

November 2020 Session in Review

Session of Grace Commons Church met November 10, 2020 with Pastor Daniel Susenbach as moderator.

Devotions: Greg Parr led devotions using Cape Town Commitment which he described as a Book of Confessions. He began with reading of Psalm 96. Although we are to love God above all else, we replace God with other things such as money, political beliefs, etc. Greg reminded us to be jealous for the honor of God's name.

Bob Groneberg presented a report on the work of the Deacons. A major change happening is that the Deacons' Closet is transitioning to Local Missions. A new Deacons' Closet board is in place to help with the transition and help make decisions. Deacons' Closet is experiencing conflict between COVID protocols and late fall weather and are working with church leadership. Deacons also met with Christelle de Wit to talk about how to communicate what the Deacons do and how to support them. Deacons Fund still supports the Thanksgiving dinner, 5th Sunday lunch and the Closet. Participation in Deacons from the congregation is also down as there were only 3 new deacons in the class of 2023. The number of deacons is not enough to support ministries like the Deacons Closet.

Each month a different ministry reports to Session on the status of their ministry. Lindsay Waymire provided a report on the Prayer Ministry and Stephen Ministry Update. The move to virtual platforms has worked for Stephen Ministry. However, there is no Stephen Ministry training class this fall. The ministry is continuing to work on supervision and processes. The challenge is to encourage people to accept care. Lindsay provided a list of needs that might cause a person to need care: health and aging issues, transitions – moving, new to town, job changes, themselves as caregivers, loss/death, relationship hardships such as divorce or estrangement, job issues, depression/anxiety, COVID-related concerns.

Prayer Ministry is leading the way with Common Space Groups which have provided community and connection remotely. 300+/- people involved in CSG which include a focus on prayer exercises. Lindsay shared a video from Prayer Ministry team. Lindsay invited elders to join a CSG for 2021.

The Boulder Vision Project status was updated by Braden Mark. Preschool progress is on track for a Fall 2021 opening. Weekly garage sales are helping to clear out the old to make room for the new preschool. The main campus must have Landmarks Board approval for the demolition of the Geneva Wing – a requirement for construction older than 50 years. Community input is the next step in the process for the Annex project, and there will be an outreach to residents in the Whittier neighborhood for feedback.

Capital Campaign has reached \$8 million+. Doug Smith and Braden will have a video as part of Nov 8 worship with a building update and a prompt for the last of pledges to come in by the end of 2020 with a final campaign total coming at the end of Jan 2021. Celebration plans on hold until late spring or summer. New renderings will be part of the Sunday video. Main change is the city's requirement that the building go to the NW corner of 15th and Walnut. That change is part of the Boulder City Urban Design Planning.

Grace Commons is in the middle of the annual process to recruit, select and elect new officers for the positions of trustees, elders, and deacons (aka TED). Deb DuPont encouraged all elders to pray and submit names for the next class of officers. The lack of in-person interactions has slowed the submission of potential candidates. One on one conversations is encouraged as the best way to find people who will consider leadership. Daniel led a time of prayer.

The Regathering Leadership Team is reviewing the latest change in the Boulder County COVID restriction level. Boulder County has moved to a higher level of restriction. The Sunday worship service coming up on Nov 8 has been revised to align with the County regulations. The Regathering Leader Team continues to meet with ministries to help with compliance. The Personnel Committee is providing direction to staff with COVID specific protocols. In-person worship will probably be discontinued follow Nov 15 but the decision will be made following the tribunal meeting on Nov 11. Kha asked for direction regarding a letter from a congregant – critical of the restrictions in place due to COVID. Daniel will respond. Session agreed that they are ok with the Regathering Leadership Team making decisions regarding worship.

A discussion continued on the desire to create a Racial Justice Ministry. Daniel began the discussion reminding all of the value of healthy dialogue, having hard conversations and seeking God's wisdom. Daniel reviewed the motion from July 14 meeting as the starting point for next steps. Most recently, Carl and Daniel met with Jim Carpenter and Cindy Avenell to make a plan forward. Recommendation is that the formation of the Racial Justice Ministry will fall under the leader of Ash McDonald in the Discipleship and Community department. There was considerable discussion for and against the creation of this ministry. No resolution was reached at this meeting.

The remainder of the meeting was held in executive session to continue the discussion on the Racial Justice Ministry and to hear a report from the Personnel Committee regarding the Hansons.

The meeting was adjourned.