

## March 2023 Session in Review

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

Lindsay Waymire and Laurie Niewoehner led a devotional time preparing Session for personal and corporate confession. Session prayed over their own sins and confessed the corporate sins of leadership. Corporate sins of pride, gossip, control, fear, entitlement, leaving out Christ as Lord and self-reliance were some of the corporate sins named.

Session approved the minutes and ministry reports from Session, Deacons, Trustees, Governance, Racial Justice Ministry, T.E.D Team and Stewardship. In addition, Session received the February Covenant Partnership report which records 836 covenant partners. As part of the consent agenda, Session approved the housing allowances for four pastors in the following amounts:

Bare: \$44,400  
Bledsoe: \$40,000  
Crider: \$42,500  
Hofmann: \$35,000

### **Pastor Nominating Committee update:**

Debbie Carosella shared that The Opportunity Profile for our Pastor/Head of Staff position is ready to be posted. The PNC is excited about the results. The Opportunity Profile will be available on the Agora Search Group website and on the Grace Commons website in the next week.

### **Communion:**

Randy provided a brief review of our current and hopefully future communion practices as our method of serving communion will be changing in the coming months as the emergency COVID order is being lifted this spring. The serving of communion is complicated as there are concerns about germ transmission, challenges for the mobility impaired congregants and the size of the volunteer pool needed to serve communion. In addition, we have a class at 8:15am that has worship elements and might be an opportunity for more frequent communion. Previously with 3 worship services, there was typically one service where the distribution of communion took place by passing plates down the pews. Randy would also like Session to consider the use of wine instead of juice. Session should consider an approach that is both biblically sound and pastorally sensitive. This discussion will continue in April.

### **Mercy Ministry Update:**

Randy showed a CBS 4 Denver news clip sharing the story of Springs Rescue Mission. Randy shared some of the history of the Mission. First Pres Colorado Springs is the founding church for Springs Rescue Mission. The vision of the Mission is to not leave people where they are in homelessness.

Randy presented that it is time to transition to something more complete than what we can currently do through the Deacons' Closet and for the approximately 100 perpetually homeless in Boulder. The process to taking this new next step has included many conversations with Lamb's Ministry and Deacons' Closet leadership. Trinity Lutheran Church is willing to house the Deacons' Closet distribution center when the time comes to close the Annex. Session acknowledged the value of the faithful team of volunteers who have served the Deacons Closet for many years and also the need to communicate with the congregation.

Lamb's ministry is praying about becoming a leader in developing a new model of mercy ministry in coordination with the recently proposed city sponsored Day Center for the Unhoused.

MESH (Ministry Evaluation and Spiritual Health), a committee of Session, was charged with reviewing the current strategy to minister to the poor and plan communications in the short and long term.

**Roots Update:**

Pastor Rich Bledsoe came to provide an overview of the Roots ministry since Libby's retirement in December. Rich shared that with Libby's departure, his role is to be a pastoral presence with the ministries already in place. He is not going to become a program director. As a pastor, he is meeting with the Work Krew and Sewing Circle to get to know them. Libby's role is not being replaced by Rich. Session asked questions regarding the health of the existing committees of Roots such as the Work Krew. In addition to his ongoing congregational care and visitations, Rich is meeting with those groups regularly.

**Stewardship:**

March 12 is commitment Sunday and Session is considering a target budget of \$2.97mil. Session approved that target amount but will consider the budget in detail at a future meeting.

**Governance and T.E.D Report:**

After discussions with the three boards (elder, deacon and trustee), Session approved a motion to request the following officer make up for the class of 2026: 3 elders, 6 Deacons, and 7 Trustees.

**Trustees Report:**

Gene Koch, president of Trustees, provided a brief update on recent work of Trustees. There will be a congregational forum on March 19 to provide an update on the project at 1603 Walnut. A handout will be provided with a fuller set of frequently asked questions. In addition the trustees have retained legal counsel for the formation of an LLC for 1603 Walnut. A building permit application has been submitted.

Randy adjourned the meeting at 9:00pm with the singing of the Doxology.