

### FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. McConnell welcomed the elders and staff members at 6:00 PM in the Chapel Reception Room for dinner and discussion. The elders and staff 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, and Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas. Ruling Elders: Jeanne Asakura, Diane Curtis, Andrea Jackson, Darrel Jordan, Andrew McFall, Maxine Perry, Marlene Petro, Steve Rowe, Sandi Stewart, Dimitrios Vafeas, and Pam Williams. Clerk to the Session Linda Getzen, Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie, Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp, and Director of Ministry & Mission Sarah Soboleski.

**EXCUSED:** Lesley Conzelman.

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

**STORYTELLER:** Steve Rowe told his story of God's presence in a life of travel, family reconciliation, and love. 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: 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.** Rationale: Pastor Hmingi may hold several new member classes during a month. The new members are usually introduced to the congregation on a following Sunday. For convenience to expeditiously receive these new members, Pastor Hmingi frequently calls on a small group of Elders who have volunteered to convene to receive new members. A new group of Elders are needed to replace those Elders who retired from the Session earlier this year. This is an annual update to a similar Motion passed in 2021.
- **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED: To receive into membership as of April 25, 2022, the three members listed in the April Clerk's Report at date 04/25/2022, who attended one of Pastor Hmingi's recent New Member Classes.**

### STAFF REPORTS:

#### Director of Ministry & Mission Sarah Soboleski:

- Analytics: On-line participation in worship is dropping and in-person attendance in worship is increasing. She will provide a breakdown of the in-person attendance by worship service. See statistics in the Session package.

- Over 500 have taken the Volunteer Accelerator survey.
- Staff leadership is looking at job descriptions - being updated and used as tools.
- Sarah and Genevieve graduate from seminary this weekend. They have passed their ordination exams. A colossal achievement. Hurray, hurray, hurray!

**Executive Director of Operations Pam Gillespie:**

- See details in her written report at page 17 of the Session package.
- The walking trail on the "Back 40" is ready to be constructed. The required tree survey has been submitted to the county, which has 60 days to review.

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

- Wednesday Night Life continues to be well received in-person and viewed through the church website. Fewer in-person attendees. She encouraged Elders to come in person.
- 9 Stephen Ministers are to be installed at the 11 AM service on May 1.
- Pastor Hmingi has a strategic goal of receiving 100 new members from August 2021 through April 2022. She feels that she has fallen short of her goal because 85 adults have been received, but that is not counting the 17 confirmands that were received into membership last week. So, an amazing 102 it is!!
- The Grief Support group continues under the strong leadership of Anne Owens and Rhonda Graper.
- Easter bread distribution was a success.
- She had a fun staycation with her visiting sister.

**Family Life Pastor The Rev. Laurie Haas:**

- The 9 AM Easter service had 61 children! Was it the lure of an Easter egg hunt?
- Susan Neisler continues to have 50+ at Trivia Night in the Palms Center.
- Palms Center floor is scheduled for repainting – new striping for more volleyball courts.
- Student Ministry is prospering under the leadership of Conor Peters. Special dinner with the confirmands and their families last Saturday.
- Family Ministry leadership will be going to the 2022 Orange Conference.
- Check out the new Welcome Desk in the Narthex.

**Music Director Genevieve Beauchamp:**

- The concert for Ukraine was a wonderful event that met an important need in the community. See it on YouTube.
- Participated in presiding at a memorial service with Pastor Hmingi.
- Holy Week. Indeed, it was.
- The Organ task force has met and will be hearing presentations from organ companies about possible solutions to the aging equipment.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE:** Administration and Finance Chair Andrea Jackson reported:

- Finances continue to be in great shape.
- The A&F Committee approved a Strategic Funding Plan. See page 16 of the Session package. A handout was presented, and Dr. McConnell provided an overview. Churchwide sources of funding have been identified, such as cash reserves, capital reserve, Foundation annual funds, mission funds, new ministry initiative funds, congregational support, food pantry funds, and other designated line items. Uses for funding have been compiled, such categories as New Ministry Initiatives, Mission Investments, previously identified "Old" Capital projects, and possible "New" Capital projects.

