

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SESSION MEETING MINUTES
HOUSTON, TEXAS
June 16, 2020, 2020

MODERATOR
The Rev. Trey Little

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Because of the current public health environment, the meeting was held virtually, via Zoom conference.

Attendance:

Pastors Present: The Rev. Dr. Trey Little, the Rev. Chris French

Elders Present: Dath Collins, Bert Crump, Judy Dewey, Francisco Garibay, Debbie Kaplan, Debbie Lunn, Mike Mantel, Natalie McElroy, Dan McElyea, Hardie Morgan, Nnenna Okoro, Wayne Parchman, Tom Prisk, Tanner Spears, Jim Tomforde, Ethan Tritt, Gindi Vincent, Karen Welton, Woody Woodruff

Excused: Evan Ghazi

Absent: n/a

Others in attendance: Traci Baudin, Sharon High, Denise Phelps, Candy Clarke Aldridge

Prayer for Grace, our Church Family and our Leadership: Trey opened the meeting with a devotional reading from Jeremiah 29, then opened the meeting with prayer.

Clerk's Report & Administrative Matters:

Candy Aldridge presented the Consent Agenda for approval. A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda. It was seconded and approved.

Strategy Team Updates - 2020-2021 Grace School Year: Jim Tomforde provided a report in the Session packet with the status of the school year and plans for re-opening in the fall. The final quarter of the semester was completed virtually for lower grade and middle school students. Families reported that Grace's online learning was much better than their siblings' experience with public schools' online learning. Tuition for the semester was returned to preschool families because of the challenges with virtual learning for the younger children. He reported that they have frozen enrollment for the fall in order to comply with expected social-distancing guidelines for reopening in the fall.

New Business:

- ECO Denominational Material – the Session packet included materials from ECO regarding The Church and racial reconciliation. The letters and the video stimulated a deep and poignant discussion among the Elders, who supported Trey in a call to action of the Session. Elders urged a genuine approach, knowing that it may not be perfect in the beginning. Elders also urged that the approach be simple, not complicated, and to not shy away from the raw elements. We framed an ad hoc group that will develop a plan of action as soon as possible. The discussion closed with a deep responsive prayer among the Elders.

- Summer Groups – Denise Phelps described a new virtual Sunday School format called Postcard Summer for small weekly groups to discuss the week’s sermon and scripture. Beginning June 28, groups can meet virtually, in driveways or front yards or on campus (maximum 48 on campus) for their discussions.

Old Business

- COVID-19 Update – Conversations have begun in earnest about re-gathering the Grace family on-site. Trey reported that much of the Grace staff works remotely, coming to the office as necessary. Meetings occur via Zoom, or in small groups observing recommended protocols for minimizing spread of the virus.
- Simplification – Hardie Morgan addressed the email he sent to Elders with a compendium of all the “programs” at Grace that had requested meeting space in the past year. Hardie asked the Chairs of the Strategy Teams to review the items falling under their team and respond with appropriate information regarding the 150 items.
- Finance/Updates – Hardie reported that unrestricted contributions for April 2020 were 16% lower than April 2019, and YTD 2020 was 10% lower than YTD 2019. Operating expenses for April 2020 were 12% lower than April 2019, and roughly flat compared to YTD 2019. The April 2020 operating deficit was 5% greater than in April 2019. For YTD comparison, the April 2020 operating deficit of \$397,730 is a 938% increase.
- Regather June 28 – We are on-track to re-gather in-person for worship, on June 28, complying with guidelines and regulations for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

Dates

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held Tuesday, August 18, 2020, 6:00 p.m. via Zoom conference.

Respectfully submitted,



Candy Clarke Aldridge
Clerk of Session