

Minutes of the Called Session Meeting

Bayside Presbyterian Church
5 November 2020 7:00 PM Via Zoom

The Session of Bayside Presbyterian Church met in a Stated Meeting at 7:00 pm via Zoom due to the current COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. Members present, constituting a quorum, were Moderator Rev. Dr. David Rollins, Clerk and Elder Amanda Long and Elders Cherokee Adams, Will Albertoli, Clif Furedy, Ashley McLeod, Bob Orcutt, Michele Parker, Chris Pascuzzi, Mike Raymer, Di Ricks, Ed Spillman, and Rose Ann Wehr.

Session Members not in attendance: Butch Brenton, Ed Gluckowski, Richard Guy, Kay Niman Meyers, Brenda Reid, Thom Sare and Matthew Wicks.

Staff Member Present: Associate Pastor Rev. Emma Ouellette, Chi Yi Chen Wolbrink, Director of Music and Lacy Schimmel, Director of Youth and Family Outreach.

Mission: Bayside is a covenant community of Christ's people seeking to know and do the will of God.

Vision: Changing lives by growing Christian disciples and living God's Word.

Rev. Rollins opened with prayer. Rev. Rollins shared the purpose of the meeting.

The called session meeting will be to review 2 motions from Worship. The motions are detailed below along with the Zoom Meeting details. As this is a called meeting no other business will be reviewed.

Motion Two was discussed first.

Motion Two:

Worship moves that a special worship service be held on the Longest Night, December 21st. The worship service would be held outside (weather permitting) or virtually. **The Motion Passed.**
****Note that this motion was ultimately overridden to state virtual only by the approval of Motion One.***

Rev. Rollins shared the motion and advised that Elder Spillman had addition verbiage to add to the supporting documentation. It is not an amendment to the motion.

The motion was read.

Motion One:

The Worship Ministry moves that in person worship services be suspended as of November 16, 2020, including Christmas Eve services, until improvements regarding COVID-19 provide increased levels of confidence for our congregation to return to in person services. The worship committee will monitor and evaluate monthly. Worship services will be pre-recorded and made available online.

There was discussion about the motion 2 being in conflict to motion 1.

Elder McLeod shared that the motion was made prior to the rising COVID cases and was not part of the discussion with ministry.

Rev. Rollins shared that he feels that the additional thoughts should be part of our discussion.

Elder Pascuzzi shared that part of the reason was brought forward was the lack of participation from the congregation.

Elder Parker shared that she attended this past Sunday and that there was little participation this past Sunday and spoke in favor of the motion given the participation. She felt very welcomed and safe but does not want to see anything happen to her church family

Rev. Rollins shared that Sperry Davis had been contacted and offered support in processing the services and for now is fine.

Elder Furedy shared that he shared motion with ministry – all agreed to that we need to be save. They did state that we do need to find a way and time to come back to worship and activities at the church.

Rev. Rollins agreed and shared we need to think about how we connect and yes things have changed and need to for now, but the staff continues to look for ways to connect. Yes, we need to move toward in person worship as we are able to do so in a safe ways.

Elder Spillman shared that he concurred that we need to have the opportunity to share in worship – he shared that if the work by Sperry is the only concern then we need to find ways to support him better and continue worship. But feels that with the numbers rising he doesn't feel that we should be in person right now until the numbers are declining, and it is safe to return to in person worship.

Elder Orcutt – shared we should not wait until the Governor makes a move – we need to care for the congregation.

Rev. Rollins called the motion and **The motion passed.**

Rev. Rollins stated that Motion 2 will be updated by Motion 1 and will be virtual not in person.

Elder McLeod shared that we should not have the special worship in person on the 21st based on the other motion passing. She shared some of the information in the notes below. Looking at ways to make the building open to worship in the space and perhaps in small groups as people are comfortable.

Rev Rollins shared that the 2020 renovation has been delayed a bit and looks like it maybe early December. The pews are running behind.

Elder McLeod shared that we need to make sure that we are communicating the reason for the change. Should we spend some money to boost services and social media, etc.

Elder Spillman asked if we would still have a Longest Night service - virtually – since it will not be in person.

Rev. Ouellette shared that Living Nativity will be held, the 12th of December.

Elder Albertoli – wanted to thank the staff for all they are doing during this time.

The meeting was closed with prayer at 7:30 by Rev. Ouellette.

Supporting Documentation that was shared prior to the meeting via email.

The following reasons brought the committee to make the above recommended motion:

1. In person service attendance is well below the maximum occupancy of 80, with no more than 20 in attendance, half of which are either staff members or essential volunteers.
2. The recent survey indicates that our congregations' needs are best being met through the online service.
3. The quality of a fully pre-recorded service exceeds that of a partially live and partially recorded service; therefore the overall quality of a fully pre-recorded service better serves Bayside Presbyterian members and non-members alike.
4. A fully pre-recorded service also values, respects and makes the most efficient use of our staff and volunteer resources.

----- Not part of motion but things being considered-----

Online defined:

YouTube and Facebook

Regarding Christmas Worship

1. Two pre-recorded Christmas Eve services, one for children/families and one traditional adult service will be produced and made available online for Christmas Eve worship.
2. Christmas decorations will still adorn fellowship hall (and or the sanctuary once complete) for the full seasonal feel of advent services. Wreaths outside at entrance doors etc.
3. While not confirmed, staff and worship committee are considering options to provide congregants the opportunity to have an individually scheduled "time slot" for reflection at church during the advent season.

From the survey, it was noted that it would bring great joy for members to see the faces of fellow congregants, therefore worship ministry is formulating plans to:

1. Encourage members to provide "Christmas Card Photos" of themselves/families that can be used pre and post service, as well as a full "Christmas greetings from Bayside Presbyterian" slide show.
2. Set up zoom small groups to meet to watch service together, or post service to chat, a "virtual atrium" if you will.

Additional information from Elder Ed Spillman

It appears the predicted COVID second wave is becoming a reality. The overall US rate has hit new highs of over 100,000 daily cases as well as new 7-day highs – and they are increasing. The areas of the country where cold weather has settled in are leading the way. The weather has started to turn on the East coast. Virginia rates are starting to climb – as well as Washington DC. Western Virginia areas are increasing rapidly. Norfolk and Virginia Beach new cases have started to climb, and the 7-day average is headed upward – just like many areas of the country have already.

We need to worship God individually and as a congregation while also ensuring the safety of ourselves and our neighbors. To that end, a recent survey was conducted across BPC and found out our congregation's group worship needs are best being met through our online service. In fact, about 10-15 members and visitors in the audience have attended the Sunday service since we restarted it this past summer.

As we move forward through the Fall – the positivity rate and new case counts for COVID are highly likely to increase. In the interest of safety, we should discontinue in-person worship 16 November – and return to producing the service strictly online. Having strictly on-line services should continue until such time as the staff and Session consider it safe for all to meet again.