

**MINUTES**

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of Church of the Palms – Presbyterian (USA) (“Congregation”), and Church of the Palms – Presbyterian (USA), Inc. (“Corporation”), together with the presentation of an Annual Report from the Foundation for the Church of the Palms – Presbyterian (USA), Inc. (“Foundation”), was held at approximately 10:00 AM on Sunday, January 28, 2024, in the Sanctuary. Notice was given on two consecutive Sundays before the meeting and in churchwide publications.

**QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER:** Seeing over 5% of the members in attendance, the Clerk to the Session and Secretary of the Corporation Linda Getzen declared a quorum. Also present was the President of the Corporation Dimitrios Vafeas. Senior Pastor The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell served as Moderator and called the meeting to order.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Dr. McConnell opened the meeting with prayer.

**PROCEDURAL MOTIONS:**

1. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To run the meetings of the Congregation and Corporation concurrently, and that the minutes taken will constitute actions of both bodies as though held separately.**
2. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To designate the Clerk to the Session and Secretary of the Corporation Linda Getzen to serve as Secretary for the combined annual meetings.**

**MINUTES:** Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To dispense with the reading of and approve as recorded the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation held on January 29, 2023.

**MEMORIAL MOMENT:** Congregational Life Pastor The Rev. Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne called for a Memorial Moment to recognize and pray for those members of the Congregation who died during 2023, noting that their names are listed in the 2023 Annual Meeting Report and adding the name of Phyllis Zublake.

**REPORT FROM NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** Chair of the Nominating Committee Marlene Petro introduced the committee members and thanked them for their service. Elder Petro then presented the slate of nominees for five Ruling Elders to serve on the Session. There being no nominations from the floor, **upon motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously, nominations were closed. Motion from the Nominating Committee and passed unanimously: To accept the following to serve as Ruling Elders on the Session: Class of 2025 - Marcia Baarson (filling an unexpired term) and Class of 2027 - David Bossman, John Kennedy, John McQueen, and Sandy Snyder.**

Elder Petro then presented the slate of seven nominees to the Executive Committee of the Board of Deacons. There being no nominations from the floor, **upon motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously, nominations were closed. Motion from the Nominating Committee passed unanimously: To accept the following to serve on the Executive Committee of the Board of Deacons:**

**Class of 2025 - Charlene Nowak (filling an unexpired term) and Class of 2027 - Dorothy Brodeur, Phil Ellis, Marilee Heider, Vicki Morley, Carilyn Reiter, and Carol Somers.**

Elder Petro then presented the slate of nominees for those Deacons known as Shepherding Deacons - Class of 2027. There being no nominations from the floor, **upon motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously, nominations were closed. Motion from the Nominating Committee passed unanimously: To accept the following to serve as Shepherding Deacons: Class of 2027 - Martha Albritton, Ruth Anderson, Rob Anderson, Rose Antrim, Bob Antrim, Ken Asakura, Julie Boeger, Janet Brennan, Shirley Brown, Jane Carpenter, Debra Chrobak, Ginna Clark, Jackie Cowles, Ann DiLouie, Carolyn Ellis, John Ellis, Ann Good, Debbie Gore, Martin Guice, Janette Hale, Francie Hall, Helen Haskell, Sandra Hickey, Beth Hill, Peggy Hoffman, Betsy Holden, Priscilla Hull, Barbara Ingram-Rice, Kevin Jeffers, Pamela Kampfer, Thomas Kortendick, Linda Kuck, Bob Kuck, Rona Loweth, Carol Loweth, Judy Lutes, Shelly Maddox, Karen Mathis, John Mathis, Phyllis McIlraith, Kyle Mitchell, John Newsome, Barbara Olevano, Anne Owens, Marsha Quattlebaum, Kyle Quattlebaum, Dolly Richmond, Jacque Ruse, Debra Sieb, Nancy Speed, Melissa Voigt, Bill Waggener, Paula Weaver, Angela Yeager, and Scott Yeager.**

