

**Presbytery of Yellowstone – Special Meeting
January 18, 2022**

22-001. Opening of the Meeting

The Presbytery of Yellowstone met on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, via Zoom format beginning at 12:30 noon.

The meeting was opened with prayer and a reading of Psalm 42 by the Moderator, MWS Dave Thompson. Attendees reflected on the Psalm then heard it read a second time by Rev. Charley Blom of Miles City.

This special meeting was called by 2022 Presbytery Moderator Dave Thompson and 2021 Moderator Julie Boksich at the request of the Pastoral Ministry Team for the following:

1. To give the presbytery opportunity to inform Esther Berg on the presbytery's action at the November 5-6, 2021 meeting and reasons for denying her request for reinstatement as a PC(USA) pastor. (BoO G-2.0508)
2. To give Esther Berg opportunity to respond.

22-002. Present at the meeting:

Ruling Elders with vote attending:

1. RE Russ Kline, Member LC
2. CRE Margee Smith, Stanford
3. RE Chuck Wright, Butte
4. RE Andy Pehl, Terry
5. RE Debbie Blackburn, Manhattan
6. RE Suzanne Bratsky, Bozeman
7. RE Sean Larson, Anaconda
8. RE Cal Boyle, Anaconda, St. Timothy's Chapel
9. CRE Veva Larson, Anaconda

Ministers of Word and Sacrament Members Present: (Note absences and excused absences are not, reported for Special Meetings of this Presbytery)

Dave Thompson (Moderator), Dick Davis, Mary Davis, Debbie Funke, Teresa Kendall, Jamie Schmeling, Dan Krebill, JP Carlson, James Bell, David Murchie, Neva Rathbun, Chuck Carlson, Rusty Craig, Kimmy Briggs, Charley Blom, Kathy Goodrich Co GP

10. **Others Present:** RE Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk, Esther Berg, guest, RE Stephanie Bergstrom, Manhattan, guest, RE Karolee Larson, Butte, guest

22.003. A Quorum was declared present by the Moderator, Dave Thompson based on attendance visible on ZOOM.

22.004 Procedural Motion

The Stated Clerk moves the following Procedural Motion:

1. That the roll for this meeting be established by email to;
statedclerk@yellowstonepcusa.org Please include your church and if you are a minister

member, ruling elder serving as commissioner from your church, or are a member due to membership on Leadership Cabinet

2. Call in or Zoom attendees shall indicate in the email if they are a Member, Minister of Word and Sacrament, Elder Commissioner, Other Member with vote according to the presbytery standing rules, or guest.
3. That Esther Berg be seated and given voice at this meeting.
4. That the Presbytery grant the Moderator the authority to give privilege of the floor to persons of Yellowstone Presbytery, other than Members or Commissioners, for the purpose of speaking at this meeting.

Action item: A motion was made to adopt the procedural motion. The motion was seconded and it passed unanimously.

22.005 Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming spoke at the request of the Pastoral Ministry Team (PMT) concerning reasons the PMT recommended that Yellowstone Presbytery deny Esther Berg's request for reinstatement to the minister rolls of Yellowstone Presbytery at the November 5-6, 2021 meeting of presbytery:

1. Misrepresentation of herself as a PC (USA) pastor following her removal from the rolls in November 2009.
2. Misrepresentation of her status as honorably retired when only a presbytery in which one has membership can grant that status.
3. Application to a position of designated pastor in a PC (USA) church when not enrolled as a minister member of a presbytery.
4. Items 1 through 3 above spoke to an unwillingness to adhere to the polity of the PC (USA).

Yellowstone Presbytery approved the recommendation of the PMT on November 5, 2021.

The floor was opened for others in the presbytery to speak. Teresa Kendall noted that the Community Presbyterian Church of West Yellowstone is no longer a part of the presbytery.

22.006 Guest Esther Berg spoke in response stating she was very sorry. That she did not know she was misrepresenting herself as she thought, with opinions from several people, that she was ordained as a minister for life. She stated that she had had difficulty communicating with people in the presbytery, often waiting a long time for response. She stated trying to have her membership moved to other presbyteries but was denied. (Note: There is no record of this in her file.)

Jim Bell asked Esther what she would like Yellowstone Presbytery to do at this moment in time. Her response was to be reinstated to the rolls and allowed to transfer her membership to Tres Rios Presbytery.

A motion to reinstate was made but ruled out of order at this meeting.

