

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SESSION MEETING MINUTES
HOUSTON, TEXAS
March 24, 2020

MODERATOR
The Rev. Trey Little

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 6:30 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, Evan Ghazi, Debbie Kaplan, Debbie Lunn, Mike Mantel, Dan McElyea, Hardie Morgan, Nnenna Okoro, Wayne Parchman, Tom Prisk, Tanner Spears, Jim Tomforde, Ethan Tritt, Gindi Vincent

Excused: Natalie McElroy, Karen Welton

Absent: Woody Woodruff

Others in attendance: Beth Craig, Sharon High, Phil Warman, Candy Clarke Aldridge

Prayer for Grace, our Church Family and our Leadership: Then we shared Psalm 91 together as a devotional. Chris French opened the meeting in prayer, including some prayer requests from Elders.

Clerk's Report & Administrative Matters

Candy Aldridge presented the Consent Agenda for approval. A correction was made to the attendance record in the minutes. The Elders attending the February 22, 2020 meeting should read as follows: Dath Collins, Bert Crump, Judy Dewey, Francisco Garibay, Evan Ghazi, Debbie Kaplan, Debbie Lunn, Mike Mantel, Natalie McElroy, Hardie Morgan, Nnenna Okoro, Wayne Parchman, Tom Prisk, Tanner Spears, Jim Tomforde, Ethan Tritt, Gindi Vincent, Karen Welton, Woody Woodruff

A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda and revised Minutes. It was seconded and approved.

Leadership Development: Trey opened by sharing from the book Leading Beyond the Blizzard. It was regarding three approaches to leading during challenging times.

Strategy Team Opportunities: The Strategy Teams were encouraged to continue meeting via Zoom. Trey asked the Gather Team to formulate a plan to welcome the congregation back once we are allowed to worship and congregate together again.

New Business

- COVID-19 update - Trey described the modifications in the daily Grace activities during the public health emergency that COVID-19 requires. Staff has worked very hard to adapt worship and work schedules to comply with social-distancing guidelines. The campus is closed with a minimum of staffing onsite until at least April 3. Staff members are encouraged to work remotely as much as possible.

Sunday morning worship will continue online at 10 am for the foreseeable future. The Facebook Live medium is not reliable, so we are likely moving to the pre-recorded Vimeo format. Sunday morning worship will include a suggested liturgy that will be available through Grace's website. We have added an online Wednesday evening worship and prayer service at 7:30. Everything is subject to change as we adapt to local requirements and recommendations. Student Mission activities also are on hold for now.

Old Business

- Gather/Connect/Bless Strategy Language - the Session retreat, the Leadership Team committed to refining and finalizing the language for updating the strategy. The updated language is found in Basecamp, and will be used to launch the discipleship strategy later this year. Elders agreed to the new language and encouraged Trey to move forward with the plan.
- Finance/Updates - Recent financial results are included in the minutes of the March 11 Ministry Support Team meeting in the Session packet. We projected \$340K in operating income in March, but actually collected \$260K. Hardie expects March contributions will be slow to arrive due to ongoing delays in US mail delivery. Expenses are down 4% from last year. He expects that expenses will further decrease during this closure: decreased electricity costs, reduced security hours to evening only, less use of external contractors to perform church maintenance, etc. Additional measures are under consideration. Electricity savings could be \$18K per month. Last Sunday, Chris urged the congregation to be faithful in giving, and emphasized the ease of electronic contributions.
- Ready Campaign update on campaign and construction - Hardie reported that we have collected 70% of pledged amounts in 47% of the elapsed time in the last year of the campaign. There remains to be collected \$469,788 of the original pledged amounts. In addition, we have received \$164,000 from gifts outside of the pledges. We have spent \$6.1 million to date, leaving \$1.7 million remaining from what was budgeted. There remains \$528,900 net currently unallocated.
- Pastor of Discipleship and Formation Search Team Report - Trey reported that the Search Team has interviewed two candidates in person, with a third one scheduled this week. The candidate will be rescheduled once public conditions allow. A couple of other candidates are in the vetting process.

Trey encouraged the Elders to be mindful of where we can help during this pandemic period:

- Be devoted to prayer for:
 - The leadership of Grace
 - The congregation
 - Thanks to the Lord as the source of our provision
 - Leading with faith, not fear.
- Make your monthly pledge contribution online, and teach someone else how to do it,
- Be intentional about staying connected. Continue to meet with your teams, make phone calls to other members and encourage everyone to worship online. He encouraged everyone to comment during worship and watch for someone who may need attention or prayer.

We closed the meeting by reciting the Lord's Prayer together.

Dates

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held Tuesday, April 21, 2020, 6:30 p.m., likely via Zoom conference.