

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SESSION MEETING MINUTES
HOUSTON, TEXAS
April 20, 2021

MODERATOR
The Reverend Doctor Julia Leeth

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Attendance:

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

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

Excused: Deb Castillo, Tanner Spears

Absent: n/a

Others in attendance: Lauren Baker, Traci Baudin, Beth Craig, Margaret Ellis, Sharon High, Heather Kaemingk, Hardie Morgan, Denise Phelps, Emily Rose Samuels, 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 1/John Ch. 2.

Moderator's Report - Julia described the progress she is making in her first 90 days. She has addressed the well-being of the staff and reviewed the programs and ministries at Grace. She is now addressing the organization and expects to present a new organization chart at the May Stated Session meeting.

Clerk's Report, Administrative Matters and Approval of Consent Agenda - Candy Aldridge presented the Clerk's Report and the Consent Agenda, which included the Minutes from the previous meeting. There was a motion to approve the Agenda. It was seconded and approved.

Team Updates

- Ministry Support update - Hardie Morgan
 - Finance Report - Income for March 2021 is 14% below March 2020, and 4% below FY YTD 2020. Expenses have been reduced over the year so that the overall March 2021 to March 2020 is a 19% surplus. On a YTD comparison, the overall position is 2% less than budget. In April, Grace received proceeds from the second PPP loan in the amount of \$497,000. The application was submitted by Grace Presbyterian Church alone because Grace School didn't meet the filing criteria for the second loan.
 - Stewardship Update - members have pledged \$2.9 million for the coming budget year.
 - Mike Mantel has resigned from the leadership role of the Ministry Support Team. Debbie Kaplan is the new Chair.
- Strategy Reports Updates - team updates are contained in the Strategy team monthly reports.

New Business – Discernment

- Strategic Initiatives Evaluation – teams are defining what each team should do to accomplish our mission. Chris is helping refine the role of the Team Chairs to align with the new initiatives.
 - Worship – Lisa Schwartz reported that the survey of other churches’ practices is almost ready to share with the Session. The Leadership Team is revisiting the current protocols for gathering on campus, especially during worship. Dath Collins introduced a motion to remove the “masks required” practice that we have observed since the fall. Discussion was vigorous and Julia asked for a straw poll of Elders’ opinions. The majority was in favor of relaxing the mask protocol. A motion was made and seconded to table the discussion for two weeks and pray over the decision. Elders voted to table the motion until May 4 Session meeting.
 - Equip – A new Discipleship class began on April 18, the second offering of the course. The new steering committee for equipping Grace worshippers *to make disciples who make disciples* has met to stage implementation on a larger scale, starting with microgroups and expanding to neighborhood groups. Team members are Chris French, Bert Crump, Tory Gunsolley and Candy Aldridge.
 - Serve The focus is how to best equip people who are called to serve externally. Nancy Bailey has resigned and Chris is reevaluating that job description.
 - Together
- Re-engagement Discussion – Over 200 families have been contacted personally by the Elders and staff to reengage them in Grace’s mission. Beth Craig reported the various reasons members may have disengaged over the past year: to attend a church closer to home, the previous direction of the church, COVID concerns, desire for different worship styles. Beth is exploring an app that Grace members can use to learn more about Sunday morning activities and to register their attendance at Grace events.

After a motion to adjourn, a second and approval, Chris French closed the meeting in prayer, using Colossians 1:28-29

DATES:

Student Ministries’ Car Wash – Saturday, April 24, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Called Session meeting – Tuesday, May 4, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Outdoor Worship – Sunday, May 18, 6:30 p.m.

Stated Session meeting– Tuesday, May 18 at 6:30 p.m.

Summer Session retreat – Date tbd

Respectfully submitted,



Candy Clarke Aldridge

Clerk of Session