**OMNIBUS MOTION:**

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To pass the following Omnibus Motion (Items A-F) as presented in the Agenda.**

**A. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:**

1. Stated Session Meeting: 03/28/2022
2. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 04/11/2022
3. Special Session Meeting to Receive New Members: 04/14/2022
4. Special Session Meeting to Receive Confirmation Class: 04/23/2022
5. Special Session Meeting to Receive additional Confirmand: 04/24/2022

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

1. Assignments and Meetings:
  - a. Sunday Morning Prayers for the Pastors: Month of May: Dimitrios Vafeas
  - b. Deacons' Exec. Comm. Meeting on Monday May 2 @ 7 PM: Marlene Petro
  - c. Storyteller for May Session meeting: Pam Gillespie
2. Membership Statistics, Baptisms & Weddings, and Home Communion (see attached Clerk's Report)
3. Appointment of Elder Commissioners to the Peace River Presbytery stated meeting (Thursday May 26 @ 9 AM at Venice Presbyterian Church). 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. Marlene Petro
  2. Jeanne Asakura
  3. Sandi Stewart
  4. Steve Rowe
4. Dates for 2022/23 Stated Meetings of the Session: May 23, June 27, July (no meeting), August 22, September 26, October 24, November 28, December 19, January 23, February 27, March 27, April 24

**C. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

1. Elder attending Deacons' Exec. Comm. meeting in April: Steve Rowe

**D. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SESSION COMMITTEES:**

1. Administration and Finance: Ch. Andrea Jackson (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
3. Presbyterian Women *No written report this month*
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. Update on the Strategic Plan. Dr. McConnell reported. See above under Financial Update for the Strategic Funding Plan. Dr. McConnell provide a handout and provide an overview of the status of Strategic Priorities for 2021-22.
2. Personnel Update. See page 24 of the Session package. Executive Director Pam Gillespie provided an update on the status of filling various open positions on the church staff.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Election of Church Officers. Being the first meeting of the new Session year, the meeting proceeded to the election of officers of the church and the corporation. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To elect the following church/corporate officers for a one-year term ending when successors are elected: President – Andrea Jackson, Vice President – Dimitrios Vafeas, Treasurer – Fred Chamberlain, and Secretary/Clerk to the Session – Linda Getzen.**
2. Appointment of Liaison to Congregational Advocate. The Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry assigns a Congregational Advocate for each church. Each church appoints a member of its Session to serve as liaison to the Congregational Advocate. This is an ongoing relationship to provide support and communication between the church and the COM. COP’s Congregational Advocate is COM member Bill Clough from Peace Presbyterian Church and Samaritan Counseling Services. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To appoint Ruling Elder Marlene Petro as liaison to the Congregational Advocate.**
3. Sabbatical Update from Rev. Haas. Pastor Laurie will be taking her sabbatical during the summer of 2023. She is seeking a grant through the Lilly Endowment’s Clergy Renewal Program to defray some of her costs. She shared a beautiful power point presentation of her sabbatical travel plans. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED: To bless Rev. Laurie Haas in her sabbatical endeavors and enthusiastically support her grant request to the Lilly Endowment.**
4. Foundation Grant Request – Aid to Seminary Student. All three pastors reported on this request from the Pastoral Staff. Funds are available from a Foundation restricted account bequeathed many years ago by a donor that is narrowly designated for scholarships. These funds have been used in the past for assisting seminary students. The named student has received grants from other sources to assist with her tuition. The payments from the Foundation would be used to assist her with room and board costs. This is a three-year request. **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED: To approve submission to the Foundation of the Grant Request from Restricted Funds for \$10,000 per year for three years to assist the named seminary student with room and board costs.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Continue reading *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr.

There being no further business to come before the Session, **MOTION MADE, SECONDED, and PASSED: To adjourn the meeting** at approximately 9:15 PM to a Circle of Prayer. Special prayers for Ruling Elder Sandi Stewart on the death of her husband Don Stewart.

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 - Aid for Seminarian  
*(Clerk’s note: See Session minutes of 5/23 - Foundation to postpone formal action on this grant – seminarian taking a gap year)*