Dan Krebill cited that in the Book of Order G-2.0508 there is no path to reinstatement and that

Esther would have to have to go through the ordination process if she wanted to be reinstated. Esther was asked how she has stayed in contact with presbytery since her removal and she admitted she had not.

22.007 A motion was made to extend the docket 15 minutes to 1:45 p.m. and to go into executive session. The motion was seconded and passed.

Esther Berg was excused from the meeting and presbytery went into executive session.

22.008 Presbytery returned from executive session.

22.009 A motion was made to adjourn the special meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

22.010 The meeting was closed with prayer by Moderator Dave Thompson

Respectfully submitted.

Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk

Esther M. Berg, M. Div.

535 W. Dunton Avenue ♦ Orange ♦ California ♦ 92865 ♦ (714) 272-8041 ♦
rev.esther@gmail.com

June 6, 2021

Dear Session of Grace Presbyterian Chapel, San Angelo:

Please find attached my resume for your consideration.

I have spent the last 14 years in Asia serving as a pastor in Korea and subsequently founder and president of Zeteo Missions and Orphanage in the Philippines. I remain involved via web conference calls and other digital tools. While on a 6 month Sabbatical in California, the Covid crisis hit – effectively stopping me from returning to the Philippines until the borders reopen for foreigners. At the moment, it looks like it will be next year before they do. At the same time, the government there is capricious and may suddenly decide open, just because they can. But as of three weeks ago, the most stringent “lock down” policies were back in place due to the highest spike of covid cases ever in the country.

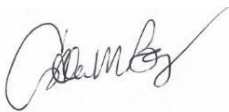
While I have spent my life as a pastor and missionary, much of my work, and experience has ensured that I have a broad range of transferable skills that would contribute to my ability to serve as a good match as your Designated Pastor.

I have spent most of my life and ministry equipping the saints for their service to God and have been told this is one of my spiritual gifts – along with teaching, preaching and compassion. Nothing brings me greater joy than working with someone who has an “ah ha” moment in faith and life – and then helping them discover and put to use their spiritual gifts.

I have learned to navigate different cultures and peoples. I have developed a sensitivity to others and their needs and am flexible and willing to learn. I led a staff of 16 as part of the mission including building staff skills and abilities by creating a training program that successfully scaled their ability to serve effectively in their respective positions.

God has gifted me to inspire and encourage individuals and teams to give the best and most of themselves. I am comfortable in multiple roles including serving as a leader, or a supporter. I am an effective team player and seek to bring people together around a common faith and goals resulting in achievement of our common Kingdom purpose.

Your sister in Spirit,



Esther M. Berg

Esther M. Berg, M. Div.

535 W. Dunton Avenue ♦ Orange ♦ California ♦ 92865 ♦ (714) 272-8041 ♦ rev.esther@gmail.com

Objective: Experienced, dynamic, innovative and compassionate pastor seeks a position where I can use my gifts to encourage and uplift others to use their gifts in God's Kingdom.

RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT and Description of Duties

Founder, President, Zeteo Missions Project and Orphanage, San Carlos City, Pangasinan - Philippines

July, 2009 – present

Duties included all administrative operations of the mission including business paperwork, orphanage paperwork, legal compliance, facilities and plant management, certification of orphanage, training and capacity building of large mission and orphanage staff with a particular focus on the empowerment of local community members to support the human needs in the region. As well as teaching, preaching, and counseling.

Professor of English – DongA University, Busan Korea

February 2014 – February 2016

Duties included teaching University level courses, English as a Second Language.

Pastor to English speaking Worship

Sooyoungro Presbyterian Church; Busan, Korea

December, 2005 – March 31, 2009

Duties included: Senior Pastor over all English Ministries including youth, children and an English Language school.

Pastor Presbyterian Church USA

September 1, 1988 – present (officially retired April 2017)

- **Parish Associate - Community Presbyterian Church.** West Yellowstone, MT: *March 2002 – September 2005*
- **Parish Associate – First Pres. Church; Greeley, CO** *May, 2000 – May, 2001*
- **Pastor - First Pres. Church; Otis, CO** *July 1, 1995 – April, 2000*
- **Associate Pastor – First Pres. Church; Cranford, NJ** *June 1 1992 – June 30, 1995*
- **Associate Pastor – Brookdale Pres. Church; St. Joseph MO** *September 1, 1988 – March 31, 1992*

Director – West Yellowstone Community Task Force [Social Justice]

