

August 2021 Session in Review

Session of Grace Commons Church, Boulder, Colorado, met August 10 and 28. Rev Randy Bare was the moderator for both meetings. The second meeting was part of the Session Retreat that met the last weekend in August.

At the first meeting, Randy led a devotion reflecting on Peter and Paul – their similarities and their differences. Both resolved conflicts within the church and led revival. Randy opened the meeting in prayer

Session approved the minutes and ministry reports from Session, Deacons, Kids and Local Missions. Session received the July Covenant Partner report which indicates we have 1094 covenant partners as of July 31, 2021.

Session Discussions:

Randy shared the concept of reviewing the Biblical Future of Grace Commons at each Session meeting. The idea will begin at the Session retreat at the end of the month with *Canoeing the Mountains* author Tod Bolsinger.

Greg Parr led a discussion of Ministry Goals and Priorities. Using the book, *God Dreams*, a task force has been consolidating ideas from the book, from the *For Boulder with Love* campaign, and from past vision work with the goal to give staff, the Personnel Committee, and the Finance Committee guidance to align the budget with the vision. One main focus is the goal of bringing young families to the church. The presentation was brief as the work will be shared in full at the Session retreat.

Randy shared some of what is to come for regathering and fall worship. Aug 22–Sept 12 we will focus on regathering with the vision of activating people to use their gifts in service. This is also the time frame for our stewardship campaign. This time will culminate with Party in the Parking Lot to celebrate the preschool, our new name, our capital campaign, and regathering. Beginning Sept 19, we will have 2 worship services on Sunday mornings, 9am and 10:30pm. 9am will be traditional and 10:30am will be contemporary. This is just a temporary configuration as beginning Jan 2022 we will relaunch services. The coffee time between services is a good time for attendees from both services to connect. Common Space Groups are part of the process of bringing unity.

Chris Lietz presented a motion to provide some structure to the recently launched Racial Justice Ministry. The motion affirms that the Word of God expressed through scripture, prayer, and preaching will be the inspiration for and foundation of the RJM work. In addition, the ministry will do its work seeking unity in the body of Christ, from Eph 4:1-3. The ministry will be aligned with ECO Essential Tenets and ECO Covenant Partnership commitments regardless of a members status as covenant partners. RJM will provide monthly reports to Session and are open to all people seeking to include and curate resources from many points of view. There was discussion regarding the use of the word “racial” in the title of the ministry and whether that word was broad enough. After discussion it was understood that a broader discussion can take place at a future meeting but for this particular ministry the focus is on racial justice. Motion passed.

The TED team continues their work to recruit additional candidates for the offices of elder, deacon and trustee and hope to have more candidates at the September meeting. In the meantime, Session voted to hold a congregational meeting on Sept 26 for the purpose of electing officers, electing members at large for the nominating committee, and to modify the Grace Commons Bylaws.

Dean Stull, Craig Rahenkamp and Greg Parr are reviewing the bylaws and will have recommendations ready for the Sept meeting. Purpose of the changes is to align our bylaws with the most recent ECO Constitution which was adopted in 2020.

Greg Parr provided an update to the stewardship campaign. An upcoming mailing including a letter, large flyer and commitment card will be sent on Aug 12 to all covenant partners and those who consistently engage with our church and programs.

During the Session retreat on August 28, Session held a brief meeting to cover 2 items. The first item of business was to approve the ECO ordination application for Jennie Fletemeyer. Session approved the motion and support Jennie's desire to seek ordination.

The second item was to hear from Daniel Susenbach. He announced that he will be resigning his position effective Oct 17. Daniel is preparing to move to London to lead a new church. Although saddened by the loss of Daniel as a valued and important member of Grace Commons leadership, the elders blessed Daniel's decision to follow his new calling to a small church in the UK. Randy let Session know that Daniel will preach his final sermon on Oct 3.