

## **Greenview Administrative Commission Report**

### **Members of the Greenview AC**

Chair: Rev. Andrew Sonneborn  
Secretary: Rev. Christian Choi  
Chaplain: Rev. Susan Phillips  
Member: Elder/CLP Sandi Woodard

### **Abbreviations**

AC: Administrative Commission  
CLC: Church Leadership Connection (online ministry postings)  
CLP: Commissioned Lay Pastor  
COM: Committee on Ministry  
CRE: Commissioned Ruling Elder (same as CLP)  
MWS: Minister of Word and Sacrament  
PCUSA: Presbyterian Church (USA)  
PGR: Presbytery of Great Rivers  
RE: Ruling Elder  
TE: Teaching Elder (same as MWS)

### **Background Information**

It came to the attention of COM at its November 19, 2019 meeting<sup>1</sup>, through their Session moderator Rev. Adam Quine, that there were significant issues developing within the life of Greenview United Presbyterian Church. It was reported at a later COM meeting by Rev. Adam Quine that several members of the Session, along with the co-clerks and the secretary had all resigned their positions effective immediately or were fired. This left the Session of Greenview United Presbyterian Church below the minimum threshold to function according to their church's By-Laws. This mass departure also indicated that there were significant issues within the life of the congregation that needed to be addressed. It was decided by COM that the most effective way to address these issues was by forming an AC to work directly with the congregation. The COM voted to officially recommend to PGR the creation of an AC for Greenview at its May 19, 2020 meeting.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> COM Meeting Minutes for the November 19, 2019 meeting. Minutes were approved at the December 2019 COM meeting. Accessed March 22, 2021

<sup>2</sup> COM Meeting Minutes for May 19, 2020. Minutes were approved at the June 30, 2020 COM meeting. Accessed March 22, 2021

At the June 2, 2020 meeting of the Presbytery of Great Rivers, an AC was officially formed to help address identified, systemic issues within the Greenview congregation. The Presbytery empowered and tasked the AC with the following tasks and authority:

1. To assist the Session in discerning its current and future ministry and mission.
2. To “counsel with the session concerning reported difficulties within the congregation”, (G-3.0303d)
3. “Advising the session as to appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the reported difficulties,” (G-3.0303d)
4. “Offering to help as a mediator, and” (G-3.0303d)
5. “Acting to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the session or if the session is unable or unwilling to do so, following the procedural safeguards of the rules of discipline.” (G-3.0303d)
6. To meet with the congregation as needed to discern matters of disorder and to discern future ministry and mission.
7. If requested or if the commission “determines that the session is unable or unwilling to manage wisely its affairs, the commission is given authority to assume original jurisdiction of session as provided in the Book of Order and following all proper procedures.” (G-3.0303e)
8. To exercise the Presbytery’s authority to approve “congregations desiring to move as well as to divide, dismiss, or dissolve the congregation in consultation with their members;” (G-3.0303b) and to approve a shared ministry agreement with another congregation.
9. To report its work and all actions to the Presbytery for ratification and whenever possible to take items seven and eight to the Presbytery for action.<sup>3</sup>

## **Commission Process**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission conducted our work together primarily through Zoom and email. We created a “gmail” account for the AC. This allowed us to work collaboratively by being able to access all the emails and documents in one location. Using Zoom allowed us to meet more quickly, while also keeping down the costs of travel.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.greatriverspby.org/uploads/2/4/5/6/24561669/06-02-20\\_assembly\\_minutes.pdf](http://www.greatriverspby.org/uploads/2/4/5/6/24561669/06-02-20_assembly_minutes.pdf). Pg. 5. The June 2, 2020 minutes were approved at the August 29, 2020 Presbytery meeting. Accessed March 1, 2021.

At our first meeting, we identified that our first goal as the AC was to help bring the Greenview Session into compliance with their congregation's by-laws. We also elected our officers, which are listed on page 1 of this report. We reviewed the documents submitted to the Presbytery by COM. We agreed that we needed to meet with the current Session members, as well as with people who could provide us with a history of the congregation and the conflict.

Two members of the AC met in person with the Session of Greenview at a neutral location, First Presbyterian Church of Lincoln, IL on July 17, 2020. The other two members of the AC attended the meeting on Zoom. We, the AC, introduced ourselves and explained what our job was going to be. We named the reasons why we were created by the Presbytery. We asked them to name the issues that they see in their congregation and what they need from the Presbytery. The primary issue raised at this meeting was calling a pastor or yoking with another congregation. At that meeting, the Greenview Session presented us with a list of members who volunteered to the Nominating Committee to serve on Session. They also presented us with the name of the person who would serve as a Clerk of Session. This discussion concluded and the Session continued with their regularly scheduled meeting with Rev. Adam Quine moderating. At a special called meeting of the Greenview congregation, moderated by Rev. Adam Quine, all nominations were duly elected to Session and the Clerk was elected by the Session.