March 2002 – September 2005 West Yellowstone, MT

Duties included drug abuse prevention, juvenile offender rehabilitation and reconciliation and building community cooperation

EDUCATION

New York University; New York, New York

Blanton-Peale Pastoral Counseling Program

MA in Counseling, 3 of 4 semesters/disciplines completed *1994*

Princeton Theological Seminary; Princeton, New Jersey

M.Div. emphasis Christian Education - *June 1988*

Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, California

B.A. Religion, Emphasis Christian Education - *April 1984*

CERTIFICATIONS

Mediation Certification – Montana State Mediators – *2003*

Counseling – Blanton-Peale Pastoral Counseling Program – *1994*

(completed 3 of 4 disciplines)

Ministry Credential – Azusa Pacific University - *1984 authorization to lead church ministries in a pastoral capacity - some denominations requirement for ordination.*

PUBLICATIONS

Faith of Our Mothers, A book about Princeton Alumnae who stand out in their unique ministries. I wrote an article about mission.

Various publications: Published articles in local and denominational newsletters, bilingual religious children's curriculum (Korean/English), family religious holiday activity books and self-published faith-oriented picture books for children.

SKILLS

Multi-lingual: Fluent in English, and speak limited Korean, Tagalog, Pangasinan (Filipino dialect), and Spanish. Can speak at a conversational level depending upon the topic.

Computer Skills - Microsoft Office Suite, proficient.

Administration Skills – Basic accounting, budgeting, payroll, human resource management, team building and organizational management, meeting moderation and meeting minutes, Robert's Rules of Order

Personal Interests – cooking, sewing, movies, music, art

Voices of Women in Ministry

June 18, 2020

WHO WE ARE MANY VOICES [RESOURCES](#) BOOKS BLOGS & MORE FROM
PTSEM SERMONS SERMON ARCHIVES SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Times of Trial

Due to political unrest and government crack downs on critics, I will not be mentioning the country where I serve in the mission field.

I have been a pastor in the PCUSA since 1988 – and am a 6th generation pastor (we don't know farther back than that). I have always been proud to serve the Lord in any way I can. At the same time, I think we professional Christians often hide the frustrations, pain and suffering that most pastors/leaders endure in the midst of their service, and sometimes because of it.

As a missionary in the majority world living amongst the poorest of the poor, I have seen and endured a lot. I have been immersed in a culture that does not value life, that watches their neighbors starve and bleed to death. A culture where every family expects they will lose at least one child before. The last 15 years living overseas have taken a toll both personally and spiritually. Last September I came back to my hometown in California for a year-long Sabbatical to find much needed emotional and spiritual refreshment. Truthfully, I knew three years ago I needed to do this, but bought into the lie that it was more important that I stay and help and do the work with the orphans, than take the time I needed to heal. I waited until I could wait no longer. Because of my delay, my Sabbatical has been both a difficult and painful time, as well as a healing and refreshing time. It took several months for me to adjust to life in the United States – like coming off a boat and having to get my land legs again- the earth felt unstable to me.

This time of trial – this national quarantine - has brought me to two opposing places: deep concern and peace.

The author of Hebrews wrote in Chapter 12 verse 3: *Consider [Jesus] who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.*

I was completely burned out when I returned to the U.S. I had grown weary, had lost my confidence in self, and was worried about my faith – I had lost heart. I knew the truth of my God, but knew I needed a reboot to be able to live my faith. Thankfully, I was well on my way to mental and spiritual health when the crisis hit but wondered which way I would swing. Would I swing back into depression or forward into God's perfect peace. One of the blessings during my

Sabbatical has been a bible study group with some amazing women with whom I have been studying the book of Hebrews. When we got to chapter 12, I felt as if God were speaking directly to me. I had lost the very things that Christ came to give me, and now God was healing my heart and restoring my strength and giving me a strong heart again. California is expensive and so I took a part time job to supplement my meager missionary stipend and cover expenses for the year, including time to reflect with professional guidance. The loss of my job at a local theater brought stress, but also brought some unexpected gifts from three different locations as well as the stimulus check that will more than get me through any financial needs during this time. The gift of time, to simply veg and binge watch, to catch up on reading, to exercise, and to pray, as I had not previously allowed myself. To sit with God's word again and let it soak into me: to be still and know. To read a complete chapter and see the life of the Word in fresh ways with new eyes. To be convicted, to confess, to feel the affirmation of God in the Word and through his people. I have truly enjoyed the "time off" and the peace that has come with it.

