

Grace Transition Team/Grace Church Council Minutes
October 29, 2009

In attendance:

Church Council: Grant Casady, Jim Heddles, Eugene Park, Renee Hoffman, Meta Mason
Grace Transition Team: Charlie Lehardy, Steve Peterson, Rick Sims, Dan Wittenberg,
Deb Peterson, Cindy Baker, Michelle Fleming
Alan Forsman, outside consultant

Next meeting: Nov 9, 2009 at 7pm

Alan Forsman (church transition consultant) opened by giving an account of what he does as well as introductory activity for all present.

A few opening comments by Alan included

- 20% of churches in the PSW Conference are in transition
- Change is opportunity
- Luke 13:6-9 (fig tree) churches become dormant with time; shade but no fruit; cultivation rejuvenates
- Transition can mean freedom to change, try new things in the church
- Communication with church is the most critical part of the GTT, along with leading the charge in helping build excitement and enthusiasm in the church.

Alan continued by outlining the transition process as follows:

<u>A good ending</u>	<u>Neutral Zone</u>	<u>New Beginning</u>
- good to celebrate Scot and what God is doing	- time of ambiguity - not a time for status quo - experiment/ revision / try new things	

Things that need to happen during neutral zone:

- 1) Find our Purpose
- 2) Paint a Picture of who Grace is
- 3) Plan (roadmap forward)
- 4) Players (get as many people as possible to claim ownership in church/get them excited).

The GTT should form the following possible sub-groups for further research/information gathering:

- 1) Internal church environment subgroup
 - a) Determine membership vs. attendance
 - b) % of attendees who are involved
 - c) Reclaim the art of telling our ministry stories
 - d) Find out who we have and who we can count on
- 2) External (community) environment subgroup
 - a) Does what we offer match up with the needs of the community?
 - b) What are some of the recurring needs being seen by community service agencies?
- 3) Communication subgroup
 - a) Communication is different than transferring information; need transparent and pervasive communication. Let people know that the church is not standing still.
 - b) "Transition team table" at church every Sunday for information and questions.
- 4) History subgroup
 - a) Learn from our history things that might serve as a platform to the future.
 - b) Make timeline of church/community history and ask others to fill in happenings.
- 5) Prayer team

Alan then opened the floor for questions/discussion

- What are the best ways to communicate with the congregation?
 - Say the same thing often and in different ways. People have different communication styles. Use variety and creativity.
- We have just finished a process creating a vision and strategic initiatives. Do we need to start this process over again?
 - Reinforce what has been done and broaden ownership of the current mission/vision.
- What is the most effective way to survey the congregation?
 - Alan suggested focus groups and suggested some questions to ask.
 - a) What about Grace do we need to celebrate?
 - b) What are our concerns?
 - c) What is one hope for the future?
 - Reach out to/visit small groups/Sunday school groups
- There is a tendency for groups of people to say “Are you going to pay attention to us?” How do we handle this?
 - Alan spoke about different levels of stakeholder participation and suggested to listen to these individuals and ask questions. Let them know we cannot possibly implement everyone’s individual suggestions, but, they will all feed into decisions made.
 - Ask what we are doing well and what we should do differently
 - Keep our purpose in mind: To continuously discern God’s spiritual direction for the future.
- Many people see this as an opportunity to structure the church differently. How do we determine what the best structure is?
 - Alan said that as we gather information both internally from the church as well as externally from the community it will help us determine the direction the church should go.
 - Don’t replace a position in the church without first evaluating the need for it and getting clarity of church roles.
- Mixing preaching pastors during interim period works, but do so within a theme for a short period of time (4 weeks or so) instead of a different pastor each week.
- What kinds of pastors we can expect to find as interim candidates?
 - Alan said all kinds of people look to be interims including those that have left the church and are waiting for their call or those that want a new adventure.
 - Alan said he would forward some possible candidates he knew of.
 - He suggested downloading sermons from candidates if they are currently serving.
 - Everything is negotiable (moving costs/salaries/etc...)
- Can we expect attendance to go up or down during this time?
 - Either can happen. Helps to communicate and demonstrate that things are happening.
- What should we do first?
 - Alan said once we have the budget in place we work on the 3 non-negotiables for an interim (see above notes).
 - Begin communicating immediately with church. Alan suggested appointing a point person for this. Over-communicate instead of under-communicating.
 - Also need good communication between GTT/Council/Church Staff.

- What expectations does the PSW Conference have of us during this time.
 - Alan said the conference is there to help us in whatever way we need. He also said a good rule of thumb in timing to find a new pastor is one month for every year the previous pastor was in service. So, we can expect about 18 months for a new pastor to be put in place and emphasized not to rush this process.
 - Alan said pastoral candidates do not have to come from the Covenant but the Covenant does have a more thorough process for screening its candidates.

Action Items

- 1) Council will propose a budget, which will then help GTT determine interim pastor financial options.
- 2) Determine interim pastor non-negotiables.
- 3) Establish a GTT communication subgroup.