

### **FELLOWSHIP**

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the Session and guests at 6:00 PM in the Campus Center for dinner and discussion about favorite devotions from the Lenten booklet. The Session 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), 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: Linda Calvert, Diane Curtis, 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 Elder Lesley Conzelman.

**GUESTS:** Pastoral Intern Morgan Wilson and incoming Ruling Elders Dave Bossman, John McQueen, and Sandy Snyder.

**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:** Fee Mercer told her story—her journey from Germany to America. 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:

- **Motion made, seconded, and passed by consensus: To change the April Stated Session meeting date to Monday, April 29, 2024.**

### **STAFF REPORTS:**

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

- All is well in Congregational Life
- The Wednesday Night Life Lecture Series by Pastor Steve on Matthew is going well. 18 Small Groups are discussing the questions from Pastor Steve. They meet weekly in person or on Zoom.
- There are 49 Small Groups at COP. 28 Leaders came to a thank-you dinner Pastor Steve and Pastor Hmingi hosted on March 10.
- Five new Stephen Ministers finished their 50-hour training and are commissioned. Anne Owens did the lion's share of the training.
- 28 Stephen Ministers attended the Spiritual Retreat on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Pastor Hmingi led the retreat with Will Browne. There are 40 Care Receivers with 40 Stephen Ministers.
- Kathy Bannister and Pastor Hmingi trained most of the 42 new Shepherding Deacons, while Elizabeth Dexter trained the new members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Deacons.
- Pastor Hmingi taught a Gather and Grow class.

- Each of the pastors led several memorial services.
- Pastor Hmingi is most grateful to God for providing Pastor Melvin, who faithfully visits the sick, lonely, and home-bound.
- Six new members in March.

Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:

- Family Ministry – Conor Peters has a part-time Student Ministry Coordinator, Jaeden Rae. Annual special giving for Family Ministry activities surpassed the \$65,000 goal. Baby Peters is due in July!
- Senior Well-Being -Caregiver classes are expanding.
- Palms Center- Coordinator Barbara Ingram recently sent out a survey about usage. Thank you to Fee Mercer for her help with the Labyrinth brochure. The first guided Labyrinth walks were held on March 21 and 23.

Executive Pastor The Rev. Sarah Soboleski (see also Executive Pastor Report in Session package):

- Staff bonuses were paid on Friday.
- “90-day check-ins” (informal performance conversations) have been completed for this cycle.
- Work continues on the church /employee and administrative manual with HR Ministry Solutions.
- A new IT company has been hired. They are working on organizing church information and conducting training.
- Corinne is working with tutoring and the onboarding process for all volunteers.
- The president of Eckerd College will be the guest preacher on April 7. The sermon will be live-streamed from the Sanctuary to the Campus Center for the Contemporary Service.
- The upcoming Faith & Society speaker will be David French.
- Taught the Confirmation Class last Sunday.

Pastor of Music and Worship The Rev. Geneviève Beauchamp:

- The Requiem performed recently was very meaningful, especially to the choir.
- The Noontime Concert series – the season's last event was well attended.
- The choir is busy preparing for Holy Week performances.
- The Organ Committee continues its work.
- Temple Sinai – Pastor Geneviève will play Rhapsody in Blue on April 14.
- Pastor Geneviève became a grandmother to newborn baby Henry.
- Training for a Paris marathon.

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

- The Samaritan Counseling Services annual luncheon on March 22 was outstanding. Kudos to Elders Sandy Snyder and Linda Calvert for their leadership work on this event
- The Men’s Ministry retreat is scheduled for April.
- Recent Faith & Society speaker Jim Wallace provided a different point of view and drew a mixed reception.
- In-person church attendance continues to climb, reaching a post-COVID high of over 1,000 on Palm Sunday!

**FINANCIAL UPDATE:** Administration and Finance Chair Dimitrios Vafeas reported:

- See the Session package for details. Cash and liquidity continued to be strong through February. Approximately \$1.4 million is allocated to various restricted funds. Year-to-date collections are below the projected budget, but total expenses are also lower.
- Building & Grounds—Elder Keith Maddox reported on the Sanctuary camera project status. The Riedel consultant firm is ready to begin work on the Sanctuary organ project. The pathway in front of the Chapel is being improved for better handicap access.

**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: 02/26/2024
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 03/11/2024

**B. TO APPROVE THE CLERK'S REPORT:**

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors @ 8:15 AM: Month of April: Fee Mercer
  - b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday, April 1 @ 7 PM: Al Jeffrey
  - c. Storyteller for April Session meeting: Steve McConnell
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)

**C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in March: Keith Maddox

**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:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Proposed review of Core Value #6 (*Care for the World*). Elder Keith Maddox reported. Core Value #6 has the following tagline: *Created in God's image, we strive to be caretakers of all that God has given — pursuing justice and reconciliation for the planet and all her people*. Elder Maddox proposed that the wording of Core Value #6 and its tagline be reviewed by an ad hoc committee that would bring its findings to the Session for action. Pastor Steve provided historical background on Core Value #6. Upon clarification by Elder Maddox and discussion, the wording of Elder Maddox's original motion was amended to focus on just the wording of the Core Value #6 tagline. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To direct the Moderator to form a sub-committee of Session to review the "tagline" associated with Core**

**Value 6 and either affirm the existing language or modify the “tagline” with a new language and provide a meaningful definition of either selection. Such subcommittee can include non-Session members with the understanding that the majority of the sub-committee will be members of Session.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. For the April Session dinner discussion: Read the introduction and Chapter 1 of *Barking to the Choir* by Gregory Boyle.
2. The Community Foundation Giving Challenge is April 9-10. Support your charities, especially those who are COP Mission Partners.

There was no further business to come before the Session. **Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 8:50 PM to a Circle of Prayer to give thanks for resting Session Elders Class of 2024, Linda Calvert, Diane Curtis, Maxine Perry, and Steve Rowe. Well done!

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

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda R. Getzen  
Clerk to the Session

Attachment to official minutes:  
Clerk’s Report (statistics)