

## February 2021 Session in Review

Session of Grace Commons Church, Boulder, Colorado met February 9, 11, 18, 23, 25, 26 and March 2, 2021 with a combination of moderators as appropriate. Erik Hanson began the month as the moderator prior to leaving on sabbatical on Feb 15. Daniel Susenbach took over as moderator in Erik's absence. Janet Schultz was named the interim clerk following Sam Oltmans' resignation in late January.

One of the key issues in February was the resolution regarding the creation of a Racial Justice Ministry. Elders Christopher Lietz and Braden Mark worked together to craft the motion in an effort to address some of the questions elders have raised at previous meetings. The proposed motion creates a ministry of lay people with staff leadership provided by Ash McDonald in the Discipleship and Community department. Once created the ministry will provide monthly updates to Session. In addition Session will form a task force to develop a framework and specific guidelines under which the Racial Justice Ministry will design and execute its ministry activities.

The discussion raised concerns about the divisiveness of the issue, the potential distraction and the potential lack of staff resources to support the issue. Other elders encouraged one another to lean into this cultural challenge.

The motion passed to create a Racial Justice Ministry within the Discipleship and Community department with a roll call vote of 9 for the motion, 5 opposed to the motion and 1 abstention.

In addition, a Racial Justice Task Force consisting of a Deb DuPont, Chris Lietz, Jonathon Anderson, and Carl Hofmann was formed.

Following the vote to create a Racial Justice Ministry, Dan Ringoen announced his resignation from Session. At the end of this same meeting Kha Le announced that he too would be resigning at the end of March.

Additional meetings in February and early March were primarily held to address issues surrounding Erik's confession to Session and his subsequent resignation. Much of the time was spent in executive session.

On February 23, Session received an intent to resign from Erik Hanson. Discussions concerning Erik's decision were held in executive session.

A Transition Communication team was formed consisting of 3 elders and 3 staff: Christelle DeWit, Director of Communications at Grace Commons, Daniel Susenbach, Ash McDonald, Deb DuPont, Glenn Bean and Braden Mark. The charge to this committee is to form the communications for Feb 28 and March 7 while other communication tasks might be added to this team. The pastors and department heads and the staff at Grace Commons will be informed of Erik's decision.

During the February 25 and 26 meetings, a communication plan was presented. Many details were contingent on the continuing conversations with Erik and the need to keep specific details confidential. The discussions included 2 primary elements to an agreement between Erik and Grace Commons: a non-disclosure agreement and a severance agreement. The communications will be on hold until a final agreement is concluded.

The discussions surrounding a severance agreement and a non-disclosure agreement were held in executive session, remaining confidential.

Prior to the March 2 meeting, Rob Dean submitted his resignation from Session.

Each Session meeting ended in prayer, sometimes late in the evening.