

Due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the elders and staff met via a video-conference Session meeting that began at 7:08 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, 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, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Outreach & Families Sarah Soboleski. Due to a prior discussion group commitment, some staff members joined after the Session meeting began.

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. He requested that the Agenda be amended to replace Staff Reports with the Financial Update and move Staff Reports to be part of Old Business. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting as amended.**

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

- New Members: Congregational Life Pastor Hmingi Browne held another new member class in September. At that time, the attendees were asked the required questions and affirmative answers were given. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To receive Jennifer F. Tyna and Justin William Tyna as Members of Church of the Palms.**

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Chair of the Administration & Finance Committee Elder Andrea Jackson reported:

- Monthly finances continue on track with a strong surplus. Cautiously positive outlook.
- Two estate gifts have been received: Trust of Etta Anderson and the Robert and Norene Brueck Charitable Remainder Unitrust (terminating distribution). Elders were reminded of the financial policy that provides that COP shall receive the first \$100K of an undesignated bequest and any excess shall pass to the Foundation.
- Administration & Finance and Global Mission Partners are laying the groundwork for the 2021 budget.
- The 2019 Audit has been completed (see Session package) and COP received a clean opinion from the auditors.
- The Moderator noted that we continually strive to be wise stewards of what we have so generously received. Year-end recommendations regarding disbursements will be coming later in the year.
- COVID-19: THE PPP government loan for staff salaries has not been taken into income yet and is therefore not part of the current surplus. If and when the loan is officially forgiven, then an accounting adjustment will be made. There was a lengthy Session discussion regarding the treatment of PPP funds and the responsibility to make a purposeful decision about applying for loan forgiveness. The government deadline to

apply for forgiveness is early December 2020. It was noted that the Palms Preschool has reopened, but continues to run a deficit in revenue due to being closed for many weeks by COVID-19 mandates and subsequent lower enrollment -- teacher salaries and expenses have been paid from other church funds. The question was asked whether PPP could be forgiven in part -- to be determined.

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: 08/24/2020
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 09/13/2020

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of October (until further notice, please email prayers before Thursday's taping of service): **Sandi Stewart**
 - b. Session Meeting Storyteller for October: Tentative **Sandi Stewart**
 - c. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting: Tentative Mon. Oct 5 at 7 PM: **Linda Calvert**
 - d. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: Tentative Sunday, Oct 11 at 11 AM (subject to change by Pastor Hmingi Browne to different dates and via teleconference: **Group 2 Elders (J. Emrich, J. Morton, & M. Straeb)**)
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)
3. Communion dates for 2021: January 3, February 7, March 7, April 1 (Maundy Thursday), May 2, June 6, July 4, August 1, September 5, October 3, November 7, December 5, December 24 (Christmas Eve 11 PM)

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in September: Cancelled.
2. Elder Commissioner attending Stated Presbytery meeting in September: Joan Emrich

D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:

1. Administration and Finance: Ch. Andrea Jackson (includes Building and Grounds Team) **INCLUDES RECEIPT OF THE 2019 FINANCIAL AUDIT FROM THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR AT KENNETH F. KANDEFER CPA.**
2. Global Partner Mission: 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 below*
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 Committee: Ch. Carol Washchuk
2. Memorial Garden Board: Ch. Sue Angle *No written report this month*
3. Nominating: Ch. Marcia Baarson

OLD BUSINESS & STAFF REPORTS:

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

- Daily devotionals and video church services will continue, but in-person Sunday church services will also begin on October 11, at 9, 10, and 11 AM. The theme is *We Get to Take*

Care of Each Other. Pre-registration will be required each week (online or by calling the office). Social distancing, masks, and other precautions must be followed. There will be limited seating and no congregational singing. Capacity in the Sanctuary is 180 per service, and in the Campus Center 73.

- Remodeling work in the Chancel of the Sanctuary is almost complete. Creation of the pulpit, communion table and baptismal font will be contracted out for completion.
- The 10 AM Contemporary Service in the Campus Center will be live-streamed on Sundays thanks to the digital media grant from the Foundation.
- The sermon series on the *Fruits of the Spirit* continues. The Fruit of Joy is next – bringing joy to others.
- The *Race and the Church* discussion group continues – also available are books and podcast conversations. The Rev. Kelvin Lumpkin from the Light of the World Church graciously recorded the sermon for our Sunday 9/29 broadcast. Dr. McConnell has visited his church.

Director of Outreach & Families Sarah Soboleski:

- Family Ministry: Working with staff and Ministry Architects on teaching and training protocols.
- Youth Ministry:
 - The search continues for a director.
 - Great volunteers and remarkable youth – 2 groups of 15 met recently (social distancing protocol in place) and were so happy to see each other in person!
 - Live stream youth event on Oct 10 in the Palms Center.
- Communications:
 - A short video has been created on what to expect as the campus reopens for in-person Sunday worship.
 - Training continues in the Campus Center for 10 people on the digital ministry team.
 - Analytics – 520 views (viewed “live” or later) of the 9/27 church services. Does not include the number of Comcast viewers because Comcast cannot provide that information. Daily devotions continue to be widely viewed and well received. The Moderator noted that a dashboard on analytics is being developed for the Session.

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

- Advent Daily Devotionals – almost all assignments have been submitted before the deadline!
- Small groups (of widely varying sizes!) are discussing the book, *Love Does*.
- Thanks to the leadership of Elder Marcia Baarson, home communion packages have been prepared and sent by mail to the homebound, together with the liturgy.
- Congregational Life: Many callers are still devoted to reaching out to our elderly and homebound. Special thanks to Dr. Alan Rodda!

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- See written report in Session package for financial details
- The church office is open weekdays 9-5. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead for appointments. Kathleen is our newest staff member – she covers the front office. Cathie Lloyd is now Executive Assistant to Dr. McConnell and Dr. Browne.

- Food Pantry is back on the east side of the Campus Center with walk-up service 5 days per week. Averaging about 80 requests per day. All Faiths Food Bank has a new computer registration system that recipients may be a little leery of using.
- James Thompson and staff are readying the church grounds for the campus re-opening.
- The remodeling of the Children’s Space is complete.
- Renovations of the Chapel are on target for a November 1 completion, but without furniture (later date).

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Race and the Church discussion group continues on October 19 at 6 PM.
- Palms Center – exercise classes are open and Pickleball starts soon.
- Book groups – *Love Does* and *Soul of a Pilgrim*.
- Very fond of the Lecto Divina spiritual practice group that meets on Wednesdays via video-conferencing.
- The walking trail and other outdoor worship experiences on the church campus are being worked on.

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Coordinating the various online daily devotions and church services.
- Conducting virtual rehearsals with the Handbell Choir and Chancel Choir.
- Producing 8 services in the style of Taizé - a community in France that offers these ecumenical services to thousands every year. Services of prayer, silent meditation, and repeated chanting. Very popular all over the world.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **In-person Session Meetings.** The Moderator asked that Elders contact him if they have concerns about beginning in-person Session meetings - possibly October 26.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Session reading is the churchwide reading: *Love Does* by Bob Goff. Read at your own pace.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED:**
To adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:16 PM with prayer by The Rev. Dr. Hmingi 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)