

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
HOUSTON, TEXAS  
January 25, 2023

**MODERATOR**

The Reverend Dr. Julia Leeth

The Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas met in a STATED MEETING on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in Massey-Tucker Hall.

**Attendance:**

**Pastors Present:** Rev. Julia Leeth, Rev. Chris French, Rev. Francisco Garibay, Rev. Aaron Hansz

**Elders Present:** Russ Chase, Ron Collins, Vic Condrey, Judy Dewey, Cathy Finck, Andy Frazelle, Tory Gunsolley, Dorothy Hobbs, Jamie Horton, Debbie Kaplan, Debbie Lunn, Abby Meade, Tom Prisk, Jim Tomforde, Ethan Tritt, and Karen Welton

**Excused:** Deb Castillo, Lisa Schwartz

**Absent:** n/a

**Others in attendance:** Ivy Castle-Simpson, Chris Eissenstat, Jordan Goodie, Sharon High, Paul Mancillas, Liz Moran, Hardie Morgan, Taylor Tritt and Candy Clarke Aldridge

**Call Meeting to Order** - The Rev. Dr. Julia Leeth

**Open with Prayer** - Francisco Garibay opened with prayer, then we prayed the scripture Acts 4: 31-35.

**Moderator's Report** - Julia and Ivy Castle-Simpson emphasized the role of Elder as spiritual leaders in worship, including praying and smooth transition in the worship service.

**Consent agenda and Clerk's report** -Candy Aldridge presented the Consent agenda and Clerk's report, including the annual Conflict of Interest form that will be sent electronically. There was a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded and approved.

**New Business**

**Strategy Team Updates**

- **Ministry Support** - Hardie Morgan introduced Chris Eissenstat, CPA, from the Whitney accounting firm, who presented the audit report of the combined consolidated financial statements for years ending June 2021 and 2022. He reported that Grace's audit statement is clean. He gave the internal protocols a 5-star rating, with kudos to Hardie and Mayda Mendiola. Hardie will email the final report and the auditor's letter to the Session.

Chair Dorothy Hobbs presented the December 2022 monthly report, which indicated that YTD 2023 revenue is 9% less than budgeted, but 11% greater than last year. Operating expenses continue to decline. Though we are still operating at a deficit, revenue has increased 47% more than in December 2021, and we have closed the gap by almost \$317,000. Dorothy also announced that Grace received a bequest of \$115,000.

Julia updated the Elders on the work of the Generosity Culture Task Force. She presented a draft work product that describes 3 waves of the plan to develop a generosity culture over the short term and long term. They expect to begin roll-out in the next 90 days.

The stewardship update is included in the monthly report. The Westbrook Estate dispute will go to trial in May. The value of that bequest is \$1.5 - 2.5 million.

- **Grace School** – In addition to the monthly report, Chair Jim Tomforde reported that the school gave the largest teacher pay raises and increased tuition this year. Construction updates will be shared with the Session as construction progresses.
- **Leadership Development** – Chair Cathy Finck urged team chairs to fill all open spots on their teams, and to assign each team member a term-end date.
- **Worship** – As described in the monthly report, the Worship Team has subdivided into these groups: Worship group will focus on worship experiences and opportunities and Gather will focus on visitors' and new members' experiences on the Grace campus.
- **Equip** – See the monthly report.
- **Serve** – See the monthly report.
  
- **Pastor Nominating Committee update** – There was a motion for the Session to move into Executive Session. It was seconded and approved. Staff and non-Elder guests left the room, with the exception of Paul Mancillas, Hardie Morgan and Taylor Tritt, members of the PNC.

After Executive Session concluded, Julia was invited back into the Session meeting. Cathy, still serving as Moderator, announced that the Session had unanimously voted to accept the recommendation of the Pastor Nominating Committee to extend the call to Julia for Senior Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church.

There was a motion to adjourn.

Julia closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,



Candy Clarke Aldridge  
Clerk of Session