

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 an article reviewing *Falling Upward* by Richard Rohr. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 6:54 PM.

MINUTES

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: Jeanne Asakura, Marcia Baarson, Linda Calvert, Diane Curtis, Gerry Hailey, Steve Rowe, and Sandi Stewart. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Ministry & Mission Sarah Soboleski.

EXCUSED: Andrea Jackson, Maxine Perry, Matthew Straeb, and Pam Williams

GUESTS: Incoming Elders: Lesley Conzelman, Darrel Jordan, and Marlene Petro. Dimitrios Vafeas attended the Session dinner only due to a prior commitment and Andrew McFall was out of town.

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: Gerry Hailey told his story of a life well-travelled and well-lived in service to God and country. Prayers were 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 as of March 28, 2022, the five members and five affiliates listed in the 3/28/2022 Clerk's Report who attended Pastor Hmingi's recent New Member Classes.**
- Draft Session Roster for 2022-23 – The Clerk provided a summary for the incoming elders. All elders please review your contact information and assignments.
- FYI: February Grant Requests approved by Foundation for Faith and Society Speakers Series \$59,600 (unrestricted funds), and Summer Interns \$8,000 (scholarship restricted funds)

STAFF REPORTS:

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- See details on written report at page 10 of the Session package.
- Revenue continues to exceed the budgeted goal. Expenses are currently under budget but will be coming more into line.
- "Back 40" update: Required tree survey should be done in 3-4 weeks and then will be submitted to Sarasota County for its review.

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Ukraine benefit concert has been quickly organized and scheduled for April 3. A large audience is expected.

- Youth musicians during the prelude each month have been well received.
- She has completed her CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education). Continues her chaplain work at Doctors Hospital.
- Divinity school is almost done!

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Children’s Director Carol Homeister is taking a group of sixteen kids to Spring Bash at Cedarkirk.
- Director of Student & Family Ministries Conor Peters engaged all of the pastors and other church leaders in interactions with the Confirmation Class. The Confirmation dinner is Saturday, April 23.
- Health & Well-Being Director Susan Neisler continues to have great turnouts for the wide variety of activities at the Palms Center.
- The new Welcome Center in the Narthex of the Sanctuary is open for business.
- Rev. Haas is working on plans for her Sabbatical in the summer of 2023. She will be sharing information with the congregation in an upcoming bulletin.
- Rev. Haas attended the Temple Sinai Purim service via video-conference.

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

- As the pandemic has eased, Congregational Care visitation has resumed in-person.
- 72 Shepherding Deacons gathered in-person for the first time in many many months.
- Dr. Browne continues to hold classes for new members each month.
- Dr. Browne recently conducted a wedding and several memorial services, and today she was the leader at the Peace River Presbytery women’s retreat.
- Sunday Communion will resume with the formal passing of trays. Elders should sign up to serve each month.

Director of Ministry & Mission Sarah Soboleski:

- Hundreds of responses received as a result of the Volunteer Accelerator survey lesson given during church on Sunday.
- Communications: Wonderful Reverse Offering stories continue to come in. She and staff are working on ways to creatively share the energy.
- Analytics: She reviewed the monthly statistics. In-person worship continues to increase and recover from the pandemic. Good attendance continues at special events and at Wednesday Night Life. See page 27 of the Session package for details.
- She is working with the Global Mission Partners committee.
- Wilkinson school: Volunteers have returned to a classroom at our local elementary school to interact with the children.

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

- Prayers for Elder Andrea Jackson and her mother, Elder Pam Williams, and Elder Sandi Stewart and her husband Don.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: See Executive Director Pam Gillespie’s report above.

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: 02/28/2022

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of April: Steve Rowe
 - b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday April 4, 7 PM: Steve Rowe
 - c. Storyteller for April Session meeting: Steve Rowe
 - d. **Special Session meeting to receive the Confirmation Class into membership: Saturday April 23 dinner at 6 PM in Campus Center.**
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in March: Pam Williams

D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:

1. Administration and Finance: Ch. Andrea Jackson (includes Building and Grounds Team)
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 proposal update.** Dr. McConnell reported. The invitation for the SURE coordinator to meet with the Session is still open. As previously noted, SURE has changed leadership. It may be possible to meet with him in the fall.
2. **Strategic Funding Initiative update.** Dr. McConnell reported. A team has gathered to explore the various funding sources at COP (mission giving, operation funding, capital reserve funds, and the Foundation). The team will work on proposals about how to strategically coordinate the abundance COP has been blessed to receive.
3. **Race and the Church team update.** Rev. Haas provided an update on recent R&C activities, such as the Newtown Trolley tours, which were well attended. There are eight members of the core R&C team. She reviewed the mission statement of the R&C team, which focuses on awareness, relationships, and commitment of resources to address racism. Dr. McConnell mentioned his involvement as various community groups come together to examine how resources can best be used to respond to matters of racism in the Sarasota community. So grateful to have Rev. Kelvin Lumpkin from Light of the World Church leading COP in all three worship services last week. The 11 AM service also had a special musical performance by Light of the World's men's ensemble.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Personnel changes.** Dr. McConnell reported on staff changes. Linda Evans is retiring as the Tutoring Director. Don Prieur is retiring as the long-time Media Director. Staff Accountant Viola Mast is departing. The Palms Preschool will soon need a new Front Office Coordinator.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Ordination Sunday – April 3 at the 9 AM service.
2. Dinner - Session to Receive Confirmation Class on Saturday, April 23 at 6:00 PM.
3. Confirmation Sunday – April 24. A significant milestone for our young new members!

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:**
To adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:23 PM to a Circle of Prayer and laying on of hands to celebrate our retiring Elders Class of 2022: Marcia Baarson, Linda Calvert, Gerry Hailey, and Matthew Straeb. Blessings as you continue your “falling upward”!

By: _____
The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell
Moderator

By: _____
Linda R. Getzen
Clerk to the Session

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