

June 2023 Session in Review

Session of Grace Commons Church, Boulder, Colorado, met June 8, 2023. Rev Randy Bare was the moderator.

The meeting began at 6pm with a time of fellowship, a light meal and a celebration of the outgoing elders and our transitional pastor. The official meeting followed, beginning at 7pm.

Session approved the minutes and ministry reports from Session, Deacons, Trustees, Governance, MESH, Finance, Racial Justice Ministry and Stewardship. Session received the May Covenant Partnership Report, which records 825 covenant partners.

Clerk's Report:

The work on the charters for each Board or committee of Session continues. The charters for the Leadership Development Team and the Deacons were presented for a first reading. They will be voted on at the July Session meeting. Dean is also working on the committee assignments for Ministry Year 2024.

Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) Update:

Debbie Carosella, a PNC member, the progress to date for the PNC. Approximately 425 pastors expressed interest in our position. Rob Lauer, our search consultant from Agora Search Group, has watched sermons for over 200 candidates. The PNC has narrowed the search to four candidates and the application process is now closed.

The next step is for the remaining four candidates to complete an in-depth questionnaire after which Rob will engage in a lengthy interview with each one. Rob will recommend three candidates to the PNC. The PNC will interview these three candidates and then narrow the candidates to two for in-person visits.

Elders asked about the upcoming vote on 1603 Walnut. Debbie said that the candidates are attracted to our church because of our desire to look ahead creatively. The PNC is transparent with the candidates about the project's status.

Boulder Vision Project:

Gene distributed two motions for the 1603 Walnut St Project. Motion 1 is for the Session to vote to send a motion to the congregation for a vote. The Motion 2 is the motion for the congregation to consider. In summary, the motion is asking the congregation to allow for any of the following: pursue the project, encumber the building, change the project scope, or sell the building.

The motions were created with the advice and guidance of attorney.

Although the motions give authority to the Trustees, the Trustees will continue to work under the authority of Session. There will be considerable communication and partnership as the Trustees consider each option.

Several elders questioned the reasons as to why we are asking for a vote to encumber the property when all of the financing is not in place. The Trustees, represented by Gene Koch and Warner Andrews at this meeting, have learned that they cannot continue to pursue the project without the authority to encumber the property. They need that authority to have conversations with banks.

Communication is an important aspect to the upcoming congregational meeting. The length of the motions is directly related to covering the four project possibilities.

The process for the congregational meeting will include opportunities for in person discussion covering both sides of the issue. We will be using paper ballots, which will be counted by reserve elders Stan Nicholas and Howard Anderson.

Session voted unanimously to approve both presented motions.

Stewardship update:

Kathy Baker provided an overview of the upcoming budget shortfall resulting from the current Stewardship campaign. There are many factors—one of which is the number of people who pledged in Ministry Year 2023 but have not pledged for Ministry Year 2024. Based on the evaluation, Kathy suggested that the church needs 60-80 new pledges to reach the budget goal. Session will begin this summer reaching out to the congregation.

Annex 125th Anniversary

College ministry at Grace Commons is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. Dave Pommer is asking for permission to host a fundraising banquet to which he would invite congregants and alumni. Randy confirmed that there are accounting issues to be considered as to how the raised funds will be monitored.

Session will vote on a motion to approve this fundraiser at their July meeting.

Mercy Ministry Update

Jonathon Anderson shared the recent work of the MESH team as it developed the next steps in the Mercy Ministry Vision. He presented the following motion:

Session bears responsibility for empowering and encouraging the people of Grace Commons Church to be gospel neighbors to Boulder and to spread the good news of Jesus in our community. In anticipation of our upcoming pastoral transition, and in acknowledgement of recent ministry disruptions, MESH moves that Session commission Jim Remnant, reserve elder and leader with The Lambs Ministry, to form and lead a task force **chartered** to draft a holistic proposal for “Good Samaritan” mercy and justice ministries at Grace Commons Church to preserve and purposefully equip our new pastor with this institutional knowledge. This proposal

- shall summarize and be rooted in the history and current practice of such ministries at the church, including (but not limited to) the activities currently implemented by local missions, Deacons' Closet, Lamb's Lunch, and the fifth Sunday lunch;
- shall propose a holistic plan for such ministries at the church, including any recommended alterations, with reference to existing best-practice ministries that might be used as a model (for example, Springs Rescue Mission);
- shall identify precedent and opportunities for coordination with such ministries and services at other churches and in the community (for example, the thanksgiving meal at Second Baptist Church of Boulder);
- shall identify precedent and opportunities for coordination with such services available and in development at the City of Boulder (for example, Kids Hope, Feet Forward, and Flatirons Habitat for Humanity);

and shall be presented to Session and the new Lead Pastor (Head of Staff) within three months of the new pastor's installation.

Session passed this motion.

Prior to the close of the meeting, Randy shared that First Pres Akron is in need of preacher support in the month of July. Elders are invited to preach at this small ECO church.

Randy adjourned the meeting at 9:20pm with the singing of the Doxology.