Over the next several months, the AC met with various individuals involved with Greenview throughout its recent history. We met with current and former COM ministry partners, the former pastor of the congregation, and one member of our commission met with some former members of the congregation who are now worshipping at the Indian Point Presbyterian Church. All interviews were discussed by the Commission so that we were on the same page, while also maintaining confidentiality.

Once we felt that we had a grasp on Greenview's history and consequences, we decided to meet with the congregation of Greenview in October 2020. A review of this history is included in the "Acknowledgements" section. We requested that the meeting be done on Zoom. This request was initially met with resistance and ridicule by some of the Session members. One member in particular was openly hostile to the idea and stated that she refused to participate in the congregational meeting. The Commission typed up a letter and had the PGR office mail it to the congregation inviting them to meet with the AC. We ended up having 7 members of the congregation attend the meeting with the AC on Zoom.

After this meeting with the congregation, the AC heard nothing from the Session or the congregation for several months. One of the possible reasons for this is listed in the "acknowledgements" section. However, neither did anyone from the congregation reach out to the AC for guidance or clarity. As a Commission, we met in January, 2021, after receiving notice that the current Moderator of the Session, Rev. Adam Quine, wishes to resign as moderator because he will be going on sabbatical in 2021. At this meeting, we

agreed that Rev. Forrest Krummel, the current COM ministry partner for Greenview, would make a good moderator for the Greenview Session.

We met as an AC with Rev. Krummel and Rev. Adam Quine on Zoom to discuss where we are with Greenview and what would be expected of the moderator. Rev. Krummel agreed to serve as the Moderator and COM appointed him as the moderator at the February 2, 2021 meeting<sup>4</sup>. Revs. Krummel and Quine will work with each other on when and how the hand off will occur.

We met in February, 2021 to decide what our next steps are as a commission. We decided that it would be best to type up a report. After finalizing this report, we will present it to the Greenview Session in June, 2021. We also will submit this report to PGR and COM.

## **Acknowledgments**

We believe that an important part in reconciliation between the PGR and the Greenview United Presbyterian Church is acknowledging those things that led us to where we are now. To that end, we, the Greenview AC acknowledge and name that:

1. Both COM and the Session of Greenview United Presbyterian Church did not adequately identify and address the conflict and dysfunction that existed between their CLP and the congregation. This unaddressed conflict led to the dissolution of the relationship between the CLP and the congregation.
2. COM did not provide adequate guidance and assistance to Greenview after the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. In the absence of leadership, there were hostilities between congregation members, as well as between Session member that developed. This inaction referenced in Acknowledgement #1 fostered a growing sense of animosity that has led to explicit hostility with the Presbytery within the Greenview congregation.
3. The Session of Greenview has, for years, not addressed the conflict within its congregation. Several Session members still refuse to acknowledge that conflict exists within their congregation. They also refuse to acknowledge the assistance and help that Presbytery tried to provide through their many COM Ministry Partners.
4. When asked by the AC if any incoming Session members were related to current Session members, we were told no. We subsequently learned that at least three members of the same family currently serve on the Session. Miscommunication and misdirection only serve to further create a culture of conflict within the congregation and between the congregation and PGR. Having several members of one family on Session at one time, while sometimes unavoidable in a smaller, rural congregation, also works to consolidate power within a few people and can lead to further conflict.

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<sup>4</sup> COM Meeting Minutes for February 2, 2021. Minutes were approved at the March 2, 2021 COM meeting. Accessed March 22, 2021

5. There seems to be a lack of communication between the Session and the congregation. Several people connected to the congregation have stated that they were unaware that there is an AC working with Greenview. This lack of communication will only serve to further the conflict within the Greenview congregation, and between the Presbytery and the Greenview congregation.

6. After months of work and discussion, the AC received no word or direction from the Session on which path they wish to pursue except for a single sentence asking if they could yoke with another congregation. There has been no evidence of the work done in addressing the conflict and spiritual issues that need to be addressed by the Session.

7. The chair of the AC acknowledges not sending a promised list of resources in a timely manner to the Session. This lack of communication likely deepened the Session's frustration with the Presbytery.

## **Commission Recommendations**

Given the History and Process, along with the aforementioned Acknowledgements, the Greenview AC makes the following recommendations to PGR's COM for adoption. We firmly believe that the following recommendations should be completed before any decision is made regarding the yoking of Greenview United Presbyterian Church with another congregation or before calling a CLP/MWS to serve in Greenview United Presbyterian Church. COM is strongly encouraged to adopt these recommendations and to enforce these recommendations within the fullest bounds of PCUSA polity.

It is our belief that not following these recommendations will likely cause detrimental harm to the ministry of the Greenview congregation. It will also likely harm any pastor that is called and/or congregation that is yoked with Greenview.

