

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SESSION MEETING MINUTES
HOUSTON, TEXAS
March 27, 2021

MODERATOR
The Reverend Doctor Julia Leeth

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on Tuesday, March 27, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church. This was the annual Church Officers' Retreat.

Attendance:

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

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

Excused: Debbie Lunn, Jim Tomforde

Absent: n/a

Others in attendance: Deacons of Grace Presbyterian Church, Daniel Baudin, Traci Baudin, Sharon High, Heather Kaemingk, Hardie Morgan, Denise Phelps, Amber Sheffield, 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 Colossians 3:12-17.

Clerk's Report, Administrative Matters and Approval of Consent Agenda - These reports were deferred to the April Session meeting.

Pastor's Hope for Posture of Leadership - Julia expressed her vision of all church officers adopting a posture of leadership in reinvigorating Grace.

Deacon Celebrations - Denise Phelps gave a brief overview of the six deacon groups that care and serve the congregation. Deacons serve about 100 members each. They have enhanced the level of service to the members this year. There is increasing interaction between deacons' and elders' teams, leading to more effective care for the congregation.

Discipleship: Equipping and Experiencing - In his new role as leader of Grace's discipleship focus, Chris French cited Colossians 1:28, John 21:1-6 and Acts 24 in setting the context for the discussion. He asked the elders the following questions:

- What are the results of our discipleship/equipping efforts so far?
- What should we be aiming for?
- How does the Church do what it's supposed to do?
- What is Grace doing to equip us to make disciples?
- What can the Session be doing?

He described the progress and next steps, as outlined in the handout. Elders should be relating this to everyone they know in the church. At this point the deacons parted and joined Denise in their deacon

retreat.

Stewardship of Resources – Julia opened the presentation by reminding the elders that there will be structural and program shifts to ensure we are doing what God has called us to do – make disciples. The aim is to have a healthy system within which to do God’s work. Decisions will be made intentionally and with purpose. Hardie Morgan’s presentation is attached to these minutes. He updated the elders on the Ready Campaign, the anticipated bequest from a member and the Payroll Protection loan. Elders requested to see the charter for the Jarboe Lecture Series and a list of each of the non-operating funds Grace maintains.

Reengagement Overview – Beth Craig described the current efforts to reengage the church members – teaching people to come back to in-person worship and participate in the life of Grace. She asked elders to identify 10-15 church friends who haven’t been worshipping with us, and to contact them to reengage them. Name identification and calls should be complete before Easter.

Strategic Initiatives – Julia walked through the Six Initiatives and suggested that they were too wordy. Based on input from elders and staff, she offered rewording that would be easier to use in conversing with church members about “what Grace is focused on” in this transition period. The wording is found in the handout attached to these minutes. This will become the framework for an “elevator pitch” elders can use in contacting missing/lapsed members. Julia will introduce it at the State of Grace meeting on April 11 after worship. Elders were asked to consider the suggested simplification and rewording, and send comments to Sharon High by April 6.

Worship – Heather Kaemingk spoke to the question “what is the next faithful expression of worship at Grace?” She emphasized that worship should be formational and offer practices that shape our hearts to be like Jesus – not like the external culture. It will acknowledge and honor the Glory of God, the Gravity of sin and the Grandeur of Grace so that we worship God in the fullest. For the next several months, Grace will continue to offer one worship service that combines traditional and contemporary elements. There will be targeted opportunities to feature traditional and the contemporary styles of music in special events during the year. The structure and staffing of the Music staff may need to be adjusted as the plan evolves.

Hardie updated the elders on Grace’s response to COVID-19. We will continue with current mask and social distancing protocols. Restrictions on spacing for children has eased to 3 feet apart. About 200 worshippers come to Grace each Sunday. The capacity is 290.

After a motion to adjourn, a second and approval, Julia Leeth closed the meeting in prayer.

DATES:

Session – Tuesday, April 6, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

State of Grace – Sunday April 11 at 11:00 a.m. after worship

Respectfully submitted,



Candy Clarke Aldridge
Clerk of Session