

May 2022 Session in Review

Session of Grace Commons Church, Boulder, Colorado, met May 10, 2022. Rev Randy Bare was the moderator.

Greg Parr led a devotion using Mark 2 and reminding us of the most recent Sunday sermon, Greg read the story of the healing of the paralytic man who was brought to Jesus by his friends. Greg shared his story of an encounter with Jesus through Fellowship of Christian Athletes in 1967 as he was invited to an event at which Paul Anderson shared the gospel. A key take away from the devotion was to "be reckless friends who invite people to meet Jesus."

Randy followed up Greg's devotion with a reading of a verse Paul wrote to Timothy: *For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.* Paul had a great understanding of the human experience. There is anxiety amongst the staff during our current transition. Denying our anxiety brings trouble and keeps us from thinking clearly. Remember the Spirit given to us brings power, love and self-discipline.

Following the devotions, Amy Nelson shared her news that she will be stepping down as our accounting director at the end of June. Amy shared the story of her time at Grace Commons and the family support she and Colton have felt. With Colton's graduation from high school, Amy will be entering a new professional role as the Director of Operations at Ascent Church. Session prayed for Amy and thanked her for her service.

Session approved the minutes and ministry reports from Session, Deacons, Trustees, Governance, Finance Committee and Racial Justice Ministry. Session received the April Covenant Partner report which indicates we have 1024 covenant partners as of April 30, 2022. In addition Session voted to dismiss the Regathering Task force as their need to monitor our church response to COVID has been completed.

Session compared the pledging units for Ministry Year 23 to the last pre-covid stewardship campaign in 2019. There are new individuals and families pledging to the new ministry year budget as well as many people who pledged in 2019 but did not pledge this year. There are also individuals who consistently give but do not pledge. Session is working to understand the differences in pledging from previous years.

The Trustee Charter was made available for review by Session. Session will vote on this charter in their June meeting.

The Governance Chair, Dean Stull, and the Governance Committee is proposing the formation of a Pastor Support Taskforce to lead Session's responsibility to oversee the Lead Pastor/Head of Staff which currently is the Transitional Pastor. Formation of this team now is part of Session's responsibility in preparation for calling a new Lead Pastor. The model is the result of research into the processes in place at other ECO churches to provide pastor support. A motion was passed to form this taskforce which will be comprised of 3 elders.

Session requested that the T.E.D. team work to fill the 3 boards to a full complement of 12 members each – Trustees, Session and Deacons. As always the work to select officers is done through the leading and provision of the Holy Spirit. Tim Chiles, the moderator of the T.E.D. team reported that they have a good list of potential candidates. The number of potential candidates is very close to meeting Session's goal for board sizes.

Braden updated Session on the recent work of the BVP team and Trustees. At the most recent Trustees meeting, the trustees reviewed some possible alternatives to the affordable housing on the 2nd and 3rd

floors and the 4th floor space. Session encouraged the Trustees to consider mission in addition to cost when determining the scope of the project. Doug Scheetz for the Trustees is evaluating the costs for a variety of options and was not ready to provide Session with specific options for the Annex. The scope and type of affordable house and the designated use of the 4th floor are the primary issues for evaluation. The first floor remains mercy ministry.

Dave Pommer came to Session to talk about this past year's ministry and began by thanking Session for the gift of his recently completed sabbatical. Dave shared the challenges and hopeful signs of this past year. They had a team of 3 great interns—who will be missed. They built great family connections among the students who just wanted to be together. They saw growing spiritual maturity with 9 baptisms and 3 students who accepted Jesus. He shared stories of students' faith. Dave asked Session—what is the expectation and hope for college ministry given the financial and staffing challenges of the upcoming year?

Randy reviewed some of the upcoming decisions before Session as part of the pastor search process. ECO provides much reasonably priced and free support to our leadership to assist with the search process. There is also the possibility engaging a professional search firm that specializes in pastoral searches. There are 2 firms in particular that are closely aligned to ECO.

The next step in the search process is to create a Mission Study Team. Session appointed 6 members to this team: Linda Carlson, Mary Woodson Felker, Sandy Bracken, Cindy Avenell, Stan Benjamin and Matt Koschmann (Matt was added to this team at a subsequent virtual meeting). This team will create a document that presents/describes our church and community as well as our past, present and future hopes and challenges. The pastoral nominating committee will then use this document to communicate to potential candidates regarding the Lead Pastor position.

The Personnel Committee presented a new staffing design for the elders' review and discussion. This staffing design is intended to align with the ministry priorities of Session as well as address some budget concerns. Some of the significant staffing changes include the creation of a Director of Young Adult Ministry position, the outsourcing of some of accounting work, and reduction in the number of University Ministry interns. The Missions Pastor position will not be filled at this time.

Session had their first review of the Ministry Year 23 budget. Session passed a motion that approved assumptions for the budgeting process: 1. The organizational chart as presented, 2. A MY23 budget of \$2.6mil. and 3. A MY24 budget of \$2.4mil.

Randy adjourned the meeting at 9:30pm with the singing of the Doxology.