

FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed elders, staff members, and guests from the Race and the Church Team at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center for dinner and discussion based on *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 7:10 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: Marcia Baarson (via teleconference) Linda Calvert, Gerry Hailey, Andrea Jackson, Maxine Perry, Steve Rowe, Sandi Stewart, Matthew Straeb, and Pam Williams (via teleconference). Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Ministry & Mission Sarah Soboleski. **EXCUSED:** Ruling Elders Jeanne Asakura and Diane Curtis, and Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie.

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.**

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 who attended one of Pastor Hmingi's recent New Member Classes: Leslie Gillis, David Schubring, and Susan Schubring.**
- Session Storytellers – The Moderator explained the role of Session Storyteller. The Clerk passed out a sign-up sheet for all to take turns at telling their stories over the next 18 months.
- The Articles of Incorporation (last updated 1988) and the Bylaws of the church corporation need to be reviewed and updated. Changes would need to be approved at a meeting of the congregation. Consensus permission given by the Session to the Clerk to pursue this task.
- Pastor Laurie noted that the Gulash baptism identified in the Clerk's Report did not take place as scheduled. The Clerk's Report is revised to omit that event.

STAFF REPORTS:

Director of Ministry & Mission Sarah Soboleski:

- Written report on attendance analytics provided. In-person worship attendance is increasing.
- As new members join, Pastor Hmingi reported that they are making connections and maintaining those connections
- Assembling 125 volunteer job descriptions. A "volunteer accelerator" app is being developed that will allow participants to quickly assess their "giftedness" and suggest ways they can use their gifts to become more involved in church life.

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

- Wednesday Night Life is doing very well with the combination of in-person and on-line attendance (averaging 150) at Pastor Steve's lectures. 16 Small Groups discussing the lectures (13 via Zoom & 3 in-person).

- Ann Owens and Rhonda Graper are moderating the grief support group. Many in the group are non-COP members.

Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:

- World Communion Sunday was very well received.
- All music groups have restarted in-person rehearsals.
- Recent concert in the Chapel. Incredible sound in the newly renovated facility. The lunchtime concerts are scheduled once a month for the next 5 months.
- Next Taizé service will have in-person attendance.
- Messiah has been moved to the springtime.
- Sarasota Young Voices is heading to Denver next summer
- Working on her CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at the chaplaincy at Doctors Hospital.

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Hospital visitations have reopened as the pandemic eases.
- Teleconferencing continues to work well. Some groups will continue meeting that way.
- Family Ministry has great energy. Director Conor Peter will do another report to the congregation at the end of the month.
- Carol Homeister continues to work so well with the children
- Rise Against Hunger food packing project is November 10.
- The Palms Center is “hopping” with activity.
- Pastor Laurie has planned study leave for 2 weeks in November.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Andrea Jackson reported:

- Finances are doing well [*See page 13-14 of the Session package for additional financial information from the Executive Director of Operations*]

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: 09/27/2021
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 09/29/2021

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors at 8:20 AM in Sr. Pastor’s office: Month of November: **Linda Calvert**
 - b. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday, Nov. 2 at 7 PM: **Sandi Stewart**
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk’s Report, as revised above)

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Elder attending Deacons’ Exec. Comm. meeting in October: **Linda Calvert**
2. Commissioners attending the Presbytery Meeting on 10/14: **Maxine Perry**

D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:

1. Administration and Finance: Ch. Andrea Jackson (includes Building and Grounds Team)
2. Global Partners Mission: 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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Grant Request to the Foundation:** The Moderator reported on a Grant Request coming from the Leadership Team. The grant will fund installation of the walking trail and labyrinth on the back seven acres of the church campus (known as the "Back 40"). **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Grant Request for \$170,000 for the walking trail and labyrinth project.**

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Associate Pastor Job Descriptions.** The Moderator excused Candidates for ordination Genevieve Beauchamp and Sarah Soboleski from the rest of the meeting. Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne, and Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas requested to be excused as well. The Moderator gave the history regarding the proposed positions for Associate Pastor of Worship and Music and Executive Pastor. He explained the presbyterian procedures involved in creating two pastorates and the identification of candidates. Discussion began on various aspects of the positions, including timing, scope of work, and effect on church finances. As the evening drew late, to give the Elders more time to explore the proposals and so that absent Elders can be included in the process, it was agreed to postpone action, and the following motions were adopted:

MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To call a Special Session meeting for Monday, November 8, 2021, at 7:00 PM for the purpose of continuing discussion and action regarding the Associate Pastor Job Descriptions.

MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To cancel the Stated Session Meeting scheduled for Monday, November 22, 2021. [Clerk's Note: unless an urgent matter arises, all business items will be deferred until the December 20 Session meeting].

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Next book to read: *Falling Upwards* by Richard Rohr – Chapters 1-6.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 9:30 PM to prayer concerns (particularly for Sebastian Spivey as he progresses through cancer treatment) and a closing prayer by the Moderator.

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

By: _____
Linda R. Getzen
Clerk to the Session

Attachment to official minutes:

Clerk's Report (statistics)

Foundation Grant Request for walking trail & labyrinth (attached when returned by Foundation)