

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SESSION MEETING MINUTES
HOUSTON, TEXAS
July 21, 2020

MODERATOR
The Rev. Chris French

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Because of the current public health environment, the meeting was held via Zoom conference.

Attendance:

Pastors Present: The Rev. Chris French

Elders Present: Dath Collins, Bert Crump, Judy Dewey, Evan Ghazi, 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:

Absent: n/a

Others in attendance: Traci Baudin, Sharon High, Denise Phelps, Heather Kaemingk, Angela Wade Simpson, and Candy Clarke Aldridge

Opening Prayer: Rev. Chris French opened the meeting with prayer.

Clerk's Report & Administrative Matters:

Candy Aldridge presented the Consent Agenda for approval. The minutes of the June 26, 2020, June 23, 2020 and July 19, 2020 Session meetings were included. It was approved by common consent.

Strategy Team Updates:

Church Officer Nominating Committee update - Nnenna Okoro reminded the Elders to nominate candidates to fill the 6 Elder spots and 10 Deacon spots for next year. The deadline has been extended another week.

Financial Update - the financial reports are in-process because fiscal year closing doesn't occur until after the end of June. They will be presented at the next Session meeting. Hardie Morgan and Mike Mantel from the Ministry Support Team reported that revenues are down \$116,620 over June 2019. This will likely result in a fiscal year revenue deficit of \$570, 444. The solutions include applying the loan proceeds from Payroll Protection Plan and implementing the February 2020 Session resolution. This, along with increasing revenue, further reducing expenses, and approaching key supporters directly, should help reduce the gap between revenue and expenses.

Congregants pledged \$6.4 million for the Ready Campaign. To date, we have collected 72% of the pledges through 60% of the collection period. This includes non-pledged contributions of \$340,000. Hardie expressed confidence that the collections will meet the pledged amounts even considering the \$320,000 allowance for uncollected pledges.

Ongoing or Old Business

- **Re-gathering and COVID-19 response update** – A recommendation for re-gathering was included in the Session packet, but was not presented for a vote.
- **Reconciliation Project update** – Chris contacted David Bailey from Arrabon to discuss how to begin the discussion on racial reconciliation. A group of Elders had a conference call with him and are digesting what they heard and how Arrabon might be able to assist. Arrabon will provide some options for the group to consider, and they will make a recommendation to the Leadership Development Committee. Funds may be available from the Margaret Jarboe Lecture Series.

New Business

- **Transition Plan and Timeline Summary** – The Leadership Team (Chris French, Hardie Morgan, Heather Kaemingk and Angela Wade-Simpson) outlined the proposed Transition Plan. Eleven items are described in this first phase. The first three items have been accomplished. A team will be assigned to prioritize and address the remaining items. A motion was made to adopt the Plan and seconded. It was approved by common consent.
- **Approval of Transition Plan items:**
 - Designate Chris French as Acting Moderator of Session
 - Designate Hardie Morgan as Transitional Head of Staff
 - Assign temporary transition oversight to Session Planning Team (the Chairs of the Grace Strategy Teams, the Leadership Team and Clerk of Session).A resolution was proposed to approve these items, and it was seconded. It was approved by common consent.
- **Approve draft letter from Session to the congregation** – a motion was made and seconded. It was approved by common consent.
- **Review Frequently Asked Questions** – Elders reviewed a draft of Frequently Asked questions prepared to be posted on the Grace Transition website to address questions the congregation might have.
- **Executive Session:** Trey Little separation arrangements. Chris French turned the meeting over to Elder Wayne Parchman to moderate the Executive Session. Wayne asked Chris and all non-Elders to recuse themselves, with the exception of the Clerk of Session. At the conclusion of the Executive Session, Elders returned to the regular Session meeting.

Chris closed the Session meeting with a scripture from Colossians and a prayer.

Dates

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held Tuesday, August 18, 2020, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom conference.

Respectfully submitted,



Candy Clarke Aldridge
Clerk of Session

Minutes are recorded here in the order of the Session Meeting Agenda.