

### 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 *Dangerous Wonder: The Adventure of a Childlike Faith* by Michael Yaconelli. 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 Bob Baarson, Marty Guice, Bill Mallett, John McQueen, Marlene Petro, Bill Reynolds, Robin Segó, Jane Delgado Semidei, Sandy Snyder, Tom Taylor, and Dotti Tyle. Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson.

**EXCUSED:** Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen and Ruling Elder Andrea Jackson.

**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 appoint Marlene Petro as Clerk Pro Tem for the meeting to serve in the absence of the Clerk to the Session. MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

**OPENING PRAYERS** – Pastor McConnell opened the meeting in prayer.

### STAFF REPORTS:

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:** Renovations are being made in the Music Building and creativity has been necessary to work around this, but it will be worth it in the end. Much effort has been devoted to hurricane preparation and clean up.

**Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:** She will report under Old Business.

**Congregational Care Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne:** Dr. Browne expressed gratitude for her study leave to Switzerland last month where she studied the Reformation, a topic on which she and Dr. Will Browne will be teaching at Church of the Palms this fall. There is a need for 15 additional shepherding deacons. The Deacons are working on the 90s luncheon on October 7 where the youth will be serving. She and Laurie Haas are working on the Chili Cook-Off on September 28 and looking for eaters and servers. There have been five recent deaths, all of which were inactive and there will be no services.

**Equipping Director Carolyn Wilson:** Carolyn Wilson announced that there would be small groups and classes starting soon. Additionally a trial off-site four-week Bible study at The Glenridge will begin on October 1.

**Executive Director of Ministries Laurie Haas:** An offer will be made for the Contemporary Service Worship Leader this week. Laurie has begun her CPE internship required for her M.Div. and will

be spending 20 hours a week doing pastoral care as well as her regular responsibilities and in addition to being the youth leader. She is getting ready to sit for the ordination exams.

**Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell:** Dr. McConnell reported that Church of the Palms is served by an incredible group of staff and volunteers who were willing to do whatever was needed before, during, and after Hurricane Irma. James Thompson, facilities manager, and Kathy Robinett, food services coordinator, were recognized at services on September 17 for their enormous efforts to preserve the campus and care for our neighbors. Other staff arrived on Monday after the storm to assess the situation at the church. Volunteers, staff, and US Lawns came on Tuesday to clean the campus grounds, while coffee and soup were offered in the Campus Center. Additional stress was put on the food pantry prior to the hurricane as people prepared. The supplies that are currently being collected in the pod in our parking lot will be delivered to Immokalee on Thursday. We may be partnering with Temple Sinai in relief efforts. The special offering collected on Sunday will provide just under \$14,000 in relief funds. Dr. McConnell informed the Elders that he has spoken with the Foundation about helping in some significant way within the Presbytery, as we have been blessed and it is necessary to share that.

**CORRESPONDENCE AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** *The Clerk to the Session emails to Staff and Elders pertinent correspondence received between Session Meetings.* No additional announcements.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE:** Administration and Finance Committee Chair Elder Taylor reported: Elder Taylor reported that we are doing well but we need to continue to be diligent. We are \$27,000 better than planned and behind by only \$25,000 in donations. The committee suggests that the mission money be released. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:** To approve Global Partners to distribute the \$17,000 for the first three quarters of the year committed to specific missions.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:** To set aside for discussion or clarification, item F. 1. 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 F.1., as presented in the Agenda.

