

GRACE CHAPEL ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 7, 2020

CALL TO ORDER & PRAYER – Amy Warfield opened the meeting with procedural instructions and prayer at 4 pm. The meeting was to be streamed live on the Zoom webinar platform, with an interactive Q&A session after the presentations. However, at approximately 4:10 pm, there was a technology failure that couldn't be repaired, so the live stream had to be cancelled. Instead, meeting presentations, along with Q&A for questions submitted to the church office, were made available on the Grace Chapel website, www.grace.org.

VOTING PROCESS – Final motions will be posted on the church website by June 12, 2020. Members will receive an email with a link to an online voting ballot on June 12. If no email address is on file, or if a member requests, a paper ballot will be sent by mail. Voting must be completed by end of day, June 21, 2020. Voting results will be posted on the website by June 24, 2020.

SENIOR PASTOR REPORT -- Pastor Bryan Wilkerson presented the Senior Pastor Report. The Grace Chapel Vision: To be a growing community of seekers and believers discovering life with God for the good of greater Boston and the world. *Discovering Life with God for the Good of the World*.

The ministry focus this year was *Experiencing Grace*. Sermon series included:

- Fall 2019: *Experiencing Grace*
- Global Awareness Week: *Grace Under Pressure*
- Advent 2019: *Follow the Wonder*
- Winter 2020: *Googling God*
- Lent 2020: *BLESS*
- Easter 2020: *Overcome*
- Spring 2020: *What Now?*

Ministry Highlights

- New Grace Brand and promise: "You will experience grace here"
- New Ministry Model: Sunday Experience, Group Life, Next Generations Ministries
- Campus Growth Strategies
- Fully Online Ministry Platform: "The church has left the building!"
- Abounding Generosity: Fully-funded budget, special giving

Pastor Bryan expressed gratitude to the elders for their leadership, and to the staff and congregation during this time of living through a pandemic, with all in-person church gatherings cancelled since mid-March. He outlined the church's phased reopening plan, which will begin sometime after July 5th. At a date to be determined, limited groups will start meeting on campus and limited staff will return to campuses. This will increase cautiously over time, with vigilance, all under governmental limitations. At some point, all ministry will return to campuses. Even then, online services will continue.

ELDERS' REPORT – Jimmy Su presented the Elders' Report. The elders are committed to fulfilling the church's mission. Recent and ongoing efforts of the board have included the ordination of Pastor Adam Rowe and a renewed commitment to the practice of prayer. They will continue to focus on three major areas: strategic growth, integrating digital/online ministry into church life, and providing individuals with clear pathways to engagement.

The board is grateful to Pastor Bryan, executive pastor Mark McDonald, and all the staff for their strong efforts to implement church programs online since the church building closed in March. The elders support the phased reopening plan with its emphasis on safety and quality ministry. Jimmy gave thanks to the congregation for faithful service and generosity, especially considering the events of the past months of not being able to meet in person. Retiring elders Brenda Messervy, Joan Christel, and Victor Gerdes were also thanked for their many contributions to the elder board.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Eric Bergstrom presented the Treasurer's Report. Grace Chapel had \$9.5 million in general fund giving in FY20, which was in line with recent years. We are extremely grateful to our great God and to a faithful congregation for this generous provision, especially since we haven't met in person ("passed the offering plate") since March 8th. In addition to general giving, the congregation gave over \$229,000 in special offerings during Global Awareness Week and Christmas Eve services, and to the Benevolence Fund.

The FY2021 proposed budget is \$8.1 million. This more conservative figure is based on the many unknowns of the year ahead. We will manage some of the expenses by leveraging a forgivable CARES Act loan and FY20 operating budget reserves. The four largest budget items are ministry, missions, buildings and loan repayment.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT – Priscilla Seuss presented the Nominating Committee Report, identifying the nominating committee and presenting the slate of nominees for the Board of Elders, Nominating Committee, Audit Committee, Moderator and Clerk. The lists below include the campus that nominees identify as their primary campus.

New Elder Nominees:

- Keith Cerci, Watertown
- Matt Doremus, Wilmington

The Full Proposed Board of Elders for 2020-2021

- Jimmy Su, Chair
- Eric Bergstrom, Treasurer
- Keith Cerci, Elder Nominee
- Andrea Dacayanan
- Matt Doremus, Elder Nominee
- Cynthia Fantasia
- Victor Roman
- Priscilla Seuss
- Sandy Shen
- Rob Stutzman, Secretary

Other Nominations

- Nominating Committee (one-year term)
 - Victor Roman
- Audit Committee (one-year term)
 - Russ Ayan, Chair, Lexington, 3rd year
 - Lucy Marchese, Lexington, 2nd year
 - Jim Citro, Lexington, 3rd year
- Moderator (one-year term)

- Amy Warfield, Lexington, 2nd year
- Clerk (one-year term)
 - Sandy Smith, Lexington, 2nd year

PROPOSED BALLOT MOTIONS – Mark McDonald presented the proposed ballot motions.

