

August 2022 Session in Review

Session of Grace Commons Church, Boulder, Colorado, met August 9, 2022. Rev Randy Bare was the moderator.

The time began with dinner and an examination of and conversation with the incoming class of elders, deacons and trustees. Following the examination, the incoming officers were dismissed and Session voted to approve the incoming class of officers, and they begin their work in earnest this month.

Jonathan Anderson led the devotion by reading scripture passages. These verses were a charge to love others, demonstrate mercy, value humility and goodness, and serve sacrificially. Jonathon closed the devotion time with prayer.

Following the devotions, Randy introduced the devotion plan for the next 6 months. Session will be led by 2 staff members, Lindsay Waymire and Shirley Davis, and engaging with the ECO Flourishing Churches curriculum. This will begin with the September meeting.

Session approved the minutes and ministry reports from Session, Deacons, Trustees, Governance, Finance Committee, the Grace Commons Foundation, MESH, Personnel Committee, Pastor Support Team, and the Racial Justice Ministry. In addition, the 2 consent motion: 1) to appoint Craig Rahenkamp as the delegate to the Presbytery of the West meeting and 2) to approve communion to be served at the Stadia Bloom Conference in the chapel on Sept 30 were approved. Session received the June and July Covenant Partner reports which record 830 covenant partners.

Mission Study

The Mission Study Report was presented to Session for their approval by Matt Koschmann and Cindy Avenell, 2 members of the Mission Study Team (MST). The document will be available for the congregation to read and will be used by the Pastor Nominating Committee in their work. The document holds in a healthy tension the reality of the state of Grace Commons and the hope for our future. Session asked for some minor edits to the document: updating the financial details and adding a word about the desire to expand lay leadership roles. With these edits, Session approved the report. Randy thanked entire MST for their efficient work.

Pastor Nominating Process

Randy followed the acceptance of the Mission Study Report with an update on the Pastor Nominating process. He provided some history of our past processes as well as the past PC(USA) system which often led to a mismatch between a pastor and congregation. The PNC will be made up of 5 members at large, 2 elders, 1 deacon and 1 trustee. The process to solicit nominations to the PNC has already begun. Session discussed the impact that the use of a search firm might have on the PNC process. Randy explained that his experience using a search firm was positive and that he sees that process as a way to spare the PNC of some of the drudgery of reviewing hundreds of resumes. The search firm will do the preliminary work and narrow the pool of candidates so that the PNC can work on the candidates who are the closest fit. A search firm will spend time with the staff and the PNC to understand our culture—both current and aspirational. The next step in the process will be to form a nominating committee who will interview and recommend the PNC slate. 3 elders will work with Randy to form a nominating committee to do the PNC work.

Business and Operations Update

Larry Drees joined the meeting to give a status update on the transitions in the Business office with the departure of Cathy Marquis and Amy Nelson. A part-time bookkeeper and volunteers are helping to issue checks and cover payroll. The audit is just beginning, and the Trustees will be forming an audit committee to support the process. In the future Larry plans to provide regular financial reporting to Session.

Larry is not able to give year-end financial information yet. He needs to wait until the audit is complete. For MY 23, pledging and giving are up slightly. We have received a government refund associated with 2020. Larry is waiting for information from the auditors as to how that money can be spent. Larry's primary focus is on improving efficiencies of the business office through automation and outsourcing.

Covenant of Session

Randy presented the Covenant of Session which is the annual practice of Session to commit to unity in their role on Session. He also brought an additional document which helps to decision making when unity does not exist. This new document will be part of the Covenant of Session.

Certified Lay Pastor

Craig Rahenkamp was put forth to complete the Certified Lay Pastor process through ECO. The certified lay pastor is an ordained position but will require a church "call" upon completion as with other ordination processes. Upon completion, it is Session decision how to deploy Craig – either at Grace Commons or in support of other churches.

Trustees

Gene Koch, representing the Trustees, reported that the BVP information continues to be updated on the website and included in leadership updates. The Trustees are receiving regular reports from the BVP team on their work.

Fall Worship

Randy presented the worship service plan for fall which requires Session's approval. Pastors and Department Heads (PDH) are proposing that we continue with 1 blended service this fall as we continue to work toward unity as a congregation before calling our new pastor. The proposed schedule is below:

Worship: 9:30am

Kids Sunday School: 9:45-10:30am

Adult education hour: 10:45-11:30 or 11:45am

The worship design team will continue to refine the blended worship experience. The elders discussed not only the worship service but the logistics surrounding the education hour. Their aspirational goal is to provide a children's experience during the education hour in addition to adult classes. A motion to approve the fall worship plan was made and approved.

Session meetings will be moving to Thursday nights as all of our youth and college programming happens in the building on Tuesday evenings.

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