

FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the elders and staff members at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center for dinner and small group discussion. The elders and staff then moved to the Sanctuary to see the newly arrived Chancel lectern and Communion table. They then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 7:00 PM.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Teaching Elders: Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell (Moderator), and Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas. Ruling Elders: Jeanne Asakura, Diane Curtis, Darrel Jordan, Andrew McFall, Maxine Perry, Marlene Petro, Steve Rowe, and Pam Williams. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie.

EXCUSED: Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne; Ruling Elders Lesley Conzelman, Andrea Jackson, Sandi Stewart, and Dimitrios Vafeas; Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Ministry & Mission 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 prayer. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

STORYTELLER: Ruling Elder Maxine Perry shared her story about the call of mission that she and her husband Doug Perry experienced throughout their lives, which led them to the founding of the Eye Clinic in Honduras. Prayers were given for the storyteller.

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

- **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED: To receive into membership as of June 27, 2022, the following persons who attended Dr. McConnell's New Member Class in June:**

GREG ISAACS

MALINDA ISSACS

The Clerk's Report for 06/27/2022 will be revised accordingly.

- Discussion regarding new Session Liaison for Ordination Candidate Sarah Soboleski. Ruling Elder Marcia Baarson is the current Liaison, but her term on the Session has ended. This question will be revisited at the August Session meeting.
- The Clerk announced that much-needed amended and restated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for COP have been drafted by the church attorneys but need to be revised to comply with the Book of Order. The Clerk will complete the revisions and ask for a few Ruling Elders to assist her with a review later in the summer.

STAFF REPORTS:

Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne (she submitted a written report which Rev. Haas presented in her absence):

- All is well in Congregational Life.

- The 90's Birthday Luncheon, a Ministry of the Deacons, went great. This was the first one since the pandemic started two years ago. Dr. McConnell gave a wonderful devotion to them.
- Shepherding Deacons and Stephen Ministers continue to care for the congregation
- Volunteer visitation pastors Melvin Christian and Stu Broberg are great.
- Home Communion Ministry continues with new requests
- First New Members Welcome Dinner in 2 years of the pandemic went very well. It was held in the Campus Center. 61 attended. 54 were actual new members.
- In those two years of the pandemic, March 2020-June 2022, 160+ people joined COP. Most became full members – a few affiliates.
- Various follow-up comments on the above from the Session: At the dinner, the new members shared their stories of why they joined COP. It would be great to share stories like these with the Session. Question from Session: Are we checking with new members periodically to see if they continue to be active in church life? How do we keep that going? Also, how about reviving the new member reception line after church under the tree?

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Vacation Bible School had 100 campers, 50 adult volunteers, and 59 student volunteers. A majority of the campers were new - not children of church members.
- Student Ministry – 10 middle schoolers went on a mission trip - work is being done to increase participation in that age group. A recent COP After Hours had 30 students and 10 adults attending. 32 students have signed up for the trip to Montreat.
- Palms Center – The usage schedule had been revised temporarily to accommodate summer campers in the early afternoon. Pickleball and student basketball continue, and a new adult basketball league has formed on Thursdays.

Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:

- For further details, see the written report on page 15 of the Session package.
- Finance Director Terry Lamberson started in June. He has dived into finance work and is learning the church computer system.
- Food Pantry – the number of families being served is increasing. New volunteers are participating. Veronica Posey has been hired as part-time help for Food Ministry Coordinator Kathy Robinett.
- New dumpsters beside the Campus Center will help with trash removal – they will be concealed by fencing shortly!
- The lectern and communion table for the Sanctuary have finally arrived.
- Kudos to Media Specialist Greg Lee for his diligence in sourcing new soundboards – they will arrive sooner and at a \$20K lesser cost! He also sourced a new remote-controlled camera that can replace the existing camera in the Chancel.
- The first part of an ARPA Stabilization Grant has been received and went towards preschool teacher retention bonuses. There are two unfilled positions in the preschool. There is a critical need for a teacher in the toddler room.

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

- Changes in the Sunday Morning Worship Experience. Follow-up from last month's Session meeting. The survey results to the congregation are in but are not conclusive. There is a yearning for Bible and book studies on Sunday mornings. But those responding seemed content with their worship times (9, 10, or 11). Work to be done. No clear path at this time.
- Juneteenth worship experience on Sunday the 19th with Light of the World church member, retired attorney, and lifelong historian David Wilkins was well-received by the congregation.

Unfortunately, concerns with David's bad back necessitated that the discussion with Dr. McConnell be delivered via video rather than in person. But it was fortunate that they pre-recorded their conversation in anticipation of this!

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie reported. Contributions continue to exceed year-to-date goals, but they are slowing down as summer progresses. The cost of property insurance has skyrocketed, but overall year-to-date expenses are still under budget. No red flags. They continue to watch the economic news and exercise caution in spending. They are working through lay staff compensation decisions as the new salary year starts July 1 and will affect 2023.

