

Grace Commons Church Session Meeting Minutes

Date: Mar 19, 2024

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Oerter Hall, Grace Commons Church

Moderator: Rev. Anthony Ceder

Session Members present:

Kathy Baker	Lynnie Parr
Shirley Berg	Steve Rice
Debbie Carosella	Lisa Schone
Anthony Ceder	Dean Stull
Willie Knierim	

Others present:

Gene Koch
 Cindy Avenell
 Janet Schultz
 Carl Hofmann

A quorum was confirmed, and Clerk, Dean Stull, called the meeting to order at 6:35pm. A motion was made and seconded to approve the following agenda, which was modified to accommodate the time constraints for this rescheduled meeting due to the snow closure on Mar 14. The motion passed to approve the modified agenda below.

6:30pm	Establish Quorum; Call Meeting to Order	Anthony Ceder	Motion
6:30-6:45	Devotion	Dean Stull	
6:45-6:50	Consent Items for approval	Anthony	Yes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session meeting agenda • Session meeting minutes: Feb 8, 2024 • Covenant Partnership Reports: Feb 29, 2024 • Accept committee reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trustees ○ Deacons ○ Governance ○ LDT/TED ○ MESH ○ PSC ○ Stewardship • Accept ministry reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Foundation ○ RJM 		
6:50-7:00	Clerk's report –	Dean	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegates for April Presbytery meeting, Thurs, April 25, 4pm zoom 		
7:00-7:20	Ad Hoc Mission Study Committee update	Lisa	yes
7:20-7:30	Stewardship update	Kathy/Willie	
7:30-7:55	Pastor Reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retreat review Worship service Sermon series 	Anthony	

Devotion:

Dean led a devotion considering the condition of casual Christians since the start of the COVID pandemic. Using examples from the gospel of Matthew and *Mere Christianity*, he shared that it is hard to follow Jesus, but we press on in the work as our hope is in Jesus. Dean closed in prayer.

Agenda:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the consent items in the agenda.

Motion passed.

Clerk Report: Dean Stull

Dean asked for two representatives for the upcoming Presbytery meeting, Thurs, April 25, 4pm via zoom. Kathy Baker and Willie Knierim agreed to serve as the representatives for this meeting.

Gene Koch distributed a draft document on sexual misconduct and harassment that is being developed by the Trustees. Gene will have the final version at the next Session meeting.

Ad Hoc Ministry and Mission Study Committee report: Lisa Schone

The following motion was presented. The motion was revised since the February Session meeting to align the work of the committee with ECO Polity and to include a broader view of Missions.

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 ministries and missions of Grace Commons Church.

Session also desires to align this work with its responsibility described in the 2022 Constitution under section 1.06, **The Responsibilities of the Session**. Specifically, section 1.0603a “...to lead the congregation in ministries of evangelism, compassion, and justice...” and section 1.0603c which states that Session will “... plan for and

provide an effective disciple-making, ministry-discernment process for the congregation and new believers...”

Session is now more fully aware of recent 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 Ministry and 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 August 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’ ministries are aligned with the mission, vision, and goals of the church.
 - how they equip covenant partners to be missional Christians 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; and
- it is anticipated that the Committee’s work will be a template or guide for future work to align, resource, and organize new ministry areas.

Following a brief discussion the Motion passed.

Stewardship Update: Kathy Baker

The Stewardship Committee intends to send out a letter to the congregation after Easter encouraging everyone to confirm their giving. Future letters will be sent out in January and July of each year. In addition, tri-annual family meetings will be scheduled as a primary source of communication to the congregation.

Gene added that the Trustees will have a preliminary budget ready for a first review at the April meeting.

Worship/Misc Topics: Anthony

Anthony led the beginning of a discussion on the current worship service and the potential for an education hour. In the next few weeks, Session will be considering the possibility of adding a second service and expanding the Sunday school offerings to include students, college and young adults

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm, and the elders were encouraged to join the college students at the Annex in the Chapel.

Anthony Ceder, Moderator

Dean Stull, Clerk

Date approved by Session: April 11, 2024