

# Grace Commons Church Session Meeting Minutes

Date: Feb 8, 2024

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Westminster Hall, Grace Commons Church

Moderator: Rev. Anthony Ceder

## Session Members present:

Kathy Baker

Debbie Carosella

Anthony Ceder

Emily Crider

Topher Fox

Willie Knierim

Lynnie Parr

Steve Rice

Lisa Schone

Dean Stull

## Others present:

Gene Koch

Debbi Tucker

Janet Schultz

Carl Hofmann

Shelly Zumsteg

A quorum was confirmed, and Anthony Ceder called the meeting to order and opened in prayer. Kathy Baker led a devotion and discussion in small groups on seeking God in our neighborhoods. Each small group ended in prayer.

## Agenda approval:

The following agenda was provided in advance of the meeting. Session approved the agenda, minutes, matters of record, committee reports.

| 6:30pm    | Establish Quorum; Call Meeting to Order | Anthony Ceder | Motion |
|-----------|---|---------------|--------|
| 6:30-6:55 | Devotion                                | Kathy Baker   |        |
| 6:55-7:00 | Consent Items for approval              | Anthony       | Yes    |

|           |  |                    |                      |
|-----------|--|--------------------|----------------------|
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Session meeting agenda</li> <li>• Session meeting minutes: Jan 11, 2024</li> <li>• Covenant Partnership Reports: Jan 31, 2024</li> <li>• Accept committee reports (NS=not submitted): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trustees</li> <li>○ Deacons</li> <li>○ Finance</li> <li>○ Governance</li> <li>○ LDT/TED</li> <li>○ Mercy Ministry Task Force</li> <li>○ MESH (NS)</li> <li>○ PSC (NS)</li> <li>○ Stewardship</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Accept ministry reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New worship experience (NS)</li> <li>○ Foundation (NS)</li> <li>○ RJM</li> <li>○ Young Adult ministry</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |                    |                      |
| 7:00-7:05 | Clerk's report: New Member approval:<br>Approve Bonnie Johnson to be a Covenant Partner at the recommendation of Pastor Emily Crider   | Dean/Emily         | yes                  |
| 7:05-7:15 | Stewardship update   | Kathy/Willie       |                      |
| 7:15-7:30 | Mercy Ministry Task Force update   | Lisa               | 1 <sup>st</sup> Read |
| 7:30-7:50 | Executive Session  | Anthony            |                      |
| 7:50-8:00 | Break  |                    |                      |
| 8:00-8:15 | MESH update: Global Missions   | Shelly Zumsteg     |                      |
| 8:15-8:25 | TED update   | Shirley Berg       |                      |
| 8:25-8:35 | Worship topics:<br>Offering practice<br>New Worship experience   | Anthony            |                      |
| 8:35-8:45 | Trustees update:<br>BVP update<br>Financial report   | Gene Koch          |                      |
| 8:45-8:55 | ECO National Gathering Update  | Anthony/Emily/Lisa |                      |
|           | Looking ahead  |                    |                      |

|         |   |  |  |
|---------|---|--|--|
| Jan-May | <p>TED officer nominating process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January: recruiting</li> <li>• March: interviewing</li> <li>• April: compiling slate</li> <li>• May: Session approval</li> <li>• June: Congregation approval</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| Feb-Mar | Commitment campaign for Ministry Year 2025.   |  |  |
| Feb 25  | Installation service for Anthony Ceder. Jim Candy to preach.  |  |  |
| Mar 14  | <p>Session Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stewardship report</li> <li>• MESH Report</li> <li>• Mercy Ministry Task Force Recommendations</li> <li>• TED report/update</li> <li>• Finance Update</li> <li>• Update on 1603 Walnut</li> </ul>   |  |  |
| Apr 11  | <p>Session Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stewardship report</li> <li>• MESH Report</li> <li>• Mercy Ministry Task Force Recommendations</li> <li>• TED report/update</li> <li>• Finance Update</li> <li>• Update on 1603 Walnut</li> </ul>   |  |  |
| May 5   | Elders to meet with covenant partner candidates   |  |  |
| May 9   | <p>Session Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve slate of new officers</li> <li>• Approve covenant partners</li> <li>• Call a congregational meeting for June</li> <li>• Stewardship report</li> <li>• MESH Report</li> <li>• Mercy Ministry Task Force Recommendations</li> <li>• TED report/update</li> <li>• Finance Update</li> <li>• Update on 1603 Walnut</li> </ul> |  |  |
| June 2  | Congregational meeting to approve the slate of new officers.  |  |  |

**Clerk Report: Dean Stull**

Dean presented the following motion:

*Motion: that Session approve Bonnie Johnson to be a Covenant Partner at the recommendation of Pastor Emily Crider.*

Motion was made and seconded.

Emily Crider shared reflections on her time meeting with Bonnie in preparation for covenant partnership.

Motion passed.

#### **Stewardship Update: Kathy Baker**

The Stewardship Committee is looking ahead to 2024-25 with an emphasis on the giving of time, talents and financial resources. In addition, the committee will be using “monthly financial commitment” as the language instead of pledging when communicating financial giving.

