

FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the Session at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center for dinner and discussion based on *Short Stories by Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine. The Session then moved to Room 206 of the Education Building for the Session meeting that began at 6:55 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. Geneviève Beauchamp. Ruling Elders: Linda Calvert, Lesley Conzelman, Al Jeffrey, Keith Maddox, Andrew McFall, Fee Mercer, Maxine Perry, Marlene Petro, Steve Rowe, and Dimitrios Vafeas. Also present: Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen.

EXCUSED: Ruling Elders Diane Curtis and Darrel Jordan

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: Rev. Geneviève Beauchamp told her story – *The Last Chord*. 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 Pastor Hmingi held a sizeable new member class yesterday. **Motion, made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To receive into membership as of April 24, 2023, the 21 members who attended Pastor Hmingi's recent New Member Class.** They are identified in the Clerk's Report attached to the official minutes.
- An additional membership change request was received after the Clerk's Report was printed. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve the Certificate of Transfer of Laura Savary Rees to Vienna Presbyterian Church in Vienna, Virginia.**
- The Clerk's Report in the Omnibus Motion below is revised to reflect the above changes.

STAFF REPORTS:

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Preparing to leave on her sabbatical on May 1.
- Gather & Grow series - *Praying in Color* was inspiring.

Pastor of Music and Worship The Rev. Geneviève Beauchamp:

- The choir season is winding down, and the summer choir will start after Pentecost.
- Attended her daughter Daphne's master's degree viola recital in Toronto.

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

- All is well in Congregational Care.
- Small Groups - 12 Tables of 6 are still meeting. 15 groups continue to meet about the Wednesday night lecture series. There are 42 various small groups.

- Stephen Ministry – The training class has a wonderful group of 6 women.
- Presbyterian Women – circles are growing in membership.
- Visitation pastors Mel Christian and Stu Broberg continue to provide pastoral care for the sick and homebound. Pastor Hmingi is grateful for both of them.

Executive Pastor The Rev. Sarah Soboleski:

- Enjoyed having Daphne as an intern this spring.
- Clark Simmons from the PCUSA Board of Pensions visited with the staff today and provided information about the 403(b) plan.
- Pastor Sarah will be attending an HR seminar this week.
- Temple Sinai – followed up with them regarding the Amy-Jill Levine lectures. There is talk of starting up a mutual book club.
- Global Missions – January 2024 trip to Honduras is being planned, as is a multi-generational trip in the spring.
- Global Missions - looking for an advocate for Habitat For Humanity.

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

- Foundation – Debra Jacobs from the Patterson Foundation facilitated the COP Foundation board retreat on April 22. The COP Foundation will be looking for ways to collaborate with the Session about creatively using resources.
- Dashboard of attendance statistics – online attendance continues to grow. He is observing and taking in the changing dynamics of ministry in this digital age. It was a joy to see a crowded sanctuary on Easter. Church attendees in area retirement centers are grateful for the online ministries.
- Joyful celebration of the 30th anniversary of the sanctuary with Dr. Bruce Porter preaching.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Dimitrios Vafeas reported:

- 1st quarter balance sheet and liquidity are strong.
- Restricted funds of approx. \$1M – primarily consisting of capital reserves of \$750K.
- Running an operating surplus - expenses are managed well and are lower than budget, but the property insurance bill is coming.
- Congregation contributions are close to budget for the 1st quarter. A bequest was received, but there was a shortfall in regular giving.
- Given recent bank failures, A&F has been prudent about the exposure of church funds. Accounts have been reviewed, and funds have been shifted for FDIC insurance coverage.

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: 03/27/2023

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors @ 8:15 AM: Month of May: Dimitrios Vafeas
 - b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday 05/01 @ 7 PM: Andrew McFall
 - c. Storyteller for May Session meeting: Lesley Conzelman
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)

3. Dates for 2023-24 Stated Session meetings: May 22, June 26, July (no meeting), August 28, September 25, October 23, November 27, December 18, January 22, February 26, March 25, and April 22.
 4. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the Peace River Presbytery stated meeting (May 18, 2023, at Burnt Store PC, Punta Gorda, FL). 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. Keith Maddox
 3. (possible) Maxine Perry
 4. _____
- C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**
1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in April: Marlene Petro
- D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:**
1. Administration & Finance: Ch. Dimitrios Vafeas (includes Building & 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
 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. Foundation Restricted Funds Request – Additional Student Intern Scholarship. Ruling Elder Andrew McFall and Pastor Laurie reported a request coming from Family Ministry. Funds are available from a Foundation restricted scholarship account and have been used for spring and summer interns. The scholarship payments are made to the students' colleges to assist with their fall tuition. In January 2023, the Foundation approved using restricted funds for two interns, one of whom served during the spring. The spring internship was highly successful, and another intern has been identified so that two interns can serve during the summer. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Restricted Funds Request for \$4,000 for a scholarship for an additional student intern.**
2. Walking Path Update. Pastor Sarah provided an update on the construction of the walking path on the "Back 40" of the church property. It is anticipated that construction will finish by the end of May.
3. Sabbatical Update. Pastor Laurie provided an update on her excellent sabbatical plans, and she received a coveted grant from the Lilly Foundation. She leaves on her adventure on May 1 and will return on August 21.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Election of Church Officers. Being the first meeting of the new Session year, the meeting proceeded to the election of church and corporation officers. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To elect the following church/corporate officers for a one-year term ending when successors are elected: President – Dimitrios Vafeas, Vice President – Keith Maddox, Treasurer – Fred Chamberlain, and Secretary/Clerk to the Session – Linda Getzen.**

5. Special Session Meetings to Receive New Members. Pastor Hmingi holds new member classes each month. The new members are usually introduced to the congregation on the following Sunday. For convenience to expeditiously receive these new members, Pastor Hmingi regularly calls on a small group of Elders who have volunteered to convene on behalf of the Session to receive new members. This is an annual update to that motion. Pastor Hmingi mentioned that she might bring forward a revised plan at the next stated Session meeting. **Moved, seconded, and passed unanimously: That Special Session Meetings to Receive New Members are scheduled and moderated by Pastor Hmingi on an as-needed basis. The Ruling Elders appointed to serve in-person and/or via teleconferences at Special Session Meetings to receive New Members shall be Darrel Jordan, Maxine Perry, and Steve Rowe. Pastor Hmingi will notify them of the special meeting. Any other Ruling Elders on Session are welcome to attend and vote. The quorum of Ruling Elders for such meetings to receive new members remains at two, per established policy.**

6. Foundation Grant Request – Aid to Seminary Student. Funds are available from a Foundation restricted account bequeathed many years ago by a donor narrowly designated for scholarships. These funds have been used in the past to assist seminary students. Church member and seminarian Rachel Mallet has received grants from other sources to help with her tuition at Harvard Divinity School. The payments from the Foundation would be used to assist her with books, room and board, and similar costs. This is a three-year request. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Grant Request from Restricted Funds for \$10,000 per year for three years to assist seminary student Rachel Mallet with her non-tuition costs of attending Harvard Divinity School.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Reading for next meeting: Short Stories by Jesus by Amy-Jill Levine – Chapter One.

There was no further business to come before the Session. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:27 PM to prayers and a laying on of hands for Rev. Laurie Haas as she departs on her sabbatical.

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 – Restricted Funds – additional summer intern
 Foundation Grant Request – Restricted Funds – aid for seminarian