

Grace Presbytery Council
Minutes of the May 6, 2020 Stated Meeting
Acting on behalf of Grace Presbytery¹

Actions taken by the Presbytery Council

1. Approved the minutes of the February 22, 2020 stated meeting of Grace Presbytery.
2. Approved the minutes of the January 22, 2020 stated meeting and the March 16, 2020 special meeting of the Presbytery Council.
3. Approved the following changes in the Standing Rules (new text is indicated with ***Bold Italic*** font). Rationale: This request comes from the Youth Ministry Committee in order to clarify committee responsibilities concerning presbytery's ministry and programs with children.

5. ***Children and*** Youth Ministry Committee

5.8 ***Children and*** Youth Ministry Committee

- 5.8.1 The ***Children and*** Youth Ministry Committee consists of twelve adult members and fifteen youth members (high school sophomore through first year college freshman).
- 5.8.2 The committee provides for the nurture, faith development, and leadership skills of ***children and*** youth in the presbytery, as well as the adults who work with youth. It is responsible for conducting programs, retreats, and events that affirm youth as children of the Covenant and enables and challenges youth to minister to others.
- 5.8.3 The committee duties include:
 - 5.8.3.1 Implementing programs for (1) ***children***, junior high and middle school youth, including but not limited to events such as Youthquakes, (2) senior high youth including but not limited to events such as Senior High Youth Connection.
 - 5.8.3.2 Coordinating ***children and*** youth mission trips and projects.
4. Approved the following Payroll Assistance Grant for congregations affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The total amount available in grants will not exceed \$150,000 and the funds will be drawn from the Presbytery Contingency Fund. First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth has generously voted to match up to \$150,000 to support the grant program.

¹ In accordance with the Standing Rules which delegate the authority of Grace Presbytery to the Presbytery Council: "In the event of a natural disaster, a state of emergency, or other situation which would delay, postpone or cancel a meeting of the presbytery, the Presbytery Council is delegated the authority to act on behalf of Grace Presbytery."

Grace Presbytery’s Statement of Mission: “Grace Presbytery claims God’s mission as our calling: to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ who saves, redeems, and reconciles the world to God through ministries of witness, justice, and mercy. Grace Presbytery prepares and supports leaders to build vital congregations that reach seekers and those in need, nurture disciples, and send apostles of our Lord into the world.”

Purpose: To provide payroll assistance in order to maintain current staff for congregations of Grace Presbytery that have been severely impacted financially by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Requirements for grant application: Sessions will apply for assistance using the Application Form and providing 1) March 2020 and April 2020 financial statements (April to date if application made prior to May 1); 2) balance sheets for savings accounts, reserved funds, or endowments; and 3) current payroll expenses (per month.) Once application and documentation have been received, a representative of the Committee on Ministry will schedule a phone interview to discuss the application.

Maximum Amount of Grant: Grants are made on a case by case analysis of need and other resources available. Ordinarily the maximum amount of a grant will not exceed the value of one month of payroll expenses.

Restrictions on use: Grants may only be used to directly support payroll (salaries and benefits) for current employees of the congregation.

Submitting an Application: This application is available online at the presbytery website (www.gracepresbytery.org).

5. Approved the following recommendations concerning resuming in-person worship:

Grace Presbytery sessions are engaging in conversation about the safety, wisdom, and timing of returning to in-person worship. The Book of Order reminds us that congregations are “the fellowship of women, men, and children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ.” (G-1.0102) As covenant communities, congregations are called to “lead a life worthy of the calling to which (we) have been called, with all patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4.1-3)

The church is being called to exercise patience as we continue to bear with one another in love. Bearing with one another in love requires us to make decisions for the health and safety of the whole congregation and community – especially those at risk due to underlying health conditions and age. Bearing with one another in love and maintaining our unity should not lead to divisions within a congregation. While we long to gather again in person for worship, the reality is that worship as we knew it prior to the pandemic is not possible at this time. When it may be time to return to in-person worship, worship itself will look and feel very different until we are no longer living through the pandemic.