Moving to an emerging culture, I had already given my life over to God, so I haven't really worried about the virus. I am not being cavalier about it, I have an autoimmune disease that has permanently damaged my lungs, but I also do not fear it. Yet I see fear all around me. I have tried to encourage those around me that God will see us through. Do not lose heart.

Fear for tomorrow solves nothing but robs us of hope for today, worry for tomorrow solves nothing, but robs us of peace for today. Today's reality is that a lot of good people are confused, angry, fearful, annoyed, and having a myriad of emotions around the current state of the world. I have dear and faithful friends who are "freaking out" about everything touched, space between, masks, and who are terrified to return to work. I have dear and faithful friends who are angry they are required to wear masks in public and planning to cancel their Costco memberships. Good and faithful believers are responding in many different ways.

When the Israelites found themselves in a time of trial – without strong leadership (Moses had gone up the mountain to meet with God) – there was panic: desires to go back to Egypt; hoarding of manna, which spoilt; building a golden calf. Many people behaved in a manner contrary to one of faith. At the same time – over the long haul - we see the faith of Moses helping the people through, the hope of Caleb and Joshua overcoming the majority fear with challenge to move forward. It took 40 years of wandering in the dessert – but I recently heard a pastor express that the wandering (rather than punishment) was an act of grace

and mercy. That time of trial was discipline to help a people who were “not yet” become what they needed to be to conquer and inherit the land of Promise.

My deep concern has come for the mission I, along with my adopted daughter, founded in an emerging nation/majority world country. My adult daughter has remained leading and guiding the staff and children in the orphanage. Of course I am concerned I cannot be there to help, even if I wanted to, the country has shut its borders. I would be unable to reach the mission because of travel restriction. Anti-American sentiments have only risen during this crisis. While we in the first world complain about lines and toilet paper. There has been no food on the shelves for more than a month in the poorest areas near the mission. They wait all day to enter the store, only to find there is nothing they need or what they can buy will only feed a family for one day. Travel is severely limited, and each household is allotted only one pass per family. Thanks to my daughters good planning, they were able to obtain 30 days of formula and 60 days of food when this all began, and the adults have been rationing the food and water since the beginning. At the same time, so many are going hungry all around them. They are doing their best to help: In weeks prior, the mission was able to purchase two metric tons of rice; one was donated to the local food pantry for the poor. Sadly, most people who have wealth have shut themselves off – including the doctors, who have left interns and nurses to handle the crisis because they don’t want to get sick. The food at the mission will run out in 2 weeks. I have deep concern for the growing hunger, crime and violence that surrounds the mission.

Daily I pray for the mission and their health and wellbeing. I pray daily for their witness and outreach in the midst of these difficult times. I pray for 6 year old Ezekiel – he has cerebral palsy and is nonverbal at this time; he has a bladder infection and can’t see a doctor because the hospitals are full of the sick and no doctors. The worst place for an immune compromised child.

But our God sacrificed EVERYTHING so that we would not lose hope – so that we would not grow weary and lose heart. This Hope is not dependent upon the circumstances that surround us, but rather is built on a God who knows our suffering, because he too has suffered and entered into our human condition.

So I look for what God is doing, the signs, the reminders of hope: The American Dr. who has consulted via the web with my daughter about Ezekiel, and he confirmed steps needed. I see my daughter who studied medicine before she changed her major to follow me into ministry and has many of common-sense solutions that seem to be working. I see a care box from a partner congregation that was somehow delivered when deliveries have all but ended due to the

quarantine. And what a wonderful boost to moral and faith to see care that crossed an ocean – and to see the children so happy with the gifts they received. I see staff that works so hard to keep their spirits high and the children happy – in spite of losing all four of our house-parents to fear (they fled when the quarantine began). I see the staff who did stay (leaving their families to quarantine at the mission) the security guards and cooks stepping up to help our teacher, Nursery leader, and social worker care for the children.

I know of three who have passed during this time of quarantine – One due to covid -19. A mom, younger than me, who was health compromised. I grieve for these families and that they cannot receive the physical hugs and care of their communities. But I also marvel at the ways their communities have found to reach out to them, to honor their loved ones and share in their grief. In the midst of all the difficulties, faithful people are still reaching out.

There is a comparison of Mount Sinai and the holy mountain/kingdom that is to come at the end of Hebrews Chapter 12.