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: 05/23/2022
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 05/29/2022
3. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 06/05/2022
4. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 06/08/2022

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of July: Andrew McFall
 - b. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of August: Pam Williams
 - b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday, August 1, 7 PM: Dimitrios Vafeas
 - c. Storyteller for August Session meeting: Pam Williams
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report as revised)

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in May: Marlene Petro, and in June: Jeanne Asakura
2. Report on May 26 Presbytery Meeting: Linda Getzen

D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:

1. Administration and Finance: Ch. Andrea Jackson (includes Building and Grounds Team)
2. Global Mission Partners: Ch. Lesley Conzelman
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 *No written report this month*
2. Memorial Garden Board: Ch. Judy Armitage
3. Nominating: Ch. Marlene Petro *No written report this month*

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Strategic Priorities.** Dr. McConnell presented the finalized Strategic Plan with the four Strategic Priorities for 2022-2023 and the associated goals. Discussion regarding the goals and metrics for

determining success. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adopt the Strategic Plan for 2022-2023.** Clerk's note: For text, see attachment to these minutes.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Senior Well-Being.** Dr. McConnell provided background on the beginnings and development of the Senior Well-Being ministry. Rev. Haas then reported. She, Health and Well-Being Director Susan Neisler, and volunteer Pat Gutman have been working on an aspect of the Senior Well-Being ministry that would focus on helping individual dementia-related caregivers. Rev. Haas provided the Session with a mockup of an information brochure for such caregivers that could be strategically distributed throughout the community. The goal is to provide a central pathway for caregivers to receive support, education, and care. Research will be done to avoid duplication of services already available in the community. The next step is forming a steering committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Ruling Elder Marlene Petro is chair of Day of Hope to be held on July 16. She reported that there is a need for additional volunteers to serve as Ambassadors. There is a critical need for barbers to donate services for boys' haircuts. An appeal for these volunteers will be made to the congregation on Sunday.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:45 PM to a Circle of Prayer.

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

By: _____
Linda R. Getzen
Clerk to the Session

Attachment to official minutes:
Strategic Plan for 2022-2023
Clerk's Report (statistics)

ATTACHMENT (2 pages)

**CHURCH OF THE PALMS
STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2023**

MISSION: Love God and Love Neighbor

VISION: To become more and more the most loving and inclusive place in town.

Strategic Focus: Re-engage the congregation and community by actively promoting the spiritual, mental, and physical well-being of our neighbors and each other.

CORE VALUES:

At Church of the Palms, we seek to:

- Thank God
In public and in private -- through prayer, music, and scripture -- we regularly worship and thank God for all God is, and all God does in our lives.
- Follow Jesus
We seek to be "in Christ" by accepting God's grace and modeling our lives after the life and teaching of Jesus.
- Listen to the Spirit
Always aware that God is doing a new thing, we open our lives to growing through the ongoing and ever reforming work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the world.
- Welcome All
Embraced by the all-encompassing love of God for all people, we welcome all into our fellowship.
- Love One Another
We seek to love one another through the sharing of our stories in intentional community -- rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep.
- Care for the World
Created in God's image, we strive to be caretakers of all that God has given -- pursuing justice and reconciliation for the planet and all her people.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- Create Increasingly Compelling Sunday Morning Experience to re-engage the congregation and community.
Goal: Increase Sunday morning in-person worship attendance 10% from 2022 annual average to 2023 annual average.
 - Impact Ministries:
 - Worship
 - Digital (website, livestream, social media)
 - Hospitality
 - Spiritual Formation
 - Families
 - Food
 - Facilities
 - Communication

CHURCH OF THE PALMS
STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2023 (continued)

- Engage and Re-engage the time and talents of our congregation.
Goal: Increase total amount of volunteers from September 2022 to December 2023 by 20%.
 - Impact Ministries:
 - All
- Increasingly engage congregation and community via digital channels.
Goal: Increase total amount of digital engagements from September 2022 to December 2023 by 10%.
 - Impact Ministries:
 - Digital
 - Worship
 - Spiritual Formation
 - Small Groups
 - Communication
- Increasingly engage congregation and community in ministries of well-being.
Goal: Increase total amount of participants in well-being ministries of Head, Heart and Hands from September 2022 to December 2023 by 10%.
 - Impact Ministries:
 - Small Groups
 - Spiritual Formation
 - Palms Center
 - Senior Well-being
 - Family
 - Race and the Church
 - Global Partners
 - Food Pantry
 - Tutoring
 - Wilkinson
 - Palms Preschool
 - Wednesday Night Life
 - Deacons
 - Congregational Care
 - Digital