

FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the elders and staff members at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center for dinner and a discussion of questions based on *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer. The elders and staff then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 6:50 PM.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Teaching Elders: Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell (Moderator), Executive Pastor The Rev. Sarah Soboleski, and Music and Worship Pastor The Rev Genevieve Beauchamp. Ruling Elders: Jeanne Asakura, Lesley Conzelman, Diane Curtis, Andrea Jackson, Darrel Jordan, Andrew McFall, Steve Rowe, Sandi Stewart, Dimitrios Vafeas, and Pam Williams. Also present: Clerk to the Session Linda. **EXCUSED:** Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne, Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas, and Ruling Elders Maxine Perry and Marlene Petro,

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. **Approved by consensus: The Agenda for the Meeting.**

STORYTELLER: Sarah Soboleski – *Finding Jesus at 32*. Prayers were given for the storyteller.

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:

- Status of Foundation Grant Request for Faith & Society speaker series: Granted 1/17/2023.
- Discussion re PCUSA 2022 Statistical Report. Approved for filing under Omnibus Motion below. Rev. Soboleski and the Administration & Finance Chair will review the capital expenditure figure and may adjust that before filing.
- Ruling Elder Commissioners needed for the March 2 Presbytery meeting.

STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor of Music and Worship The Rev. Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Wonderful Christmas season for the choir.
- Her ordination/installation service on January 8 was beautiful and meaningful.
- The choir is rehearsing a larger work to be performed in March.
- In honor of Black History Month, music from black composers will be featured in February.
- She has been honored to provide pastoral care and has conducted two memorial services thus far as a new pastor.

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

- Rev. Beauchamp provided a summary of Dr. Browne's report in her absence:
 - All is well in the caring ministries.
 - Rev. Melvin Christian began on 1/1 as our formal Visitation Pastor for 16 hours per week.
 - Rev. Dr. Stu Broberg continues as a volunteer Visitation Pastor, although he will have less time to help us.

- Wednesday night lectures by Dr. McConnell are well attended in person and online. 17 Small Groups continue to discuss the lectures.
- Stephen Ministers' retreat went well on 1/14. This is the first one since 2020. Joy & Gratitude through the Psalms was the theme. Dr. McConnell's lecture on "Ministry of Silent" was much appreciated and well received by the Stephen Ministry community.
- Nine new members were received in January.

Executive Pastor The Rev. Sarah Soboleski:

- See her written report on page 11 of the Session package. She has been working with the Administration & Finance Committee and staff on the 2022 Annual Report.
- Raises for the preschool teachers were effective January 1.
- Welcome to Dr. Browne's new part-time assistant Beth Oslander.
- Director of Tutoring Corinne Boot-Hanford is going above and beyond in her job.
- The Hurricane Ian Advisory Team authorized a gift to First Presbyterian Church in Port Charlotte to assist them with hurricane damage repairs.
- The Faith & Society Speaker series featured civil rights author Taylor Branch. Over 300 attended, and his talk is available on the church website.

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

- Taylor Branch's talk was well received. Next in the Faith & Society Speaker series is Professor Amy-Jill Levine, followed by NYT writer Ross Douthat.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Andrea Jackson reported:

- See the written report of details in the Session package.
- The \$266K surplus from 2022 will be allocated among mission partners, discretionary spending, and the \$191K balance to replenish the capital reserve.

OMNIBUS MOTION:

Motion, made, seconded, and passed by consensus: To pass the following Omnibus Motion (Items A-F), as presented in the Agenda.

A. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

1. Stated Session Meeting: 12/19/2022.
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 01/08/2023.

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday 02/06, 7 PM: Diane Curtis.
 - c. Storyteller for February Session meeting: Dimitrios Vafeas.
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report).
3. Filing of 2022 Statistical Report with PCUSA.
4. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the Peace River Presbytery stated meeting (Thursday, March 2, at Naples Presbyterian Church). To serve until the next appointment of elder commissioners. The Clerk is authorized to complete the appointment of elder commissioners in the event of a vacancy:
 1. Linda Getzen 2. Darrel Jordan 3. _____ 4. _____.

C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

1. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting in January.

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
 3. Presbyterian Women
 4. Stephen Ministry Leadership
- F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**
1. Deacons' Executive Committee: Ch. Elizabeth Dexter
 2. Memorial Garden Board: Ch. Judy Armitage
 3. Nominating: Ch. Marlene Petro *No written report this month*

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Endorsement for Continuing Education Proposal. Rev. Beauchamp reported that as part of her continuing education, she is interested in applying for the Doctorate in Ministry in Creative Writing and Theology at the University of Pittsburgh. The program will begin in June 2024 and consists of 2 ½ years of classes and a final project. Costs will be covered by the pastor and through her continuing education allowance. The early registration deadline is approaching, Her application required an endorsement from the session. **Motion made, second, and passed unanimously: To endorse Rev. Genevieve Beauchamp's application to the Doctorate in Ministry in Creative Writing and Theology program at the University of Pittsburgh.**
2. Strategic Planning Review. Postponed to February meeting. Collecting data.
3. Hurricane Relief Update. Rev. Soboleski reported under her Staff Report above. There are ongoing conversations with various churches in the hurricane-damaged area about their needs, and opportunities are being researched.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Gift Acceptance Policies. Rev. Soboleski reported on various minor updates to the gift acceptance policies of the church and the foundation. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve as amended and presented the General Gift Acceptance Policy, the Legacy Giving Policies and Guidelines, and the Donor Bill of Rights.**
2. Foundation Grant Request – Civil Rights Legacy Trip. Dr. McConnell reported on this request from the Race and the Church Team to assist in funding a trip by members of the Church of the Palms and Light of the World Church to experience a Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement tour in Montgomery and Selma Alabama, in October 2023, and further foster relationships between the two churches. A lengthy discussion was had regarding funding. The organizing committee is working on details regarding expense payments by participants and contributions by the participating churches. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Grant Request for \$30,000 for the Civil Rights Legacy tour.**
3. Foundation Restricted Funds Request – Student Intern Scholarships. Elder Andrew McFall reported on this annual request from Family Ministry. Funds are available from a Foundation restricted account for scholarships and have been used for spring and summer interns. The scholarship payments will be made to the students' colleges to assist with their fall tuition. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Grant Request for \$8,320 for scholarships for two student interns.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Reading: *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer.
2. Young Life will have a 5K run on February 18 at Lakeview Elementary. See Andrew McFall for details.
3. The Men's Ministry is reviving post-pandemic and is planning another event for March.

There was no further business to come before the Session. **Motion, made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:35 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:

- Clerk's Report (statistics)
- 2022 PCUSA Statistical Report, as filed
- Foundation Grant Request for Civil Rights Legacy Tour
- Foundation Request for Restricted Funds for Student Intern Scholarships