

MINUTES

Due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the elders and staff met via a video conference Session meeting that began at 7:00 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: Jeanne Asakura, Marcia Baarson, Linda Calvert, Joan Emrich, Gerry Hailey, Andrea Jackson, Cliff McHenry, Jason Morton, Lou Stern, Sandi Stewart, and Matthew Straeb. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Outreach & Families Sarah Soboleski.

EXCUSED: Ruling Elder Pam Williams.

GUESTS: Incoming Elders: Diane Curtis, Maxine Perry, and Steve Rowe.

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 words of inspiration from viewers in Michigan and a prayer. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

WELCOME GUESTS: The Moderator welcomed Diane Curtis, Maxine Perry, and Steve Rowe of the Elders Class of 2024, to be installed in April. They were invited to participate in the meeting without vote. Elder Sandi Stewart will continue on the Session and serve a second term.

CORRESPONDENCE AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: *The Clerk to the Session emails to Staff and Elders pertinent correspondence received between Session Meetings.* The Clerk reported:

- **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED: To receive the following new members who attended one of Pastor Hmingi's recent New Member Classes: David K. Hughes, Norma Jean Hughes, Justin McCormick, and James Taylor.**
- COP Foundation – Grant to Habitat for appliances was approved - \$9,695.84.
- The Clerk will email a roster of 2021-22. Ruling Elders were asked to review and calendar their assignments for the coming Session year.

STAFF REPORTS:

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

- Congregational Life – working like a “well-oiled machine” with 219 volunteers. Deacons sent out Christmas and Easter bookmarks to members 90+, as well as the sick and homebound.
- Wednesday night life on Zoom – going strong. Will end for the season in April, as will 13 small groups.
- Home communion continues to be prepared and delivered. Thank you to Marcia Baarson.
- Cathie Lloyd, Executive Assistant to the Pastors is an amazing perfectionist!
- Sabbatical - Delegating and preparing for her absence. Pastor sabbatical begins this summer for 3½ months.

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- Report in packet is for prior month. Disregard.
- February contributions are up.
- Palms Preschool enrollment and receipts are up.
- Expenses are below budget.
- Re-roofing project is complete.
- Facilities Team – preparing for the 2021 hurricane season.
- Food Pantry – usage is slightly behind average – due to spring break, school children receiving food package to take home, and US stimulus checks arriving. An additional Food Pantry distribution time is starting in April – 2nd and 4th Fridays at 5-7 PM. Will be helpful to working families as well as volunteers.
- Food Pantry Fund Task Force -Reviewing best use of the funds in the Donor Restricted Food Pantry account. All Faiths Food Bank continues to donate food for free. Task Force is meeting with some local congregations to perhaps help them start food pantries. Considering other options to use excess funds to address food scarcity.

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Holy Week – lots of music going on in all venues!
- 2nd Taizé service will be aired on YouTube beginning 3/27.
- Planning a concert series in the Chapel.
- As a Presbytery Inquirer – had a meeting with her Session Liaison Jeanne Asakura.
- Choirs and the orchestra will be coming back as COVID restrictions ease and more are vaccinated. Handbells Team B was in action at the 9 & 11 services on Sunday.
- Seminary – practiced baptizing – on a “fake” baby!

Director of Outreach & Families Sarah Soboleski:

- Family Ministry – Special Easter event for families will be held in the courtyard this Wednesday featuring the preschool children. Planning has begun for Vacation Bible School in June. Children’s Director Carol Homeister was in her element at the children’s outing to Cedarkirk.
- Conor Peters, incoming Director of Family and Student Ministries, is meeting with Sarah regularly. He is getting married shortly. He will be in town April 23-25 to meet parents and church members. Starts in June.
- Analytics on church attendance - Average weekly total attendance (in person and via video) is increasing - January 1263, February 1302, March 1343 (weekly to date). The daily devotions are holding their own and increasing viewership slightly again (March daily average 210). She shared maps of the US and the world showing the variety of locations of viewers tuning in from out of our area.
- Communications - Jackie Gomez and Matt Liddell continue to be a good team. They will be freshening up the COP website.

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- This Saturday, Pastor Laurie is leading a Zoom visioning retreat with Pastor Steve on Race and the Church.
- Health and Well-being Director Susan Neisler continues to do a great job in the Palms Center – aware of what the community wants and making changes to fit. Starting a new tai chi class. Working on the initial steps of the Senior Wellness initiative.
- Lectio Divina Spiritual Practice will continue through the summer. She encouraged others to join in.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Andrea Jackson reported:

- Administration and Finance Committee did not meet this month.
- Finances are on budget. Bequests and PPP funds have been booked into receipts.

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: 02/22/2021.
- B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:**
1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of April: **Marcia Baarson** (*due to COVID, until further notice, please email weekly prayers to the pastors before Thursday's taping of service*).
 - b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday April 5, 7 PM, via ZOOM: **Andrea Jackson**
 - c. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: **Tentative schedule:** Sunday, April 11, 11 AM in Chapel Reception Room (*due to COVID, assume that this meeting is cancelled unless you hear otherwise from Pastor Hmingi*): **Group 4 Elders (J. Asakura, L. Calvert, L. Stern)**
 2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Board meeting in March: Pam Williams
 2. Commissioners attending the Presbytery Meeting on 2/25/2021: Joan Emrich
- D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:**
1. Administration and Finance: Ch. Andrea Jackson (includes Building and Grounds Team) – *No meeting in March – financials only*
 2. Global Partners Mission: Ch. Matthew Straeb *No written report this month*
 3. Personnel: Ch. Joan Emrich *No written report this month*
- E. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MINISTRY TEAMS:**
1. Family & Student Ministries (includes Palms Preschool) *See staff reports above*
 2. Contemporary Worship Service Leadership
 3. Presbyterian Women *No written report this month*
 4. Stephen Ministry Leadership
- F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**
1. Deacons' Executive Board: Moderator Barry Buchanan
 2. Memorial Garden Board: Ch. Sue Angle
 3. Nominating: Ch. Marcia Baarson *No written report this month*

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Pastoral Statements – Continuing from January and February Session meetings. The Moderator reported. The Zoom discussion was held by the pastors and 6 elders last week to continue discussions on LGBTQ matters. No further action was proposed by the Session.
2. COVID Update – The Moderator reported. As COVID eases and more people are vaccinated, capacity in the Campus Center and Sanctuary will be increased on Sunday mornings. If a service is fully reserved on Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday, the overflow will be invited to view the

prerecorded service in the Campus center. As easing continues, other steps to be taken may include singing while masked or a face mask optional service. Then discussions will happen on when to cease the prerecorded services and resume live video coverage.

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- On March 15, an outdoor party was held for the staff thanks to a generous gift from a church member who has been “stuck” in Canada during the pandemic. Thank you to Joan Emrich and Marlene Petro for organizing a great afternoon of fun!
- Many thanks to the outgoing Elders Class of 2021: **Joan Emrich, Cliff McHenry, and Lou Stern.**

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED BY CONSENSUS: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:04 PM with prayer concerns, prayers for the outgoing Elders, prayers for Elder Pam Williams on the death of her brother, and prayers for others.

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

By: _____
Linda R. Getzen
Clerk to the Session

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