

MINUTES

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the elders and staff members to the video conference call that began at 6:32 PM.

PRESENT: Teaching Elders: Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell (Moderator), Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne, and Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas. Ruling Elders: Marcia Baarson, Linda Calvert, Gerry Hailey, Andrea Jackson, Maxine Perry, Steve Rowe, Sandi Stewart, Matthew Straeb, and Pam Williams. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Ministry & Mission Sarah Soboleski.

EXCUSED: Ruling Elders Jeanne Asakura and Diane Curtis.

QUORUM, CALL TO ORDER, AND OPENING PRAYER: A quorum was established. Dr. McConnell served as Moderator. He called the meeting to order and opened with prayer. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

STORYTELLER: Matthew Straeb told his faith story. A prayer was given for the storyteller.

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:

- **MOTION MADE SECONDED AND PASSED: To receive into membership the following persons who attended Pastor Hmingi's recent New Member Class: Susan M. Baux, James DeBolt, Patricia DeBolt, Linda Hanlon, Steve Hanlon, Michele Lewis, Barbara A. Olevano, Jo Ann Olmstead, and Jack Stauffer.**
- The Clerk asked for Commissioners to attend the next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery. *See Item B.3. of Omnibus Motion below.*
- The Clerk noted that the PCUSA 2021 Statistical Report is on the Omnibus Motion to be approved. She explained that diversity statistics are not collected by the church, but had to be estimated based on any personal observations.

STAFF REPORTS:

Director of Ministry & Mission Sarah Soboleski:

- Analytics: A year end summary for 2021 was reviewed. There were significant increases in in-person attendance from 2020. Suggestion for including statistics for each Sunday service.
- 2021 Annual Report: A wonderful production by Communication Coordinator Jackie Gomez.
- 01/30/22 Annual Meeting: A video conference link via Zoom will be available through the church website.
- Pastor Steve and Pastor Calvin Lumpkin from Light of the World Church were interviewed by television station ABC7 on the upcoming talk by Jemar Tisby.
- Ordination candidates Sarah and Genevieve are preparing for their extensive ordination exams that begin next week. Prayers!

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- The Noontime Concerts series has been a hit.
- Genevieve is finishing her Clinical Pastoral Education course.
- She conducted a memorial service for choir member Dorothy Dahms.
- The Messiah production has been cancelled due to continuing pandemic concerns.
- Sarasota Young Voices continues to come back to pre-pandemic levels.
- Chancel choir is mighty, but smaller in size as some members wish to wait out the pandemic.

Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne:

- Just returned from vacation.
- Stephen Ministers had an in-person meeting. 10 new Ministers in training,
- Thank you to Cathie Lloyd and Linda Calvert for their assistance to her ministry.

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- Memorial Garden expansion wall: Pam explained the proposal that was approved by the Administration and Finance Committee. Expanding the memorial wall involves closing off a window along the Chapel east wall in what is used as a Samaritan Counseling meeting room. *See page 19 of the Session package for details.*
- "Back 40" update: The Southwest Florida Water Management District has approved the walking trail/labyrinth plan. There are more Sarasota County comment dates that need to pass. Final approval should come around the beginning of March.
- Part-time media specialist Kevin Smith has been hired. He will train more volunteers to work with the media systems.
- Food Pantry: Orientation held. Food Ministry Coordinator Kathy Robinett has 22 more volunteers.

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Confirmation Class: 17 kids in the class. Session dinner to receive the class will be held on Saturday April 23 at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center.
- Visit the Education Building and see the space revamped and redecorated by Carol Homeister!
- Thank you to Visitation Pastor Stu Broberg for stepping in to give the sermon on Sunday while Laurie recovered from a cold.

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

- The author Jemar Tisby event is Wednesday 01/26 at 6:30 in the Sanctuary. A community leader lunch and a small dinner with the Race and the Church Team and staff will be held earlier that day.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Andrea Jackson reported:

- An unbelievable year of generous giving and lower expenses, topped by a large unexpected anonymous gift directed to operating budget and global mission. *See page 17 of Session package for details.*
- Trending: Non-pledged giving exceeds pledged giving. Makes it more difficult to do budget planning.
- The Annual Report notes the forgiveness of the PPP loan, and she will mention this at the annual meeting.
- Planning for Finances: Pastor Steve noted that more planning for finances will be done. A suggestion from Elder Straeb that a group be brought together from different areas to bring ideas together. Pastor Steve will work on this.

OMNIBUS MOTION: MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To pass the following Omnibus Motion (Items A-F), as presented in the Agenda.

A. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

1. Stated Session Meeting: 12/20/2021

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of February: Andrea Jackson
 - b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday 02/07 at 7 PM: Diane Curtis
 - c. Session meeting storyteller for 02/28: Linda Calvert
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)
3. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the Peace River Presbytery stated meeting (9:00 AM Thurs. Feb. 24 at Pine Shores PC, Sarasota). To serve until the next appointment of elder commissioners. The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:
 1. Maxine Perry 2. Sandi Stewart 3. _____ 4. _____
4. Filing of the 2021 Statistical Report with PCUSA.

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in January: Gerry Hailey - *No written report.*

D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:

1. Administration and Finance: Ch. Andrea Jackson (includes Building and Grounds Team), **includes the Memorial Garden expansion proposal identified in the A&F minutes of 01/19/2022.**
2. Global Mission Partners: Ch. Matthew Straeb
3. Personnel: Ch. Diane Curtis

E. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MINISTRY TEAMS:

1. Family & Student Ministries (includes Palms Preschool) *See staff reports above*
2. Contemporary Worship Service Leadership *No written report this month*
3. Presbyterian Women *No written report this month*
4. Stephen Ministry Leadership

F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:

1. Deacons' Executive Committee: Ch. Elizabeth Dexter
2. Memorial Garden Board: Ch. Paul Nielsen
3. Nominating: Ch. Marcia Baarson *No written report this month*

OLD BUSINESS:

1. SURE discussion from December Session meeting contemplated having a speaker from SURE attend the January Session meeting. Pandemic concerns moved the January meeting to video conference. Having a SURE speaker was postponed until the February meeting. Hopefully, the pandemic will have eased so that an in-person meeting is possible.
2. COVID Update: As the pandemic continues with the omicron variant, protocols continue in place. Because of the nature of their contact with the public, preschool and food pantry workers are required to wear masks.

NEW BUSINESS: NONE.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Reading: *Falling Upward* by Richard Rohr.
2. Plan to attend the annual meeting on Sunday 01/30/22 at 12 PM in the Sanctuary.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:**
To adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:55 PM to prayer concerns and closing 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)
2021 PCUSA Statistical Report (as filed)