Given Governor Abbott’s Executive Order of April 27, 2020, Grace Presbytery Council offers the following guidance for sessions and pastoral leaders:

- We strongly encourage worship to continue remotely.
- We encourage sessions and staff to carefully read the Minimum Health Standard Protocols required in the Governor's Executive Order (pages 39-41) and plan how to implement and enforce these protocols prior to any gatherings for public worship.
- We encourage sessions to consult their liability insurance providers for any guidance that may be helpful as they make decisions about church opening and resumption of worship and other ministry activities.
- We encourage Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Pastors, and Certified Christian Educators to be in contact with the Committee on Ministry with concerns about their own risk factors and safety in their ministry settings.
- We encourage sessions and pastoral leaders to gather and study additional resources which may be helpful in conversations when the time is safer for in-person worship. A list of resources is included below.

As we continue to live through the COVID-19 pandemic, Grace Presbytery gives thanks to God for our congregations, worshipping communities, sessions, Certified Christian Educators, and pastoral leaders as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ during these extraordinary times. Additional guidance will be shared following significant developments and new Executive Orders from the Texas Governor. The next expected update will be around May 18, 2020.

Resources: Wisconsin Council of Churches: Returning to Church (4/23/20), Washington Post: Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith (pages 7-9), Grace Presbytery: Guidance on Issues related to In-Person Worship (4/28/20)

6. Received the following report concerning the Social Justice Task Force: Moderator of Presbytery Council **Rev. John Williams** reported that the following have been appointed to the Social Justice Task Force: **Rev. David Batchelder** (Plano, West Plano) Co-Moderator; **Rev. Thomas Gibbons** (H.R.) Co-Moderator; **Rev. Clay Allard** (Dallas, Oak Cliff), **Kym Banks** (Richardson, Canyon Creek), **Armel Crocker** (Winnsboro, First Presbyterian Church); **Rev. Amy Moore** (Member-at-Large), **Rev. Perryn Rice** (Dallas, Lake Highlands), **Rev. Katy Rigler** (Richardson, Saint Barnabas), **Rev. Kyle Walker** (Dallas, Midway Hills Christian Church), **Laura Westerlage** (Dallas, First Presbyterian Church).
7. Authorized Interim General Presbyter **Rev. Mike Thompson** to provide Camp Gilmont with an application for the Payroll Assistance Grants (Item 4 above) in order for the Presbytery Council to consider a grant (to be voted upon as soon as possible via email).
8. Received oral reports from the following officers: Presbytery Council Moderator **Rev. John Williams**, Presbytery Moderator **Rev. Lisa Patterson**, Presbytery Vice Moderator **Ruling Elder Mike Jones**, Interim General Presbyter **Rev. Mike Thompson**, Stated Clerk **Rev. Gerry Tyer**, and a written report from Presbytery Treasurer **Trey Angel**.
9. Received oral reports from the following committees: **Ruling Elder Phyllis Kidwell** (General Presbyter Search Committee), **Rev. Woody Meredith** (Budget and Finance Committee), **Rev. Harry Meissner** (Church Development Committee), **Rev. Michael Washevski** (Committee on Ministry), **Ruling Elder Brian Parker** (Congregational Support

Committee), **Rev. Lisa Juica Perkins** (Nominating Committee), **Rev. Andy Odom** (Personnel Committee).

10. Received oral reports from the following staff members: Director of Ministry Services **Joanna Kim**, Director of Ministry Transitions **Rev. Craig Krueger**, Director of Ministry Development **Rev. Elizabeth Callender**, Director of Communications **M.E. Clary**, Director of Property Management **Ruling Elder Karen Ebling**, Director of Finance **Ruling Elder Vicki Roberts**.