Elder Petro then presented the slate of four nominees for the Nominating Committee - Class of 2026 (each class serves a two-year term). There being no nominations from the floor, **upon motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously, nominations were closed. Motion from the Nominating Committee passed unanimously: To accept the following to serve as members of the Nominating Committee: Class of 2026 - Joan Emrich, Judy Lutes, Maxine Perry, and Don Schalekamp.**

Elder Petro then presented the slate of two nominees for the Memorial Garden Board - Class of 2027. There being no nominations from the floor, **upon motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously, nominations were closed. Motion from the Nominating Committee passed unanimously: To accept the following to serve as members of the Memorial Garden Board: Class of 2027 - Sue Angle and Paul Nielson.**

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Elder Petro asked the congregation for help identifying candidates for the various offices.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

1. **REVIEW OF 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT AND 2024 BUDGET:** Administration & Finance Committee Chair Dimitrios Vafeas thanked past Chair Andrea Jackson for her years of wise service to the Committee. He introduced and thanked the Administration & Finance Committee members and support staff. Elder Vafeas then provided an overview of the Church Financial Report, printed in the 2023 Annual Report, which reflects the 2023 budget, 2023 actual, and 2024 budget. He also highlighted the achievements in 2023, which included ending the year with a surplus, thanks to the abounding generosity of the congregation and careful shepherding of the expenses by the church staff. The surplus will be directed toward supporting our global missions, new ministry initiatives, discretionary bonuses for the church and preschool staff, and replenishing the capital reserve fund. The 2024 budget is an increase of 3.5% overall from the 2023 budget.

2. **TERMS OF CALL:** Before presenting the Terms of Call for the called pastors, Dr. McConnell, Dr. Browne, Rev. Haas, Rev. Soboleski, and Rev. Beauchamp were excused from the

meeting. Elder Curtis thanked the members of the Personnel Committee and staff for their service during the year. She introduced incoming Personnel Chair Marlene Petro. Elder Curtis outlined the duties of the Personnel Committee, including the duty of recommending to the congregation the Terms of Call for the pastors. She then presented the Terms of Call for the called pastors, which have been discussed with each pastor and were acceptable to each. **Motion from the Personnel Committee passed unanimously: To approve the Terms of Call for the called pastors as presented and reflected in the 2024 budget.** See the Terms of Call attached to the official minutes. The Clerk to the Session will communicate to the Clerk of Peace River Presbytery for each pastor as reflected in the appropriate accounts. Upon return to the meeting, Dr. McConnell, Dr. Browne, Rev. Haas, Rev. Soboleski, and Rev. Beauchamp received applause from the Congregation thanking them for their ministries.

**Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To receive the 2024 budget as presented in the Annual Report, reflecting the pastors' 2024 Terms of Call and a total operating budget of \$4,848,846.00.** See the Annual Report attached to the official minutes.

**FOUNDATION REPORT:** President of the Foundation David West recognized the 2023 Board of Directors of the Foundation and thanked them for their service. In 2023, following its grant guidelines, the Foundation approved grants totaling \$302,176 from its unrestricted funds for mission and church capital-related projects. Included were grants to the Faith & Society Speaker Series (\$75,000), administration hardware and software needs (\$62,600), hurricane windows for the administration and education buildings (\$156,576), and leadership development (\$8,000). The Foundation ended 2023 with a balance of restricted and unrestricted funds of \$8,882,829. Restricted accounts are managed for the Memorial Garden, the Scholarship Fund, and the Food Pantry.

**CLOSING REMARKS BY MODERATOR:** Dr. McConnell remarked that we are grateful for all God has done for the church as we live into our current theme of "Behold I Make All Things New." Since the COVID epidemic disrupted the traditional patterns of our lives, we continue to search for what the "new" church looks like. Prayers are called for us to maintain a clear vision of our mission to "Love God and Love Neighbor," with Jesus Christ as head of the church. We are grateful as we try to be the full body of Christ together despite our differences.

There being no further business to come before the Congregation and the Corporation, a **motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To adjourn the meeting** at 10:30 AM with a closing prayer by Dr. McConnell.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell  
Moderator

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda R. Getzen  
Secretary of the Annual Meeting

Attachments:  
2024 Terms of Call for the Pastors  
2023 Annual Report