

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SESSION MEETING MINUTES
HOUSTON, TEXAS
April 6, 2021

MODERATOR
The Reverend Doctor Julia Leeth

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a CALLED MEETING on Tuesday, April 6 at 6:30 p.m. Because of the current public health environment, the meeting was held via Zoom conference.

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, Abby Meade, Nnenna Okoro, Tom Prisk, Lisa Schwarz, Tanner Spears, Ethan Tritt, and Karen Welton

Excused: Dorothy Hobbs, Mike Mantel, Natalie McElroy, Jim Tomforde

Absent: n/a

Others in attendance, Sharon High, Hardie Morgan and Candy Clarke Aldridge

Call Meeting to Order – Rev. Julia Leeth called the meeting to order and the meeting went into Executive Session.

Open with Prayer – Hardie Morgan opened with prayer.

Moderator's Report – Julia's focus in March and April is organizational stability. Elders were asked to participate in an organizational stability evaluation of Grace. Responses are due to Sharon High Thursday, April 9.

The Session meeting began with a scriptural praying of Psalm 371-8.

New Business

Church Officers Retreat Review – Julia asked elders what they liked and what should have been better about the topics and flow. Session Team Chairs asked for more direction in what the Strategy teams should be doing. Julia also suggested convening another retreat later in the year.

Financial Discussion – Hardie presented the current financial position and an update on the pledges. Though expenses have been reduced, lower revenue yields a 4% deficit for FYTD February 2021. In the pledge update, Hardie stated that he had received 182 pledges for \$1.6 million, below last year's pledging level. Staff continues to follow-up with those who have not returned a pledge card. The budget process starts in May for the July fiscal year. The annual audit report should be ready by the end of April. Elders requested a consolidated report for all funds outside the operating budget.

State of Grace – Julia will present an update on the State of Grace to the congregation on April 11 after worship. Elders' feedback was incorporated into the sheet of talking points that Julia will use as a guide at the meeting. The new draft is simpler and easier to understand. The talking points emphasize that Grace

is focusing on **Worshipping, Equipping** disciples to make disciples, **Serving** in various way and doing these things **Together**.

Initiatives Discussion – the Six Initiatives approved by the Session in February 2020 have been consolidated into four primary ideas: Worship, Equip, and Serve Together.

- Worship was addressed at two previous Session meetings.
- Equip has four components:
 - Equipping hour
 - Disciple groups
 - Outreach groups
 - Neighborhood groups
- Serve is mostly local in the past year because of travel restrictions. Mission partnering will continue addressing local needs.
- Together is how it works at Grace.

Julia asked elders to prioritize which of the three remaining items should come first, recognizing that they can't all be addressed at once. Elders selected Disciple groups, brainstorming ways that could make it easier to frame the start-up effort. Julia asked each elder to commit to joining a disciple group by May 15, to have the experience from which to encourage others outside the Session to participate.

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

DATES:

State of Grace – Sunday, April 11, 11:00 a.m.

Outdoor worship – Sunday, April 18, 5:00 p.m.

Stated Session Meeting - Tuesday, April 20, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,



Candy Clarke Aldridge
Clerk of Session