

February 2023 Session in Review

Session of Grace Commons Church, Boulder, Colorado, met February 9, 2023. Rev Randy Bare was the moderator.

Shirley Davis led a time of prayer and personal reflection using *Simple Discipleship*. She asked elders if they considered themselves and Grace Commons to be more “heart” or “head.” Session then talked about the importance and values of both and the value of integrating them

Session approved the minutes and ministry reports from Session, Deacons, Trustees, Governance, MESH, Pastor Support Team and Stewardship. In addition, Session received the January Covenant Partner report which records 838 covenant partners.

Session Officer Recommendations:

The Governance Committee is working with the boards of Session, Deacons and Trustees to determine the optimal number of incoming officers. Session is concerned that the reduced number of elders will make the work load excessive for each elder. Randy reminded the elders that there should a sharing of the load with non-elders on all committees of Session.

Ordination Process:

Lindsay Waymire and Dave Pommer joined the meeting to discuss their discernment regarding seeking ordination through our denomination, ECO. Lindsay and Dave shared their background, where they are in the discernment process and why they are considering ordination to assistant pastor at this time. Several elders provided words of encouragement and gratitude for their current work and for their willingness to consider this process.

Session voted in favor of a motion to approve and support the ECO Ordination process for Dave Pommer and Lindsay Waymire.

University Ministry Update:

Dave Pommer and Matt Koschmann joined the meeting to share the status of University Ministry (UMIn) and the analysis and discussions that have taken place over the last few months.

The UMin committee has spent time in a thoughtful process and is recommending that UMin continue under Grace Commons. Matt, who serves on the Annex advisory board, shared that they were tasked with reviewing and analyzing how UMin might go forward. Considering the legacy of 125 years of university ministry they considered 3 options:

1. Partnering with InterVarsity
2. Creating their own 501c3
3. Operating under Grace Commons with a slimmer budget and revised staffing structure

There first choice is to continue under the umbrella of Grace Commons and continue ministry together.

Dave and Matt acknowledged that this direction will require some scaling back of ministry and additional lay staff but the key elements of student leaders, Core groups, Annex worship night and the Messenger Program are in place.

Men's Ministry Update:

Following an introduction by Jonathan Anderson, Dave Pascoe shared what is happening in Men's Life this year and thoughts about the future as he will be leaving his role in Men's Life at the end of this season to relocate to live near his children.

Men's Life has enjoyed some small changes this year with the hope that it will lead to larger changes in the future. Mike Clark has been their speaker. Testimonies from the men are a regular part of the morning. There are about 70 men regularly coming - down from the pre-COVID number of 100.

Dave shared that the ministries largest challenges are to develop leadership in light of Dave's coming departure, reaching men under age 50, and becoming an anchor to a larger men's ministry.

Session thanked Dave for stepping up this year to lead.

Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) Update:

Debbie Carosella began by confirming that the PNC is pleased to be working with Rob Lauer and Agora Search Group. They received the job opportunity profile draft from Agora yesterday. After edits are complete, the job profile will be posted on job boards and to pastor networks. The opportunity profile makes the case for why a pastor would come here. Matt Koschmann is the moderator of the PNC and Jen Wilger is the secretary. Rob Lauer had 5 in depth conversations at the ECO National Gathering which was very encouraging. Debbie encouraged anyone who hears from or about potential candidates, to direct the information to the PNC at pnc@gracecommons.org and include a name, phone number and email address for a potential candidate.

Deacons' Closet Update:

Randy began by sharing some history. Approximately 1 year ago, Randy met with the then leaders of the Deacons including Bob Groneberg who was also a Deacons' Closet leader. It was proposed that the Deacons' Closet would be put on hiatus during construction. Following that meeting a new leadership team (Craig Rahenkamp, Gary Johnson and Mark Baker) took over from longtime leaders, Dorinda Cudney and Sally Benjamin. Recently the entire team met with Trinity Lutheran Church who is considering hosting the Deacons' Closet during construction at 1603 Walnut. Trinity needs an approval from their council and adjacent neighbors - the Hotel Boulderado and Pine Street Church who hosts a preschool.

Randy also shared a longer term vision for the Deacons' Closet and mercy ministry. He expressed the need to partner with multiple churches. The city of Boulder is seeking RFPs from non-profit agencies to operate a day center for the homeless outside of the downtown district. The Deacons' Closet and Lamb's ministry could be adjacent this day center and allow for more days of operation.

Some elders expressed concern that the longevity of the closet and the visibility to the community is an important aspect of the work and that communication to the congregation is a critical aspect of any decision that is made.

The discussion will continue in March.

Stewardship:

A stewardship plan for Ministry Year 2024 is in place. The campaign begins Feb 26 by introducing the theme/concept of connecting to Nehemiah, standing shoulder to shoulder to rebuild the wall. The first Sunday will include a video clip from the 1998 stewardship campaign featuring Dee Demons. On March 5 Randy will interview Dave Pommer to talk about ministry to the next generations. On this same Sunday,

Greg Parr and Larry Drees will share a budget overview. March 12 is Commitment Sunday, and Dean Stull will present the challenge.

Boulder Vision Process (BVP) update

Gene Koch provided an update on the status of work on 1603 Walnut. The CHFA application from Grace Commons has been received. Trustees are in negotiation with Moss Denver to be the event vendor. The building permit drawings are going to the city in mid-March. Pinkard, the general contractor, is working on their guaranteed maximum price which the trustees are anticipating to be a better/lower price than previously reviewed. The proforma will be modified when the final pricing comes in from Pinkard. The Trustees are working with a law firm on the HOA and LLC structure.

Session discussed the upcoming March congregational forum and made suggestions as to how best to communicate the complexities of the project.

After the receipt of the Trustees report on the Boulder Vision project a motion was made to endorse the Trustees Report on the Boulder Vision Project and approved the Trustees recommendation to proceed with the plan.

The motion passed with appreciation for the work of the Trustees.

Budget Update:

The Finance Committee is beginning the budgeting process and hope to have something for Session to review in early April. The stewardship campaign will be using an estimate of the expected budget. We are currently on target to meet our budget for this year.

Pastor Support Team (PST):

Jonathon Anderson presented and asked for feedback on the draft charter for the Pastor Support Team. The PST is working toward a charter that provides support to our Pastor/Head of Staff without micromanaging.

Randy adjourned the meeting at 9:25pm with the singing of the Doxology.