

FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the Session at 6:00 PM in the Chapel Reception Room for dinner and discussion around the Parable of the Mustard Seed. The Session then moved outside to the newly installed Labyrinth and then to PC10 of the Palms Center for the Session meeting that began at 7:00 PM.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Teaching Elders: Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell (Moderator), 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: Linda Calvert, Lesley Conzelman, Keith Maddox, Andrew McFall, Fee Mercer, Marlene Petro, and Dimitrios Vafeas. Also present: Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen.

EXCUSED: Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne; and Ruling Elders Diane Curtis, Al Jeffrey, Maxine Perry, and Steve Rowe.

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.**

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 her October membership class. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To receive Christine Batchelor into membership as of October 23, 2023.**
- The wedding noted in the original Clerk's Report did not happen due to an illness. The Clerk's Report is revised to omit that entry.
- Elder assignments in the Omnibus Motion corrected to assign November Prayers for the Pastors to Elder Marlene Petro.

STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor of Music and Worship The Rev. Genevieve Beauchamp:

- The excellent new Sanctuary piano made its "duet" debut on Sunday. The dedication concert will be on February 7.
- Ruling Keith Maddox is a survivor of Pastor Genevieve's learning music class!
- *Messiah* rehearsals to begin.
- The organ committee is meeting.
- Ila gave a lovely solo. She is the recipient of the PCUSA Foundation fund scholarship for a high school singer to train as a choral section leader.

Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne: *Reported by the Clerk in her absence:*

- All is well in Congregational Life ministries.
- 64 Shepherding Deacons at their quarterly meeting on September 30th. Kathy Bannister has been an excellent leader.
- God is good. We need 50 Shepherding Deacons class for 2027, but we found 53!

- Wednesday Night Life Lectures by Pastor Steve on the Book of Matthew are going well. The dinner crowd is good, too.
- The Stephen Ministry is going well. There are 40 Care Receivers from our Stephen Ministers at the moment. They are working on January 2024 training.
- Grief Share/Support group is growing.
- The Chili Cook-Off was a smashing success -- 40 pots of Chili. The Palm Center was full of people enjoying chili and fellowship.
- She is grateful for the ministries she gets to do.

Executive Pastor The Rev. Sarah Soboleski:

- Working on the 2024 budget for the Administration & Finance Committee.
- Administrative Assistant Cathie Lloyd will return full time – working with Pastor Steve and Pastor Hmingi, and more!
- Governance documents for the Personnel Committee have been completed. These will be done for each Committee/Team – A&F, etc.
- HR Ministry Solutions is working on HR practices.
- October is Staff Appreciation Month! **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve service of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper at a staff event on November 6.**

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- November 12 - Homecoming Hoedown.
- Rise Against Hunger packing event. Participants are capped at 150. A great church-wide project.
- Pastor Sarah and Pastor Laurie continue the search for a Senior Well-Being and Palms Center Coordinator.
- The workshop Using Your Brain for a Change was popular – imaging a new class quarterly.
- Pastor Laurie was installed as the 2024 Moderator of Peace River Presbytery!

STORYTELLER: Steve McConnell told history. *Job’s Friends and the “Organ Attics” of the Rotterdam Breeplein Church.* Prayers were given for the storyteller.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Administration and Finance Chair Dimitrios Vafeas reported:

- Finances are in good order. The surplus continues, and expenses are well controlled.
- The 2022 audit should be ready for submission to the Session in November,
- Working on an investment policy statement.
- Building & Grounds: Ruling Elder Keith Maddox reported
 - Continuing work on the governance document.
 - Pending: windows, additions to the labyrinth, street sign.

OMNIBUS MOTION:

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

A. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

1. Stated Session Meeting: 09/25/2023

B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK’S REPORT:

1. Assignments and Meetings:
 - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors @ 8:15 AM: Month of November: Marlene Petro
 - b. Deacons’ Exec. Comm. Meeting on Mon. 11/06 @ 7 PM: Maxine Perry
 - c. Storyteller for November Session meeting: *Elder vacancy*

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 September: None
 2. Commissioners attending the Presbytery Meeting on 10/14.
- 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. The "Back 40" project: Pastor Laurie answered general questions. There will be proposals regarding uses for excess funds of about \$28K.
2. Temple Sinai: Pastor Steve has been in touch with our sister congregation on behalf of our congregation about the Israel-Hamas war. He attended a rally at the municipal auditorium and spoke at Temple Sinai that Friday. Continue to keep our friends in our prayers.
3. The Civil Rights Legacy Tour: Pastor Steve reported that the timing for the tour is not quite coming together at present, and plans are on hold. There is an approved but unpaid grant from the Foundation for the tour (*See 01/23/2023 Session minutes*). Discussed the best way to handle this while plans are being reviewed and revised, and considering other 2023 grant requests to the Foundation that will be proposed. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To request that the Foundation withdraw the Civil Rights Legacy Tour grant.**

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Strategic Plan Funding. There was a general discussion about the draft of the Strategic Funding Plan. *See chart in Session package*. This will be updated and discussed in more detail next month. A question was asked about excess funds from Day of Hope. Elder Petro explained that such funds have traditionally been used for other school-related projects – the Wilkinson reading project is an example.
2. Foundation Grant Request – Facility Upgrades. Pastor Sarah reported on this two-part request from operations & facilities for (1) the installation of hurricane impact windows in the Administration Building and the Education Building and (2) seed funds to begin the undertaking of a major Sanctuary renovation. The estimate for the hurricane windows will be finalized when formal bids are received in the coming weeks. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Grant Request for \$160K-\$180K for hurricane windows and \$40K-\$50K sanctuary renovation start-up funds.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Reading: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14) - Chapter 6, *Short Stories by Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine.

There was no further business to come before the Session. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:29 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 Grant Request – Facility Upgrades