**We believe that the most faithful future of the Greenview congregation will grow out of the spiritually necessary work of healing from past conflicts. This spiritual healing work will provide a stronger foundation for a potential yoked or called/commissioned relationship.**

**To that end, we recommend:**

1. That the current moderator of Greenview's Session conduct a comprehensive officer training for current officers, prospective officers, and any members of the congregation who wishes to attend.
2. That the Session of Greenview contract with LeaderWise to conduct conflict mediation; to addressing systemic issues within the congregation; and to begin creating a healthy system for Greenview by providing spiritual healing caused by past and present conflict/trauma.
  - The Greenview Session will communicate to the Greenview AC by July 14, 2021 via email their decision on if they plan to comply with this

- recommendation. If the Session decides not to follow this recommendation, see recommendation #4.
- We recommend that the PGR, through the COM budget or through another appropriate line item, cover up to half of the cost of this recommendation. The remaining balance should be paid for by the Greenview Session.
  - LeaderWise will determine when they feel that Greenview has made significant progress in addressing their conflict to the point that LeaderWise feels that the congregation is ready to move on to Recommendation #3. They will submit this as a report to the Transitions Subcommittee of COM and to the Greenview AC, and from the Transitions Subcommittee to the COM for adoption. A copy will be placed within the file on Greenview in the Presbytery office. The AC will be guided by the recommendations of Leaderwise in proceeding to recommendation #3.
3. That, once the AC has determined that Greenview has sufficiently completed Recommendations #1 and #2, the COM authorize the congregation of Greenview to conduct a Mission Study. It will be the goal of the Mission Study to determine the direction the congregation is wishing to take.
  4. If the Session agrees to follow these recommendations, it is the AC's intention to walk with Greenview until the AC feels that the other recommendations have been met, at which time we will request that the PGR dissolve the Greenview AC. If the Greenview Session expresses unwillingness to work toward these recommendations, then the Greenview AC will request the PGR dissolve the AC and Greenview returns to regular communications through its COM ministry partner for their business/approval.
  5. That, once the AC has determined that steps 1, 2 and 3 have been completed, the COM grant permission to Greenview to begin actively pursuing whatever the results of the Mission Study are, as communicated by Greenview Session through its Clerk of Session.
  6. That the COM develop training for its members in conflict management so that it can better identify and address developing conflicts within the congregations of PGR. This training is clearly lacking.
    - We recommend that PGR work with LeaderWise or a similar agency in developing this training.
    - This training could be adapted, recorded, and made available to pastors and congregations as well.

**Clear communication from all parties involved is paramount for the future success of Greenview's ministry and mission.**

- Communication flows from:
  - Greenview: Congregation to Session; Session (via the Clerk of Session) to COM (via Ministry partner); Session to congregation
  - COM: COM to ministry partner; Ministry partner to Session (via Clerk of Session); and the Session to the congregation

It is incumbent upon the Session to reach out to the COM for guidance and to provide the COM with guidance on the direction the congregation wishes to take.

It is incumbent upon the COM to respond to their requests in a timely manner, through their appointed ministry partner.

## **Resources from Greenview AC**

We commend to the Greenview Session the following resources as they pursue their work. This list was previously provided to Greenview, with 1 new addition:

1. LeaderWise: [www.leaderwise.org](http://www.leaderwise.org)
2. Presbytery of Great Rivers Committee on Ministry Manual of Operations: <http://www.greatriverspby.org/manual.html>
3. COM resources: <http://www.greatriverspby.org/com-resources.html>
4. PGR online resources: <http://www.greatriverspby.org/resources.html>
5. The pulpit supply: <http://www.greatriverspby.org/pulpit-supply.html>
6. The Outreach Foundation's Small Church Initiative: <https://www.theoutreachfoundation.org/small-church-initiative>
7. Presbyterian Foundation: <https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/>
8. The "Equip PC(USA)" Resources for officer training: [www.equip.pcusa.org](http://www.equip.pcusa.org)
9. Resources for small churches: <https://pres-outlook.org/2019/06/presbyterian-foundation-reaches-out-to-small-churches/>

## **Resources from COM**

Depending on the results of the Mission Study, the COM should provide the following resources to Greenview:

1. A list of available Commission Ruling Elders/Commissioned Lay Pastors/Stated Supply for Greenview to consider; or
2. Information on congregations that might be willing to yoke with Greenview; or
3. Assist Greenview in completing and then posting an available position on the CLC.

## **Addendum**

1. Greenview AC meeting minutes have been filed with the PGR office.
2. We, the members of the AC, would like to recommend for future AC's that they name a member of their commission to serve as a "chaplain" for the commission. Within our AC, Rev. Susan Phillips served in this capacity. She made space during our meetings for us to name the things that we brought into that meeting with us: our anxieties, stresses, and prayer requests. She would then offer a prayer for us at the end of the meeting. This role was invaluable to our work.
3. We would also recommend that each AC schedule a meeting with LeaderWise near the beginning of their work, and that the Presbytery financially support this recommendation. Our AC met with LeaderWise near the beginning of our work to help us set appropriate boundaries in our work. LeaderWise also offered us a space to process issues that came up, together as a commission. We believe that this work with LeaderWise helped unite our commission and aided us in our work.