- Motion 1: Approve the Minutes of the FY20 Congregational Meeting
- Motion 2: Elect the Slate of Nominees for Church Offices for FY21
- Motion 3: Approve the Ministry Operating Budget for FY21

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – In light of technical challenges during our annual meeting, these questions ended up being submitted to the Office of Senior Pastor either by email or by phone.

Utilizing (Q) for Questions and (A) for Answers:

- **(Q) We have had several questions related to when our buildings will reopen.**
 - (A) Please know that the answers will change as we move through our phased reopening plan. You can find updates on the Grace Chapel website at: <https://www.grace.org/status/>.
- **(Q) Can you give us a sense of what Sunday services participation has been like during this pandemic season?**
 - Answers:
 - Based on those viewing on Sunday and throughout the week we have, on average, about 4,000 people viewing our online services. That average does not include an estimated Easter attendance of a little over 9,000 people.
 - These totals have held steady through this season and our average viewing time has increased.
 - As we have worshipped together, we have been able to engage with new attendees, those seeking group discipleship, and those wishing to serve in our community engagement programs
- **(Q) Bryan has mentioned in his sermons – the importance and focus of prayer in this season. How can we strategically mobilize in prayer as a church?**
 - Answers:
 - Many of our campuses are hosting regular zoom prayer calls on a weekly basis. If you have not joined one of those – we strongly recommend it.
 - We hosted an “all-church” evening of prayer on a zoom webinar on Wednesday, June 10th. We hope to offer more of these events like this in the weeks and months to come.
- **(Q) What if our giving is more or less than we have budgeted?**
 - Answers:
 - We have drafted plans across our ministry areas and campuses to align ourselves with giving and revenues and we can adjust accordingly based on the actual giving.

- The strength of our current giving, including the generous giving to the COVID-19 fund is a real testimony to the faithfulness of this congregation.
- **(Q) We had started conversations regarding a campaign before the pandemic started. Where are we with that?**
 - Answers:
 - We have been talking for some time about a stewardship campaign to help our people personal budgeting strategies, grow in their generosity, and to raise funds for greater growth and impact.
 - The funds will make possible the growth strategies that we have been identifying over the past year or so.
 - Right now, elements of that campaign are on hold, but other key components will continue.
 - One of those components was the Help & Hope Webinar we hosted in May and we expect to offer a financial stewardship series in the future. We are anticipating that many of the folks in our church will be facing financial hardship and others in our congregation may be called to minister more meaningfully to those in need.

Watch the webinar here:

<https://vimeo.com/gracechapelma/review/428122091/8705ad3b58>

- **(Q) I didn't see any mention on any of the phases about Kidstown or any Next Generation (Middle and High School Ministries). How is that being addressed, especially with babies and preschoolers? Will parents have to stay home indefinitely?**
 - Answers:
 - i. We will continue to serve our Kidstown and Student families online for now.
 - ii. Our ability to serve our next generation students and their parents is a key element of opening our buildings for a full worship experience. We are monitoring state guidelines and our ability to keep children and volunteers safe through required distancing and cleaning protocols.
- **(Q) First, let me commend you all for the great job of pivoting to an all online environment these past few months. I am heartened by the commitment to make that a more vital part of our ministry. While it does not substitute for in person worship, education, service and fellowship, a more robust and intentional online presence should be a great way to reach out to those who would not or could not attend in person. Interesting that Bruce Wall should recommend just such an approach for us to pursue in his address to EPIC just a few weeks ago.**
A couple of budget questions:
 - **Where does the \$1.25m come from on the income side of the FY21 budget? From reserves?**

- (A) We have been able to leverage the forgivable CARES Act and will utilize funds from the strong finish in fiscal 2020 for the Additional Funding item in the budget.
- **And, the \$527k for interest and mortgage principle – is that for 2 Militia?**
 - (A) In addition to our building at 2 Militia Drive, it includes our buildings at 3 Militia Drive, 59 Worthen Road, and our Wilmington campus. It also includes a portion of the CARES Act that will be forgiven in the coming year as we process it through that program.
- **(Q) I have a question(s) concerning the concept of branding at Grace. What was the purpose and was it necessary? Considering the difficult financial times that came prior to the announcement was it a sound stewardship? (signage change, tee shirts give away etc) Thank you!**
 - (A) Branding is an engaging way to unify our core message. We have updated our branding at key times over the years, and as we finalized our new ministry model across the church it seemed like the perfect time to make a long overdue update to some core branding elements. The slow roll-out included providing the t-shirts back on our volunteer and leadership training day that was a small “thank you” to that broad group that really makes this church so special.

CLOSING – The online meeting was cancelled at 4:20 pm due to the computer hardware that occurred. A recording of the full meeting was put online at www.grace.org on Monday, June 8, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Smith, Clerk