

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SESSION MEETING MINUTES
HOUSTON, TEXAS
May 18, 2021

MODERATOR
The Reverend Doctor Julia Leeth

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Attendance:

Pastors Present: Rev. Julia Leeth, Rev. Chris French

Elders Present: Deb Castillo, Dath Collins, Bert Crump, Judy Dewey, Tory Gunsolley, Debbie Kaplan, Debbie Lunn, Mike Mantel, Abby Meade, Nnenna Okoro, Tom Prisk, Lisa Schwarz, Tanner Spears, Ethan Tritt, and Karen Welton

Excused: Dorothy Hobbs, Natalie McElroy

Absent: n/a

Others in attendance: Traci Baudin, Beth Craig, Margaret Ellis, Sharon High, Heather Kaemingk, Hardie Morgan, Denise Phelps, Angela Wade Simpson, and Candy Clarke Aldridge

Call Meeting to Order – Rev. Julia Leeth

Open with Prayer – Julia opened with prayer. The Session meeting began with a scriptural praying of 1 John Ch. 5: 1-15.

Moderator's Report – Julia reports that the proposed alignment organization chart is 95% complete. She will present the final version at the June Called Session meeting. The changes will be effective June 1. Julia will present the State of Grace after worship on June 6. Topics include the staff realignment that Elders will see on June 1, a financial update, and the Living Water International virtual connection, described below.

Clerk's Report, Administrative Matters and Approval of Consent Agenda – Candy Aldridge presented the Clerk's Report and the Consent Agenda, which included the Minutes from the previous meetings. There was a motion to approve the Agenda. It was seconded and approved.

Team Updates

- Ministry Support Update – Debbie Kaplan and Hardie Morgan reported that April contributions were 1% underbudget and 25% more than 2020. FYTD contributions were less than budget and 22% below April 2020. April expenses were 1% under budget, and 15% less than 2020. FYTD expenses are 5% less than budget and 6% less than 2020. Projecting forward, we're on track for a ~\$700,000 shortfall.
 - Ready Campaign contributions are ahead of budget, with only 17% uncollected for the remaining 33% of the campaign.
- Pledges for 2021 are up \$18,000 from April. 191 families have pledged \$1.61 million compared to pledges of \$2.45 million for the same period last year. Julia continues to reach out to the top givers. She asked for the Elders to pray that people will return to Grace to build up the church of God.

New Business – Discernment

- COVID-19 Protocols – The CDC relaxed masking and social distancing protocols for citizens who are vaccinated. The new guidance was posted on the Grace website and will be observed in Sunday’s worship setting. Attendance in worship is increasing, with 271 in worship last Sunday.

- Strategic Initiatives Evaluation
 - Worship – Ivy Castle Simpson joined the Worship Team, sharing her time with Children’s Ministries. Julia received compliments in the worship service last Sunday.
 - Equip – Chris French is modifying details of the plan for transformation to account for the recently relaxed protocols.
 - Serve – Mike Mantel recently hosted a gathering for 29 Grace members at his home to virtually reconnect Grace with Living Water International friends and staff. Elders thought it would be a good idea to include that in the State of Grace on June 6. Grace is tentatively scheduling the next LWI trip to Haiti in 2022.
 - Together – Beth updated everyone on the re-engagement efforts. VBS is 2 months away, but enrollment is full. Young Moms Bible study resumes on June 1. It represents 53 moms and 82 children. Julia asked if there was a strategy for inviting the young moms to Grace. Beth will share the roster with the Gather Team. Beth invited the whole congregation to engage in the Paul Revere Middle School graduation, packing meals for 1200. Hardie Morgan announced that the Facilities Director started last week: Eugene Zelickovics.

After a motion to adjourn, a second and approval, Chris French closed the meeting in prayer.

DATES:

Called Session Meeting – Tuesday, June 1 at 6:30 p.m.

Stated Session meeting– Tuesday, June 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Outdoor Worship – Sunday, June 13, 5:00 p.m.

Summer Session retreat – Saturday, August 14, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candy Clarke Aldridge

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Clerk of Session