

Consistory News July, 2020

During a Special Meeting with the Search Team on Sunday, July 12, 2020, members of the Consistory who were available to attend received a recommendation from the Lead Pastor Search Team to extend a 3-year contract to Pastor Heather Dood to function as the next Lead Pastor for Grace Reformed Church. During our time of discussion, it was called to our attention that the Search Team over the past 2 ½ years had experienced “closed doors” to 3 other candidates. During this same time, it was reported to the Consistory, Pastor Heather had been increasingly felt led by the Spirit of the Living God to offer herself as a candidate. After a couple of interviews with Pastor Heather and making several reference checks, the Search Team felt confident that with her gifts she could provide the leadership the church needs in a replanting/revitalizing effort. A motion was then made, supported, and carried to approve the recommendation of the Search Team and present Pastor Heather to the congregation as a candidate to be the next Lead Pastor.

Since Pastor Heather is a Commissioned Pastor, the Consistory cannot officially extend to her a call upon the advisory vote of the congregation. Instead, members of the Consistory can only extend to her a contract upon receiving an advisory vote from the congregation. The Consistory agreed to develop a 3-year contract for Pastor Heather (such contract to be designed by the Executive Team and approved by the Classis before communicating with the membership) with semi-annual reviews/evaluations between Pastor Heather, the Executive Team, and representatives from the Classis. As is common in most contracts, a 30-day notice will be required by either party for termination of the contract.

The next step in this process is to provide an opportunity for members of the congregation to have dialogue with Pastor Heather (much like a town hall type of meeting) during which questions can be asked and concerns expressed. In order for everyone to feel safe due to the recent spike in COVID-19 cases, this opportunity will take place outdoors at the Crossing on Monday, July 20 at 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm. Choose a time that works best for you and please bring your own chair. Following these times for interaction with Pastor Heather, a letter will be sent to all members of Grace Reformed Church with a ballot included on which members can respond “yes” or “no” to advise the Consistory to proceed with this contract offer to Pastor Heather.

Depending on the results of that ballot vote, the contract as developed by the Executive Team and approved by both the Consistory and Classis will be presented to Pastor Heather. Should such a contract be offered and accepted by Pastor Heather, the Classis will then set a date and time for a Special Meeting of Classis during which Pastor Heather will be commissioned as the Lead Pastor of Grace Reformed Church.

The Lead Pastor Search Team and the Consistory has been on a most challenging and at times surprising journey over the past couple of years in the search for the next Lead Pastor. None of us including Pastor Heather could have predicted this is where the journey we have been on would end in this way but by the amazing grace of God we have arrived where we are today. The Search Team and Consistory respectfully call all of us to a focused time of prayer as together we continue to seek God’s will with respect to the decision that is before us and not our personal preferences.

Grace Reformed Church Newsletter

July 13, 2020

It's hard for me to believe but already we are the mid-point of the summer months. As I write this piece for the church newsletter, the Lead Pastor Search Team is prepared to recommend another candidate to the Consistory at a Special Meeting to be held on Sunday, July 12, 2020, following the morning worship service. Should the Consistory accept the recommendation of the Lead Pastor Search Team, plans will then need to be put into place to provide members of the congregation an opportunity to interact with this candidate before any vote is taken by the congregation to recommend to the Consistory to proceed. Given the current circumstances pertaining the COVID-19 Virus, I would guess the process will look somewhat different than it has with previous candidates.

This would be a good time to remind all of us that back in February we agreed that as a church we believe it is God's desire for us to follow a path of renewal and revitalization in the next chapter of our ministry together under the leadership of a new Lead Pastor. In conversations with the Great Lakes City Classis, the Consistory has designed and agreed to a tentative "game plan" (so to speak) for what this path of renewal and revitalization in the future will look like. This has been communicated with you earlier but this would be a good time, I believe, for all of us to revisit this plan. We have given it the title of "**Metrics for Renewal/Revitalization at Grace Reformed Church.**" What follows is the "**heart**" of that plan.

All of the items listed below are negotiable recommendations for a pathway into the future of Grace Reformed Church, Wyoming, MI. Together with the Lead Pastor, Staff, Consistory Leaders, and Great Lakes City Classis, members of this congregation will covenant to be in prayer for personal revival as the following items are agreed to and implemented. It is understood that as we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, the items below and the revitalization plan that is eventually develop could be subject to revision.

