

MINUTES

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the elders and staff members to the Campus Center for the Session meeting that began at 7:00 PM. Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing protocols were observed.

PRESENT: Teaching Elders: Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell (Moderator), and Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne. Ruling Elders: Jeanne Asakura, Marcia Baarson, Linda Calvert, Joan Emrich, Gerry Hailey, Andrea Jackson, Cliff McHenry, Jason Morton, Lou Stern, Sandi Stewart, Matthew Straeb, and Pam Williams. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, and Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp.

EXCUSED: Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas and Director of Outreach & Families Sarah Soboleski.

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 a devotion based on Psalm 100 and a prayer. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

STORYTELLING 2.0: Elder Sandi Stewart told about the journey she and her husband Don are on as they live together through his challenging health issues, and the support and comfort they have received from Church of the Palms. Prayers were said for the storyteller.

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

- **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:** To receive new Affiliate member who attended Pastor Hmingi's October New Member Class: Roma Jeanne Blair – member of First Community Church in Columbus, OH.

STAFF REPORTS:

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Daughter Ariane Beauchamp was married on October 10 at the church.
- Music Ministry is remarkably busy with 19 different programs:
 - Wednesday choir rehearsals are held via teleconference – prayers for choir members with health issues.
 - Handbells are meeting in person in social distanced groups.
- Taizé: Videoed and compiled 8 meditative services.
- Divinity studies – busy, but more than halfway through!

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- See written report on page 11 of Session package.
- Provided handouts and explained budget vs actual expenses and revenue to date.
- Food Pantry is open 5 days per week and averages about 80 distributions per day. Questions were raised regarding partner All Faith's Food Bank requirement to collect names and addresses of recipients. Concern was expressed about turning away clients who do not wish to provide this information. She explained information collection was

required to receive USDA food supplies from All Faith's. Canned goods are not part of the USDA distribution rules and can be distributed without the collection of information. Pam will provide more information on this process at the next Session meeting.

- Capital projects:
 - The Campus Center kitchen and rest rooms updates are completed
 - The Campus Center and Music Building require roof replacements. Administration and Finance has authorized up to \$200K from capital reserve funds for these projects. Bids have been received and will be reviewed by Pam, James T., and the Building & Grounds Committee to select a final contractor.
 - Children's worship area opening on November 8
 - Chapel renovation is on schedule. Old pews and furnishings were donated to a small church in North Florida/Georgia.
 - Chancel renovation, part 2 - worship furnishings are in process.
 - In conjunction with the Memorial Garden Board, landscaping was updated around the Memorial Garden. The remaining landscaping around campus has been updated as well.
- Sunday worship registration is going well.

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

- God & Hollywood teleconference series on Wednesdays had 60+ attending
- Small groups are meeting via teleconference and some have started in person.
- Tables of Six – mixed reactions to restarting in person.
- Stephen Ministers – meeting via teleconference.
- Shepherding Deacons – flocks are being attended.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Andrea Jackson reported:

- Finances are going well year to date, primarily due to savings in expenses. Revenue is generally flat, after taking into account a bequest received and the period when the preschool was closed and no tuition income came in.
- Funds are available for the roof replacements.
- Concern remains for finances in 2021.

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: 09/28/2020

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of November: Linda Calvert
 - b. Session Meeting Storyteller for November: Marcia Baarson
 - c. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting: Tentative November 2 at 7 PM: Sandi Stewart
 - d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: Tentative November 8 at 11 AM (subject to change by Pastor Hmingi to different dates and via teleconference): Group 3 Elders (J. Hailey, S. Stewart, P. Williams)
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)

3. Change date of December Stated Session meeting to Monday, December 14, 2020 (2 weeks early)
 4. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the Peace River Presbytery stated meeting (Thursday, November 19. At 9:00 AM via teleconference). The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:
 1. Linda Getzen
 2. Marcia Baarson
 3. Joan Emrich
 4. _____
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in October: No meeting
- 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. Joan Emrich
- 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. Carol Washchuk
 2. Memorial Garden Board: Ch. Sue Angle *No written report this month*
 3. Nominating: Ch. Marcia Baarson

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Reopening Update: Dr McConnell reported:
 - Worship attendance: Since limited in-person worship opened three Sundays ago, the average combined attendance for the three services is about 200. Telepresence for the pre-recorded services averages about 500 households online – not including Comcast viewers (Comcast figures unavailable). The Taizé services average about 200 views and the Daily Devotions about 350.
 - Palms Center – open with a full schedule of activities.
 - Small Groups – a few are meeting on campus
 - Thanksgiving Eve – the annual service with Temple Sinai will be pre-recorded.
 - Christmas season – sorting out the possibilities for services.
 - Survey to the Congregation will go out in the next few days – to find out what they feel comfortable doing during this COVID-19 pandemic time.
 - Contemporary Service – New media equipment has been installed This service is recorded live on Sundays with a delayed re-broadcast delivery.
 - Communion – In-person attendees will receive individual communion packets of the elements when they arrive.
 - Youth activities – have varied depending on COVID-19 issues.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Personnel Update: Dr McConnell reported: Resources are being shifting to better live into the Strategic Priorities that have been established for the year,
 - Family Ministry: Staff has been downsized as certain needs have shrunk. Search continues for a Family Ministry Director who will also lead the Student Ministry. Candidates are being interviewed.
 - Senior Well-Being: Report from the steering group is forthcoming. Susan Neisler, the Palms Center coordinator, will also now support the Senior Well-Being initiatives addressing Body, Mind and Spirit. She will also have some hospitality responsibilities – starting November 1.
 - Digital/Audio Visual Ministry: An additional staff person is needed as the church pivots toward a larger and better online presence and more sophisticated media uses. A job description has been created.
 - All changes will need to fit within the 2021 budget parameters.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Concern expressed for the well-being of the pastors and staff as they take on additional responsibilities during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:**
To adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:35 PM with prayer by Dr. Browne.

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

By: _____
Linda R. Getzen
Clerk to the Session

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