11. Received the following report from *Stated Clerk Rev. Gerry Tyer*:

A. The following ministers of Word and Sacrament entered the Church Triumphant since the last meeting of the presbytery: **Rev. Elizabeth Johnson Pense** (February 29, 2020), **Rev. Bette June Dobbie** (April 12, 2020), **Rev. Richard Terry Gilmer** (April 29, 2020).

B. In accordance with the Meeting Cancellation Policy, the May 30, 2020 stated meeting of the presbytery was cancelled by Presbytery Moderator **Rev. Lisa Patterson** due to the coronavirus pandemic and the shelter-in-place directions of state and local officials.

C. The 224th General Assembly (2020) meeting has been changed to an electronic meeting due to the coronavirus pandemic and the shelter-in-place directions of state and local officials. Grace Presbytery commissioners and Young Adult Advisory Delegate will be sent instructions from the Office of the General Assembly on how to participate.

D. In accordance with the 2004 General Assembly authoritative interpretation of F-3.0205 and consistent with Roberts Rules of Order, the following addition to the Standing Rules was approved unanimously on April 15, 2020 by written ballot sent to every member of Grace Presbytery (including all ministers of Word and Sacrament and all ruling elders eligible to vote):

“If a presbytery meeting needs to be cancelled or delayed for any reason, it will be announced on the Grace Presbytery website, eNews and through other electronic media. The decision to cancel or delay the start of a presbytery meeting will be made by the Moderator of the Presbytery in consultation with the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk. Rescheduling a cancelled meeting is the responsibility of the Stated Clerk in consultation with the Moderator and General Presbyter. In the event of a natural disaster, a state of emergency, or other situation which would delay, postpone or cancel a meeting of the presbytery, the Presbytery Council is delegated the authority to act on behalf of Grace Presbytery and the Board of Trustees is authorized to conduct corporate business on behalf of Grace Presbytery, Inc.”

Information

A. Attendance at the May 6, 2020 Presbytery Council stated meeting held via electronic means: Class of 2020: **Rev. Donald Hogg** (Fort Worth, Westminster), **Ruling Elder Beth Peak Thompson** (Denton, Trinity), **Rev. Thomas Lamb** (Temple, Grace), Class of 2021: **Rev. William Wilson** (Kilgore, First), **Ruling Elder Wendell Black** (Arlington, Grace), **Rev. Seong Soo Lee** (Frisco, Holy Seed New Church Development),

Class of 2022: **Ruling Elder Kathy Jones** (Dallas, NorthPark), **Ruling Elder Denyse Rodgers** (Waco, Central), Ex-Officio with Vote: Council Moderator **Rev. John Williams** (Sherman, Austin College), Former Moderator of Presbytery Council **Ruling Elder Phyllis Kidwell** (Athens, First), Moderator of Presbytery **Rev. Lisa Patterson** (Denton, St. Andrew), Vice Moderator of Presbytery **Ruling Elder Mike Jones** (Dallas, NorthPark), Moderators of Presbytery Entities: **Rev. Andy Odom** (Personnel Committee), **Rev. Michael Waschevski** (Committee on Ministry), **Rev. Harry Meissner** (Church Development Committee), **Rev. Woody Meredith** (Budget and Finance Committee), **Ruling Elder Brian Parker** (Irving, Woodhaven and Congregational Support Committee), **Rev. Lisa Juica Perkins** (Nominating Committee). Ex-Officio without Vote: Stated Clerk **Rev. Gerry Tyer** (H.R.), Staff: **Joanna Kim** (Director of Ministry Services), **Rev. Elizabeth Callender** (Director of Ministry Development), Rev. Craig Krueger (Director of Ministry Transitions), **Vicki Roberts** (Director of Finance), **Ruling Elder Karen Ebling** (Director of Property Management). Excused: Presbytery Treasurer **Trey Angel** (Dallas, NorthPark).

- B. The May 6, 2020 Presbytery Council meeting was opened in prayer by Council Moderator **Rev. John Williams**. The meeting was closed in prayer by **Rev. Lisa Patterson**.