1. The Great Lakes City Classis promises to provide a Coach for the next Lead Pastor of Grace Reformed Church for a minimum of 2 years at 50/50 cost not to exceed \$ _____ with the Coach observing worship leadership, Consistory leadership, personal evangelism ministries, and other necessary skills for the next lead pastor needed to continue the renewal/revitalization path for this church community.
2. With the assistance of Great Lakes Classis, leaders and members of Grace Reformed Church will seek coaching assistance from someone like Greg Brower and Members of Zion Reformed Church in Grandville with respect to "rebirthing" Grace Reformed Church so members and leaders see themselves and make ministry decisions more as a church restart/church plant in Wyoming, MI. than a church with long history.
3. Together with the Lead Pastor, Consistory and Staff, members of the Congregation will agree to trust God and be personally engaged towards a 10-year goal of 20/20 – realizing a net gain of 20 new disciples of Jesus/Church members per year for the first decade of the 2020's.

4. Together with the Lead Pastor, Consistory and Staff, members of Grace Reformed Church agree to trust God and commit themselves to doubling the numbers involved in the Monday afternoon and evening Crossing/Impact Ministries.
5. Together with the Lead Pastor, Consistory and Staff, members of the Congregation will commit to developing worship services that are more oriented to the cultural context of the neighborhood. This could mean that members of Grace Choir need to commit to singing more contemporary Christian music or dissolving into a larger Grace Praise Team. In addition, this could mean implementing technology perhaps with the assistance of a part-time tech person on staff to reach the surrounding neighborhood as well as designing a different format for worship.
6. Together with the Lead Pastor, Consistory and Staff, members of the Congregation will commit to a capital fund campaign within the next 2-3 years that will accomplish 2 primary objectives – 1) improve the main entrance/lobby area/office space/ and child care on the upper level, and 2) remodel the fellowship hall, church kitchen, and classroom space on the lower level for a growing ministry of Crossings/Impact.
7. The Lead Pastor together with the Staff and leaders of the Consistory will commit to developing a minimum of 20 new leaders in the next 5 years from among those who become new members of Grace Reformed Church.
8. Together with the Lead Pastor, Consistory and Staff, over 50% of the current members of the Congregation will plan and participate in 3-5 outreach/evangelism efforts per year throughout the surrounding neighborhood which results in potential new disciples of Jesus.
9. The Lead Pastor, Staff, Consistory, and over 60% of the Congregation will participate in at least 3 educational/training events per year with respect to developing fruitful ministry to low-income neighbors and those trapped in poverty.
10. Together with the Lead Pastor, Consistory, and Staff, members of the Congregation will continue to explore various ways to partner with neighboring elementary schools, the Middle School located nearby, the local municipality, and Grace University in making a positive influence for Jesus in the City of Wyoming. Standale Reformed Church could serve as a good coach and role model.
11. The Lead Pastor together with the Staff and Consistory will design and adopt a pathway to describe those characteristics that identify maturing disciples within one year of the installation of the next Lead Pastor, a pathway that is to be evaluated with the Lead Pastor and Consistory quarterly with the Classis-appointed coach.
12. Within a year of the installation of the next Lead Pastor, the Lead Pastor together with the Staff and Consistory will have in place a “family adoption” process where family units from the neighborhood who are involved in Crossings or Impact Ministries will be “adopted” by family units of Grace Reformed with the goal of introducing them and assimilating them to a relationship with Jesus and into the mission of Grace Reformed Church (“Living in and by Grace, God calls us to be Making Disciples for Jesus”) together with our core values (Worship, Compassion, Prayer, and Outreach/Mission).

13. After the Lead Pastor arrives, a Revitalization Team will be organized consisting of the Lead Pastor, Pastor Heather, 2 Elders, 2 Deacons, and 2 At-Large members to draft a more comprehensive plan for revitalization that considers all the above items that will then be submitted to the Consistory and the Congregation in a covenant format, such plan to be evaluated semiannually with the Coach agreed to by the Classis and Lead Pastor, the Lead Pastor, Pastor Heather, and the Consistory.

