

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
HOUSTON, TEXAS  
APRIL 18, 2017

**MODERATOR**

The Rev. Dr. Trey Little

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

The Rev. Chris French, Pastor of Missional Living; Hardie Morgan, Executive Director of Ministry Support; Susan McElroy, Pastor's Executive Assistant; Sabrina Hergert, Director Missions Partners; Traci Baudin, Director, Children's Ministries

Also in attendance: Mike Braden, Paul Craig, Wayne Parchman

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on MARCH 21, 2017 at 7 p.m.

**Attendance:**

**Elders Present:** Okey Akwari, Candy Aldridge, Deb Castillo, Vic Condrey, Jenny Gottschalk, Stephanie Husmann, Kevin Kiniry, Jim Leeland, Terry Looper, Scott Maham, Myrna Maldonado, John Meloy, Greg Morby, John Murphy, John Musgrove, Philip Parker, Tami Plummer, Kekee Russo, Lisa Schwartz, Jo Swank, Ted Teinert, Jim Weatherall, Greg Zuanich

**Excused:** Ronnie Braden, Jerry Hanlon, Keith McElroy, Lisa Schwartz

**Absent:** Rev. Dr. Michael Fry, Rev. Chad Erb, Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Trey Little called the meeting to order. Jim Weatherall offered the opening prayer.

**Clerk's Report & Administrative Matters:** Candy Aldridge presented the Consent Agenda, which included the March 21, 2017 minutes and the Clerk's Report for April 2017.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes and the Clerk's Report.

**Narrative on the Health of Mission and Ministry:** Discussion centered on the new emphasis on the viewpoint of the serving larger church espoused by ECO, and how that will be accomplished. It involves more than service within our congregation's walls. Elders recollected Grace's response to Hurricane Katrina, our connections with West Houston Assistance Ministries, Brookwood and Presbyterian Children's Home Services as examples of serving the larger church. A key component of Grace's strategy is to CONNECT people to form and nurture a discipling community, beginning with the Affinity Group (GPCH, MDPC, FPC) and CORE Communities for small group engagement. We will be in prayer for the Lord to show us how to effectively connect and be/make disciples "as we go," as directed by Jesus in the Great Commission.

### **Conversations About Key Strategic Opportunities:**

- CORE Communities: Chris French reminded the Session that we can make and grow a church without making disciples, but when we make disciples, the church will grow. CORE Communities began as a pilot in the Purgason's home as a deliberate Gospel-centered gathering to equip the members to make new disciples. That small group experiment was the seed for seven additional CORE Communities of 70-80 participants. Over the next few months, Chris will develop ideals and a more formal framework for equipping and feeding participants to feel bold about making additional disciples. Grace will begin a church-wide CORE Community program this fall. He encouraged stepping into the experiment as it is being shaped. On April 30, each worship service will feature a short video about CORE Communities, emphasizing the intentional connection to a Gospel-centered community that may include church members and neighbors, as well.
- Financial Update: Hardie Morgan presented the financial statements projected through 3/31/17. A highlight is that projected April contributions may exceed budget, creating a favorable position in CY 2017. As a side note, we will no longer report the budget status in the weekly church bulletin. Unless you follow the overall budget and the timing of certain expenses on a regular basis, weekly reporting does not present a comprehensive picture of Grace's financial status.

### **New Business:**

- Grace Confession Study Team: Jenny Gottschalk led the Grace Confessions Review Team that studied the Presbyterian creeds, confessions and catechisms to recommend to ECO. Team members Mike Braden, Paul Craig and Wayne Parchman were in attendance. They presented a report that outlined their work over the past seven months and their recommendation to ECO on behalf of Grace:
  - Creeds: recommend retaining the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed
  - Confessions: recommend developing a new ECO Confession
  - Catechisms: reclassify the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the Westminster Larger Catechism, the Heidelberg Catechism, The Lausanne Covenant, The Theological Declaration of Barmen, and A Brief Statement of Faith as teaching resources.
  - Archive remaining PCUSA 2012 confessions

The Session approved a resolution to accept the team's recommendation, and authorized the Clerk (or designee) to submit it to ECO. Hardie Morgan was named as designee.

- Church Office Nominating Committee: Three elders' names were submitted for the Nominating Committee, replacing elders whose terms expired. A motion was made and seconded to accept the elder nominees for the 2017 Church Officer Nominating Committee. The Session approved the motion. Deb Castillo will be the Chair for 2017. The Committee will search for nine elders and 22 deacons for the Class of 2020. Scott Maham will distribute the geographic map of deacon regions to stimulate nominations.
- Church Plant: Trey presented information to the Session regarding the opportunity to participate in planting new churches in the area. ECO has a goal to grow more by *planting*

churches than by *converting* current Presbyterian churches. Planting can take various forms in ECO: sponsorship, financial resources, leadership, guidance, moral support, etc. There is no prescription for church planting in ECO so that each opportunity can be customized locally and circumstantially. Initial “cost” would involve prayer, discernment, and time. Relationships would be established by Covenant Agreement. They encouraged elders to imagine how that might look in the next 6-8 years. No formal action was taken.

Closing Prayer was offered by Deb Castillo.

**Executive Session**

The Session dismissed the non-elder attendees and went into Executive Session.

The next Session Meeting will be held Tuesday, May 16, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,



Candy Clarke Aldridge  
Clerk of Session