- A. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:
  - 1. Stated Session Meeting – 08/28/17
  - 2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 09/17/17
- B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:
  - 1. Assignments and Meetings:
    - a. Sunday Morning Prayers with the Pastors – Month of October – Bill Mallett
    - c. Session Meeting Storyteller – October – Bob Baarson
    - d. Diaconate Exec. Comm. Meeting – 10/02/17 – 7 PM - Robin Segó
    - e. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members – 10/08/17 – Group 2 Elders (Guice, McQueen, Semidei) 11:00 AM Chapel Reception Room
  - 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 September – Bob Baarson

**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 – Co-Chs. Jane Delgado Semidei and Dotti Tyle
3. Personnel – Ch. Marlene Petro

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

1. Equipping Ministry – Dir. Carolyn Wilson
2. Family & Student Ministries (includes Early Childhood Center) – Exec. Dir. Laurie Haas
3. The Garden Leadership
4. Legacy Giving
5. Presbyterian Women
6. Stephen Ministry Leadership
7. Worship Planning

**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 F.1. Diaconate Executive Committee** –Elder Baarson questioned the use of the term “Bylaws” in the Handbook for Deacons, suggesting that it is a term that tends to be used by corporations, rather than groups within an organization. Pastor McConnell suggested that the nomenclature be researched with the Presbytery and bring that information back next month.

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive Omnibus Motion item F.1.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Building Committee—Elder Reynolds reported that the project is on schedule for completion mid- to late February. The major impact from the storm has been in getting the workers who evacuated, primarily the roofers, back to Sarasota and to work. Elder Reynolds noted that we are not concerned with water intrusion during a hurricane or tropical storm as the building sits a little higher, the retention pond has been enlarged, and once built, the downspouts will go directly into underground drains rather than onto a parking lot. He noted that the sanctuary drains would also connect to underground drains once the new roof is installed. The Sacred Graffiti event produced some very heartwarming blessings.
2. Personnel Update—Executive Director Pam Gillespie informed the Elders that Sarah Soboleski is the new Front Office Coordinator. She praised the staff for their hurricane work, both on and off the campus, as some of our members needed clean up help and the church responded with both volunteers and staff.
3. Facilities Update—Executive Director Pam Gillespie noted that due to the weather the playground construction has been delayed. The contract for the sanctuary roof has been signed and the roof replacement is scheduled to begin in about three weeks. The two diseased Laurel Oaks in our courtyard were removed this week and our big oak was trimmed. After the roof is replaced, Building and Grounds will meet to determine a plan for shade in the courtyard.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Hurricane Irma Follow-up—Dr. McConnell asked for recommendations of things we should have done so that we can be better prepared for future events. Elder Snyder indicated that she received calls regarding her plans prior to the hurricane and that was heartwarming. Elder Baarson and Dr. Browne scheduled those calls. The Elders agreed that the email and website communications were excellent.

Dr. McConnell noted that nearly \$14,000 was collected for the relief effort on Sunday. He noted that he has identified three options:

1. Help for those in Mision Peniel in Immokalee where their center was badly damaged and equipment loss, not to mention the damage to the crops.
2. Collaboration with Temple Sinai. Temple Sinai prefers to allocate supplies to the effort and may be bringing supplies to our pod destined for Immokalee.
3. Funding for the Food Pantry. Our food pantry gave out 15,000 more bags of food thus far this year than last year. There is concern about the rate at which we are giving away food and whether it is sustainable. Executive Director Pam Gillespie is working with All Faiths, USDA, and United Way to convert our food pantry to one that provides supplemental food, rather than being the main source for our neighbors’ total food needs.

The task of determining the distribution for these funds was given to Global Partners who will bring back a recommendation next month. If there is a need that is more immediate, consent will be done through email. Elder Semidei noted that Global Partners is working with three organizations—Good Samaritan, Agape, and Mision Piniel—already involved in relief efforts.

Dr. McConnell announced that Rebecca Barnes, Coordinator, PCUSA Hunger Program, will speak at Church of the Palms on Sunday, November 19 when we take our annual Food Pantry offering. He also announced that the church has received \$20,000 from a fund managed by the Foundation that is designated for the food pantry.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Reading for October Session dinner - *Dangerous Wonder: The Adventure of a Childlike Faith* by Michael Yaconelli – Chapters 2-4.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:10 PM to a Circle of Prayer.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell  
 Moderator

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Marlene Petro  
 Clerk Pro Tem

Attachment to official minutes:  
 Clerk’s Report (statistics)