Without question, this is a God-sized and ambitious plan for the future of Grace Reformed Church. It will require of all of us an openness to deep changes with which we ourselves may not feel comfortable but we know are necessary to more completely live into the mission we believe God has given us as well as our 4 Core Values. I have full confidence, however, that as staff, leaders and members of this church community you will all rally behind your next Lead Pastor and provide the support let alone encouragement your Pastor will need in the days and months ahead.

I hope and trust you will continue to be safe during the remaining days of summer. Be considerate of others around you in public spaces. In view of the recent spike in the COVID-19 Virus, do your best to practice social distancing, wash and disinfect your hands frequently, pay attention to how often you touch your hands to your face, and – as our State Governor has mandated us to do – wear your masks when you are in public places. Above all else, please continue to pray for your pastors, your staff, and your leaders as all of us are on a steep learning curve during this pandemic. Thanks so very much!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jack

July 19, 2020 WORSHIP SERVICE

Next Sunday, at our 10:00 am Worship service, we will be meeting in the sanctuary as Pastor Heather Dood shares the message: “Repentance” from Matthew 3:1-14.

FUTURE EVENT DATES/TIMES:

Aug. 10th - 6pm **Operation BackPack**

Aug. 31st - 6pm - **Children & Youth Volunteer Training Picnic**

Oct. 3rd – 11:00 am -1:00 pm **Fall Festival**

Oct. 5th **Crossing & Impact Night Begins**

Oct. 26th - 6-7:30 pm **Trunk R Treat**

Dec. 19th 5 pm-7 pm **Festival of Lights**

**These are all assuming we are able to gather.*

PRAYERS & PRAISE

Please continue to pray for Jim Herrema as the spot on his lungs showed fungus. He is waiting for an appointment with an infectious doctor.

Continue to keep Mary Bush in your prayers. As you know, she is now at the memory care unit of Reflections Sunset Manor. Also remember Beth Kubiak and her girls, as well as the rest of the Bush family as they go through these difficult times.

We give thanks that Joan Emaus is doing well after her surgery!

Dick Postema continues to be hospitalized. On Monday he was scheduled to have a new pacemaker implanted. Please keep Dick and his family in your prayers.

Don Schutter will have surgery July 15th to remove kidney stones.

Continue to keep Matthew Czurak's grandfather in your prayers as he battles liver cancer.

GRACE NEWS

We are excited to announce that **Ray Zondervan will be fulfilling the Interim Worship Leader position** for the remainder of the summer. Ray has been helping with worship for the past several weeks as well as producing our online service. Ray we are blessed to have you serve at Grace and look forward to your leadership.

A special thanks to Sarah Horton for filling our interim position the past 4months in such a unique time. We truly have appreciated having Sarah a part of Grace. We would normally have a thank you celebration but at this time we are unable to so I ask that you would bless her with cards/letters of thanks for her gifts she shared with us at Grace. (Sarah Horton, 14454 Kellogg School Rd., Hickory Corners, MI 49060)

OPERATION BACKPACK – Great sales this week on back pack items! Two options are available to you! One would be to buy the backpack and fill it with the supplies listed. The other would be to donate individual items. All supplies/backpacks would need to be turned in by August 3. Items needed for each backpack: Crayons, Ruler, 2 Highlighters, 2 – 1” Binders, 2 Notebooks, 1 Eraser, 1 Box Washable Markers, 1 Box Pencils, 1 Box Pens, 2 Glue Sticks.

CHURCH TO GO FOR FAMILIES: Pastor Heather is excited to launch church to go for the summer. Pizza boxes have been assembled and available for families to pick up on Sunday, July 19th following the worship service, or join Pastor Heather Tuesday, July 21st 6:00 pm for a parking lot pizza party!! Each family will be provided their own pizza and a parking lot square for a picnic type dinner on this day. **RSVP by July 17** to Pastor Heather via text (616-450-0302) your name and how many in your family will be eating pizza.

What is in a Church to go pizza box you wonder?? Items will be included to engage families and ways for them to share how God is moving in them during the summer break. Items such as “flat Jesus” take along, a scroll of bible coloring pages, flip card conversation starters, Skittles and a Skittles prayer guide, suggested Bible apps to download, colored pencils, and more! Be sure to plan to pick yours up either Sunday after church or at the Pizza Party on Tuesday, July 21.