#### **Mercy Ministry Task Force Update: Lisa Schone**

Lisa, Debbie and Dean have met and presented the following motion for a first reading.

***Motion:*** *On June 18, 2023, Session, at its regular monthly meeting, approved a motion from the Ministry Evaluation and Health Committee (MESH) creating a task force **chartered** to draft a holistic proposal for “Good Samaritan” mercy and justice ministries at Grace Commons Church. The charter for the task force was broad while it included language that seemed to narrow the focus with an emphasis on the “Good Samaritan” mercy and justice ministries of the church.*

*Session now understands that the charter for the task force was insufficient, that the work of the task force required a higher level of authority, and a broader approach to discern God’s will for, and serve the needs of, the missions and ministries of Grace Commons Church.*

*Session is more fully aware of recent mission and ministry disruptions and desires to understand, address, and honor these areas and the individuals who have invested their time, energy, and resources in them. At the same time, Session desires to be strategic in how and why it encourages and resources its missions and ministries, and desires to utilize and preserve the institutional knowledge from the past, in the present, and into the future.*

*Therefore, it is moved that:*

- *Session disbands the “Good Samaritan” mercy and justice ministries task force that it formed on June 18, 2023; and*
- *Session forms an Ad Hoc Committee of Session to be known as the Mission Study Committee; and*
- *for the purpose of this work the term “missions” will include Grace Commons Local Missions and Global Missions departments, as well as some other ministry areas that the Committee determines are better aligned with or generally interchangeable with the designation “mission;” and*
- *the Committee will begin its work immediately and complete its work by July 31, 2024; and*
- *the Committee will be composed of three or more serving elders and Anthony Ceder, the Pastor/Head of Staff; and*
- *the initial serving elders will be Debbie Carosella, Lynn Parr, and Lisa Schone; and*

- *the initial Committee will recruit 3 to 6 lay leaders, volunteers, staff and current or previous elders, trustees, deacons with expertise and experience within the mission areas under study to join the Committee; and*
- *the Committee will interact with church volunteers and staff working in selected mission areas when deemed necessary; and*
- *the Committee will look outside of the church for best practices and ongoing thriving missions as references for the Committee's work; and*
- *the Committee will focus on a strategic evaluation of how Grace Commons' missions are aligned with the strategic focus of the church; how they integrate with the mission, vision, and goals of the church; how they interact with each other; and how they are and should be resourced with staff, volunteers, and physical resources; and*
- *the final work product of the Committee will be a report to Session containing an overview of the completed evaluation with recommendations focused on the strategic implications of their review such as considerations of resource allocations, ministry evaluations, organizational structure, ministry short/mid/long term goals and objectives; and*
- *it is anticipated that the Committee's work will be a template or guide for future work to align, resource, and organize new mission or ministry areas.*

There was a brief discussion. This motion will be presented at the March Session meeting for a final vote.

**Executive Session:**

Dean presented the following motion for approval.

*MOTION: to move to executive session for a confidential update.*

The motion was made and seconded.

The Motion passed.

Following Executive Session, the statement below was presented by the Clerk to be included in the minutes of the general.

Session was informed by staff at the Jan 11, 2024 Session meeting that an alleged registered sex offender was attending church and involved in church programs. Understanding its responsibility to protect the congregation and walk alongside individuals struggling with challenges such as this, Session asked staff to investigate both the legal issues and internal policies currently guiding the church in situations such as this.

At today's meeting, Feb 8, 2024, Session was appraised of the status of the internal review being conducted by Trustees and staff on this topic. Session anticipates that this review will be completed and recommendations presented to Session at the meeting scheduled for Mar 14, 2024.

**MESH: Steve Rice**

Steve introduced Shelly Zumsteg, the moderator of the Global Missions committee. Shelly provided an update on the status of Global Missions.

**TED report: Topher Fox**

The nominating process to select elders, deacons and trustees for the Class of 2027 is underway. There are currently 14 recommendations and interviews will begin in March.

**Worship/Misc Topics: Anthony**

Going forward Anthony will be seeking elder input on a variety of topics – that include worship and other issues.

Regarding the facilities, Anthony asked for 2 elders to work with 2 trustees to cast vision on space usage in the main building.

The elders agreed that future decisions related to building closures will be made by the facility manager in consultation with the Business Manager and the President of Trustees.

Anthony presented the following motion:

*Motion: Session encourages the idea of passing offering plates during the worship service as an act of worship at the discretion of the Pastor/Head of Staff.*

Motion was made and seconded.

Following a brief discussion, the motion passed.

**Trustees: Gene Koch, President of Trustees**

Gene reported on the following:

- Boulder Vision Project/1603 Walnut update
- Boulder Vision Project/Main campus update

**ECO National Gathering Update**

Session members, Lisa Schone, Emily Crider and Anthony Ceder gave a brief update on the recent ECO National Gathering. This annual time includes speakers, breakout sessions and opportunities to connect with other churches within our denomination.

A Session retreat to allow for an extended time for visioning will be planned for this spring.

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

Anthony Ceder, Moderator

Dean Stull, Clerk

Date approved by Session: March 19, 2024