED and PASSED: To set aside for discussion or clarification, item F.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 F.3., presented in the Agenda.**

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

1. Stated Session Meeting – August 22, 2016

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

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers w/ Pastors – Month of October – Bill Mallett
  - c. Session Meeting – October 24 - Opening Prayer – Bill Reynolds
  - e. Diaconate Meeting – October 3 – Robin Segó
  - f. Special Session Mtg. to Receive New Members – October 9 – **Elder Group 2**
2. Membership Statistics (items 2-4 see attached Clerk's Report as revised)
3. Baptisms & Weddings
4. Home Communion

**C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

1. Elder attending Diaconate meeting in September – Meeting cancelled – Labor Day

2. Commissioner attending Special Meeting of Presbytery – Sept 8 – 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)) ***[Clerk’s Note: Includes receiving the Independent Auditor’s Reports for FYE 12/31/15 – see Financial Update above]***
  2. Global Partners – Ch. Jane Delgado Semidei
  3. Personnel – Ch. Marlene Petro
- E. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MINISTRY TEAMS:**
1. Equipping Ministry – *see Staff Reports above and Grant Request below*
  2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Early Childhood Center) - *see Staff Reports above and Grant Request 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 ELECTED BODIES/COMMITTEES:**
1. Diaconate – Ch. Don Schalekamp – *No meeting - no written report this month*
  2. Memorial Garden – Ch. Sue Angle – *And see Grant Request below*
  3. Nominating – Ch. David MacMillan – *Received by separate motion below*

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

**Item F.3. – Nominating Committee.** Elder McMillian provided an interim report from the Nominating Committee. Making good progress in providing a slate for 2017. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and PASSED: To receive Omnibus Motion item F.3.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Building Committee Update.** Elder Reynolds reported:
  - a. The capital cost estimate will be delivered by October 17. Will be reported at the October Session meeting. A list will be made of those items omitted so that some can be reinstated as the budget allows.
  - b. The Interior Design Committee will make various design selections by late October.
  - c. Ground breaking is still on schedule for late January.
  - d. Press coverage for our expansion – 941 magazine interview done. Upcoming SNN interview with Dr. McConnell and Carlson representative.
2. **Inquirer/Candidate update.** Elder Snyder (Session liaison for Inquirer Jordan Goodwin) provided an update on Jordan’s whirlwind activities in her “Middle Year” at Princeton Seminary. Jordan passed a very difficult Bible Content examination on her first try. Elder Petro (Session liaison for Laurie Haas and reporting for Judy Fulton as Session liaison for Carolyn Wilson) was pleased to report that Carolyn and Laurie appeared before the Committee on Preparation for Ministry earlier this month and both have been recommended to become Candidates. Laurie and Carolyn will appear before the Presbytery for examination at its meeting on November 10 at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church in Bonita Springs. Well done ladies.

## NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Items 1 -3 of the Agenda - Sustainability Conversation, Foundation Road Map, and Foundation Grant Requests were discussed together.**

Dr. McConnell led a conversation about planning for sustainability. One key is how the Foundation can come alongside the church to build a sustainable ministry going forward in these changing times of declining church participation. There is a need to think strategically about all resources to produce growth. To assist the Foundation in planning, on page 93 of the Session package, is a quarter by quarter roadmap of anticipated project expenses put together by staff that begins 4Q 2016 and runs through 1Q 2019. This will help the Foundation consider ways to help COP live into its mission. The Strategic Review team has been having conversations on how COP can sustain local mission partnerships and the program model also is being reviewed to find the best way to reach out to the Sarasota community. There may be opportunities in The Garden transition to consider what a sustainable model there would be. While keeping mind the goal of sustainability, the following Grant Requests were considered:

- a. **Memorial Garden.** *[Clerk's note: The Memorial Garden Board invests excess operating funds through the Foundation].* Going forward, the Memorial Garden Board has decided to use the Foundation Grant Request Forms for its withdrawal requests. *[The Clerk recommended that the form language be revised by the Foundation to accommodate this].* The Memorial Garden Board requested \$10,000 from its funds to provide operating funds to supplement application fees for the sole purpose of the perpetual care of the Memorial Garden. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and UNANIMOUSLY PASSED: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Memorial Garden Board Request for \$10,000.00 from the Memorial Garden designated funds.**
- b. **POSTPONED – Microsoft Office 365 for Business.** This Grant Request from Dr. McConnell on behalf of Operations was referred to the Administration & Finance Committee to review the proposal before consideration by the Session.
- c. **Re-Ignite.** This Grant Request from the Equipping Ministry will provide funding for a weekend retreat for people over age 50 who are nearing retirement, retired, or empty nesters – the boomers. Topic – how to build a life of significance in the second half of life. Participation available for 20-40 people, both members and non-members. Might be the catalyst for a new ongoing ministry and outreach into Sarasota. Additional funding will come from other sources. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and UNANIMOUSLY PASSED: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Equipping Ministry Grant Request for the Re-Ignite retreat for \$4,120.00.**
- d. **Ministry Architects.** This Grant Request from the Family Ministry will provide funding to train and equip the Director of Student Ministry and the Director of Children's Ministry and provide a sustainable framework for ministry and outreach in those areas. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and UNANIMOUSLY PASSED: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Family Ministry Grant Request for Ministry Architects for \$16,690.00.**
- e. **Be Known for Something.** This Grant Request from Dr. McConnell on behalf of Communications Ministry will provide funding to engage a Communications Consultant (Be Known for Something) to assist the church in providing focus and better communications both internally and externally that will advance the mission of Loving God and Loving Neighbor. Working with a consultant should help the church better

understand its Sarasota audience and effectively tailor its communication message.  
**MOTION MADE, SECONDED and UNANIMOUSLY PASSED: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Communications Ministry Grant Request not to exceed \$39,000.00.**

4. **2017 Budget Update.** Elder Taylor reported that the Administration & Finance Committee will bring a draft 2017 budget to the Session in October. They hope to make the budget a more useable management tool. There will be more concise financial reporting for the Session. Budgeting will be allocated to more realistically reflect the timing of how funds are actually spent during the year. New Finance Director Kevin Kenny will be a helpful addition to the process.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Reading for October Session dinner: *The Last Battle* by C.S. Lewis.
- Inquiry about youth deacons or having youth be involved in deacon activities.
- Elder Petro announced that October is Church Staff Appreciation Month.
- Always, but especially during this period without an Executive Director of Operations, please be considerate of the valuable time of the very busy church staff.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 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 as revised (statistics)  
Foundation Grant Requests (approved by Foundation)