

FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the elders at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center for dinner and discussion about life seasons based on *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer. The elders and guests then moved to the Chapel Reception Room for the Session meeting that began at 6:56 PM.

MINUTES

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

EXCUSED: Andrea Jackson, Maxine Perry, Marlene Petro, and Sandi Stewart.

GUESTS: Director of Student and Family Ministry Conor Peters.

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 unanimously: To approve the Agenda for the Meeting.**

STORYTELLER: Dimitrios Vafeas - *Thanks, Help. Wow.* 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:

- 2023 Foundation annual grant guideline is \$302,176.00.
- Status of Foundation Grant Request – Civil Rights Tour: Pending with the Foundation.
- Status of Foundation Restricted Funds Request – Spring/Summer Interns: Granted 01/29/2023.
- PCUSA Annual Statistical Report filed 01/27/2023 (with capital expenditure figure adjusted per Session discussion).
- For information: Draft of 01/29/2023 Annual Meeting minutes.
- **Motion, made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To renew the approval of the 2-Cents-a-Meal monthly offering collection. Such approval shall automatically renew annually until further notice.**

STAFF REPORTS:

Executive Pastor The Rev. Sarah Soboleski:

- See the Executive Pastor report on page 16 of the Session package.
- Worked on planning the Love, Life, Celebrate church event, which was a great success. Thank you to staff members Heather Ronald and Kathy Robinett.
- Worked on the Faith & Society Speaker Series. Amy-Jill Levine spoke at Temple Sinai (2/24) and COP (2/25). Upcoming Speaker Ross Douthat (3/13).
- Rev. Soboleski, Ruling Elders Lesley Conzelman and Maxine Perry, and Director of Student and Family Ministry Conor Peters are leaving for Honduras tomorrow.
- Upcoming – Mission partner Heart Gallery's drive for luggage and sundries.

Pastor of Music and Worship The Rev. Genevieve Beauchamp:

- Large music ensembles performing.
- Choir dinner – Fellowship and a little Covid were shared!
- Trying some minor changes in worship music.

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Contemporary Service – She explained the purpose of prayer walls in the Campus Center.
- Palms Preschool – Almost 100% re-enrollment!
- Gather & Grow on Sundays – 54+ attended Conor Peters’ kickoff of the Lenten series.
- Family and Student Ministry – Conor Peters shepherded kids and adults to our sister church, Light of the World, for their student kickoff.
- Race & The Church – Upcoming movie “Four Little Girls.”
- The Sunday nursery is exploding with tots! It is expanding to an additional room. More volunteers are needed!

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

- Congregational Life is busy and productive.
- Busy onboarding her new assistant Beth Oslander
- Tended to those who were sick and conducted memorial services.
- Made follow-up calls and visits with grieving families and the sick.
- 16 new members joined in February.
- Recruiting people for the Stephen Ministers Class of 2023. Four more are needed.
- Had a happy vacation with son Francis and family in Pittsburg.

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

- Faith & Society speaker Amy-Jill Levine spoke at COP on understanding the common traditions between Jews and Christians.
- Church members Ken and JoAnn Johns have pledged a significant gift to the church. Part of their generosity will help complete the funding of the “Back 40” walking path project. More thinking will be done about other opportunities in the Master Plan.
- Ruling Elder Andrea Jackson is stepping back from her duties as her Session term nears its end. We are so thankful for her compassion and talents! We love you, Andrea!

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Dimitrios Vafeas reported:

- See the written report on pages 14-15 of the Session package.
- The balance sheet is sound and on solid footing.
- Giving is lower, but operating expenses are well-managed and also lower. Preschool income is over expenses.
- Giving to annual appeal for the Student Ministry is down.

OMNIBUS MOTION:

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

A. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

1. Stated Session Meeting: 01/23/2023.
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 02/13/2023.

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of March at 8:15 AM [Note earlier time] in Pastor Steve’s office: Lesley Conzelman.

- b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday 03/06/2023 at 7 PM: Pam Williams.
- c. Storyteller for March Session meeting: Andrew McFall.
- 2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)
- 3. Orientation and training of incoming Elders and Deacons: 03/11/2023.
- 4. Ordination and installation of incoming Elders and Deacons: 04/23/2023.
- 5. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the Peace River Presbytery Stated meeting (03/02/23). 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. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in February: Diane Curtis.
- D. **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:**
 - 1. Administration & Finance: Ch. Dimitrios Vafeas (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 *See staff reports above.*
 - 3. Presbyterian Women *No written report this month.*
 - 4. Stephen Ministry Leadership *No written report this month.*
- F. **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CONGREGATION COMMITTEES:**
 - 1. Deacons' Executive Committee: Ch. Elizabeth Dexter
 - 2. Memorial Garden Board: Ch. Judy Armitage *No written report this month.*
 - 3. Nominating: Ch. Marlene Petro *No written report this month.*

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Strategic Planning Review. Dr. McConnell provided an update and led a lengthy discussion on the status of the Strategic Plan adopted for 2022-2023, its Strategic Priorities, and their associated goals. The intention is to provide an update every quarter.
- 2. Foundation Restricted Funds Request – Memorial Garden. Rev. Soboleski reported on this request from the Memorial Garden Board for funds from the Memorial Garden investment account managed by the Foundation. Funds will be used for the expansion of the Memorial Garden. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Restricted Funds Request by the Memorial Garden Board for \$6,873.50.**

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Conor Peters - Application as Inquirer. Rev. Haas reported that the Director of Student and Family Ministry and church member Conor Peters wishes to come under the care of the Peace River Presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry as an Inquirer. Dr. McConnell explained the role of the Session when a church member wishes to enroll with the presbytery as an Inquirer. Applicant Conor Peters submitted himself to the Session for examination and provided his written answers to the Questions for Reflection. He explained his faith journey and his passion for growing in ministry. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To endorse**

the request by Conor D. Peters that he be enrolled with Peace River Presbytery as an Inquirer and to appoint Ruling Elder Andrew McFall as Liaison for the Inquirer.

2. Foundation Grant Request – Funding for Advanced Theological Education for Staff Leadership. Dr. McConnell reported. Director of Student and Family Ministry Conor Peters was excused for the remainder of the meeting. Dr. McConnell explained the grant request. [*Note from the Clerk: The Session established the Leadership Theological Fund in 2014 to assist senior staff members – see the Employee Handbook.*]. Staff member Conor Peters intends to pursue an MDiv degree through the University of Dubuque. As has been done in the past for several other staff members, funds in the Leadership Theological Education account would be used to assist Conor with his education-related expenses. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve the submission to the Foundation of the Grant Request for a three-year proposal totaling \$33,000.00 to fund the Leadership Theological Education account for the benefit of Conor Peters.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Reading: TBD by Dr. McConnell.
2. Guests at the March Session meeting - New incoming Elders: Linda Calvert, Al Jeffrey, Fee Mercer, and Keith Maddox. This will be the last meeting for outgoing Elders in the Class of 2023.

There was no further business to come before the Session. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 9:12 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)

Foundation Request for Restricted Funds by Memorial Garden Board

Foundation Grant Request for Funding for Advanced Theological Education for Staff Leadership