

## Session Meeting Minutes

Date: June 12, 2025

Time: 6:30 pm

Location: Westminster Hall Grace Commons Church

Moderator: Steve Rice

### Session members present:

Kathy Baker

Debbie Carosella

Topher Fox

Willie Knierim

Lynnie Parr

Steve Rice

Doug Rutherford

Jen Wilger

### Others present:

Greg Parr, Clerk of Session

Carol Born, Trustee

Carol Turpin, Deacon

Larry Drees, Director of Business and Operations

Greg Parr called the meeting to order at 6:30 and a quorum was confirmed.

Steve Rice was introduced as the moderator for the meeting and opened Session in prayer.

### Agenda Approval:

The following agenda was provided in advance of the meeting. One item was added to the consent items: A couple is seeking permission to be married at Grace Commons and have a pastor from Flatirons Church officiating. The bride-to-be was involved in the youth program at Grace Commons. Session approved the consent items along with this request, if after counseling, Anthony Ceder gives his approval.

6:30pm	Establish Quorum; Call Meeting to Order	Greg Parr	Motion
6:30-6:45	Elect acting moderator-Opening Prayers	Session	
	Consent Items for approval	Acting Moderator	Yes
6:45-6:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Session meeting agenda</li><li>• Session meeting minutes: May 8, 2025</li><li>• Congregational meeting Minutes: June 1, 2025</li><li>• Covenant Partnership Reports: NA</li><li>• Accept committee reports:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Trustees</li><li>○ Deacons</li><li>○ Governance</li><li>○ LDT</li><li>○ MESH</li><li>○ PSC</li><li>○ Stewardship</li></ul></li><li>• Accept ministry reports:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Foundation</li><li>○ RJM</li></ul></li></ul>		

6:50-7:10	Recognition of Elders with expiring terms	Session	
7:10-7:30	Trustees Report Security	Carol Born	
7:30-7:40	Leader training review	Topher Fox	
7:40-7:55	Review of Common Ground Children's program	Lisa Schone	
7:55-8:15	Ministry Year 2026 Budget second reading	Larry Drees	Yes
8:15-8:35	Assistant/Associate Pastor discussion	Greg Parr	
8:35-8:40	July meeting date discussion -7/10	Greg Parr	
	Looking ahead		
July 2	Officer's dinner at Kingdoms-RSVP		
Aug 3	Installation of new Officers		

### Recognition of out-going Elders

A time was spent affirming and thanking Kathy Baker, Debbie Carosella, Willie Knierim and Steve Rice for their service as Elders over the past three years.

### Trustee Report – Carol Born

Carol updated Session on three items:

#### 1. Pathways Preschool:

Now 4 trustees plus Larry and Warner.

Steve Rice will be meeting with LCG monthly for status and quarterly for strategy.

The focus will be to assess if the preschool is meeting its goals.

First goal is to hire a new director.

Enrollment growth is next. Break-even is 52 children; now down around 38.

This fall Trustees will be considering whether to continue or to terminate relationship.

Question for Session: Is preschool a money generator or a part of the mission of the church? We were charged with providing 75 minutes a week of Christian education and we are not currently providing that.

Question from Trustees: If we cancel, how can we recoup our investment.

A good succession plan is needed. Do we give them a year and work on a succession plan if the preschool cannot succeed in being profitable?

2. From Kathy Haddock re: Security. The man who interrupted our church service earlier this summer continues to create videos and emails against staff at Grace Commons. Most recently demanded 5 million dollars to prevent an increase of wrath. Police are well aware and are providing extra surveillance.
3. Reserve Account: A study was conducted several years ago which suggested that because of the age of our building, we should be adding \$265,000 a year to our reserve account. We have not been doing that but dipping into the reserves to fund our budget. This year we have \$150K in the budget for reserves.

Warner wanted to give an update on the first floor of the 1603 Walnut Project, but he couldn't make it to the meeting. He offered this summary:

We are looking at three different possibilities: Laird, Ebenezer, and Change Please. They each have different business models. Please be praying over presentations for wisdom to know where God is leading. We are wanting to solidify a partner by October. Session asked if Warner could send Elders some information on the three different possibilities.

#### **Update on Leadership Development Committee – Topher Fox.**

Topher shared three main tasks of the committee: to conduct the TED process, and identify new leaders; new officer training; and addressing spiritual health.

It was noted that recently a number of officers have felt burnt out, and have left the church after serving. The desire of the LDC is to help officers serve with joy. It was also noted that leadership changes and the pandemic also led to burn out and disappointments. The suggestion was made that MESH and TED consider following up with exit interviews.

#### **Approval of Budget for Ministry Year 2026: Discussion led by Larry Drees**

Session moved to extend the meeting time for 30 minutes.

#### **Discussion:**

There was significant progress made in reducing the budgeted expenses from the first reading last month. Doug Rutherford described how a sub-group of Session had met several times with staff to look at a variety of reductions. Several job adjustments were made to cover staff vacancies and realignment with ministry goals. Without layoffs, this allowed reductions in total compensation expenses of over \$200,000. There may be further changes to job specifics, which the Head of Staff and Director of Operations will continue to work on.

Due to new duties and changes of duties, as well as the need for adhering to policies for job reviews, Session determined that greater emphasis should be placed on evaluation of each staff member's job responsibilities, including accountability toward measurable objectives.

#### **Motion:**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget of \$3.425 million for Ministry Year 2026 with the following guidelines: a mid-year review of income and expense will be conducted in December 2025 and based on the findings, an action plan will be established in December and implemented in January; and, as part of the review, all jobs on the organizational chart will need to be evaluated based on clear objectives and accountabilities.

The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 with the singing of the Doxology

Steve Rice, Moderator

Greg Parr, Clerk

Approved by Session: July 10, 2025