

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
HOUSTON, TEXAS  
January 19, 2021

**MODERATOR**  
Reverend Chris French

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Because of the current public health environment, the meeting was held via Zoom conference.

**Attendance:**

**Pastors Present:** Rev. Chris French

**Elders Present:** Dath Collins, Deb Castillo, Bert Crump, Judy Dewey, Francisco Garibay, Evan Ghazi, Debbie Kaplan, Debbie Lunn, Mike Mantel, Abby Meade, Nnenna Okoro, Lisa Schwartz, Jim Tomforde, Ethan Tritt, and Karen Welton

**Excused:** Natalie McElroy, Tom Prisk, Tanner Spears

**Absent:** None

**Others in attendance:** Margaret Ellis, Heather Kaemingk, Angela Wade Simpson, and Candy Clarke Aldridge

**Call Meeting to Order** – Rev. Chris French

**Open with Prayer** – Debbie Lunn opened with prayer.

**Moderator's Report** – Chris addressed the format for Session meetings and confirmed that the meetings will continue to take place via Zoom for now. He recommended that the Planning Team would revisit the regional COVID-19 data to decide when it is feasible to meet in person again. He also took a moment of personal privilege to acknowledge that this is his last meeting as Moderator. In moving forward, he reminded Elders of their ordination vows, and encouraged them to stay faithful to those oaths. He encouraged Elders to welcome The Rev. Dr. Julia Leeth and support her leadership when she starts on February 1. He also encouraged Elders to tune in to the virtual National Gathering on Jan. 29 and 30.

The Session began their time of prayer with a prompted group prayer.

**Clerk's Report, Administrative Matters and Approval of Consent Agenda** – Candy Aldridge presented the Consent Agenda for approval, including the minutes of the previous Session meeting. A motion was made and seconded. The motion was approved.

**New Business – Discernment**

- Incoming Team Chairs conferred in December with outgoing Chairs to complete and submit a Strategic Initiative Evaluation of the team's 2020 activities. The focus was on the progress toward achieving the six initiatives that were introduced to the Session in February 2020. Further discussion of the content will take place in the near future.
- Angela Wade Simpson briefed Elders on the onboarding plan for Julia Leeth. February will focus on meeting with staff and the Planning Team and will include a few Zoom Town Hall opportunities in

February for the congregation to get to know her.

**Strategy Team Updates**

- Ministry Support Team Update - Mike Mantel and Hardie Morgan reported on the current financial status and the status of the Ready Campaign in its final year. For calendar year 2020, collections for the operating budget were \$500,000 below budget. Considering the expense reductions in the fall of 2020 and the anticipated Payroll Protection Plan loan forgiveness, there will be a \$200,000 net deficit. Projecting to fiscal year-end in June 2021, the deficit is expected to be \$400,000.
- Annual stewardship campaign - Case for Support - will kick off on January 31, with pledge cards turned in on February 14. Support materials include an information booklet, a video to be shown in worship and throughout the year and a letter with a pledge card that will be sent to the congregation. Booklets and pledge cards will be available in the Narthex in February.
- With 66% of time elapsed in funding the Ready Campaign, we have collected 75% of the pledges. It is estimated that uncollectible pledges amount to about 5%.

Chris French closed the meeting in prayer.

**DATES:**

**Session** - Tuesday, February 16, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

**Session Retreat** - Saturday, March 27

Respectfully submitted,



Candy Clarke Aldridge  
Clerk of Session