26 At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe;

In these Times of Trial, we are shaken - our faith, our relationships, our communities, and sometimes our governments. The impermanent things fall away. But the shaking simply reveals who we are – but not only that – who our God is. And what remains is what is truly real – the things that cannot be shaken – God's kingdom. In the midst of our fear and concerns, we can also give thanks for the opportunities and growth these times are bringing, painful as they maybe. Perhaps you were not ready and are struggling to overcome fear, or perhaps you are the one who is speaking into the fear – the words of HOPE. Whomever you are remember this time is still a time of God's Grace and Mercy to us all. And because of that, I can give thanks. Because our God reigns, we have hope.

I heard a sermon recently where the pastor preached about fear. When things are shaken, we think we will "rise to the occasion" but actually we usually regress. We go back to the basics – and we may not like what we see in ourselves or others. So when fighter pilots are trained over and over – it is so when they are shaken – they will regress to their training and succeed. We must continue to

practice our faith: worship, study, pray, and love with patience and kindness so that as we are being shaken, we will not grow weary; we will not lose heart. Our God knows our fears and our sufferings, and our Jesus intercedes for us, and holds tomorrow in his hands.

I pray God's sustaining grace and mercy will cover you as you overcome.

Please forgive the length of this document. But we are speaking about my life and my life's work. In case I am not given the opportunity to speak to you in person, I want to give you what I think is important. I am so happy to speak to you personally. 714-272-8041.

I was asked to provide references (see reference page) and speak about "What I have been doing" since 2009 that would support my request for reinstatement.

I would submit to you that EVERYTHING I have done since 2009 is in keeping with the faith and ministry of the PCUSA. Some things have been blatantly Presbyterian:

- My participation in the Women of Faith Initiative at Princeton Seminary; I have been a participant, small group leader, and Mission presenter at the WMI (Women in Ministry Initiative) Conferences held by Princeton Theological Seminary in 2017 and 2019. I was also made the WMI liaison for Asia. A PCUSA ministry for mostly Women Clergy of the PCUSA
- My participation in the book "Faith of our Mothers." I was chosen as one of 4 Presbyterian women outstanding in mission. I was asked to write an essay/chapter for a book titled, "Faith of Our Mothers, Living Still: A History of Women at Princeton Theological Seminary" The book was published in 2017 as part of the Women in Ministry Initiative at Princeton Theological Seminary highlighting PTS graduates who are outstanding in their fields (and written by Dr. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld and Dr. Abigail Rian Evans). **So I am published in a book highlighting outstanding PCUSA women**
- I and our mission have continued to be part of the PCUSA at home and abroad both as mission partners (evidenced in my references), and in contributing to the betterment of Presbyterians and Ecumenical ministries around the world.

The work of our mission – Zeteo Missions (Zeteo is Greek for "passionately seeking" and appears 137 times in the New Testament) – strives to Passionately Seek to do the work of Christ in the Philippines. Our mission would be a PCUSA mission except for the fact that the Presbytery of the Yellowstone refused to entertain even a discussion about the possibilities at the time of my request in 2009 and honestly, I was tired of trying to convince the Presbytery members regarding my previous work in Korea, so I accepted their decision to NOT support my work because "it would be too difficult to supervise." I tried several times to go around Yellowstone Presbytery to get presbyterian endorsement– but was informed it was impossible to "go around" the Presbytery, I also tried 3x to transfer to other Presbyteries (Pittsburgh, Los Ranchos, Princeton) who were excited about the work I was doing. But because Yellowstone chose to drop me from the rolls, that too was difficult to impossible.

There is nothing "UN-Presbyterian" about the work I have been doing – as a Presbyterian Pastor and my daughter a Presbyterian Elder – we teach and preach the Word of God, and run our mission in a very Presbyterian style.

I looked at **the Presbyterian web site (pcusa.org)** and under the heading "How We Serve" found 20 items of Presbyterian service. Our mission does nearly all of them – Here are the standards on the PCUSA web site for which we more than engage.

- **Advocacy and Social Justice** – We are fighting human trafficking. The Philippines is #1 in the world for Child Pornography. Children, especially infants, are a desirable commodity because they can be raised up to perform sexually from an early age. (our first rescue was an 18 month old girl already being prostituted and living in a cage until "needed".) Our Orphanage (currently with 13 children and 16 staff) is the only Orphanage in 3 provinces that accepts infants. We fight to beat the traffickers to the hospitals for unwanted babies and often we are too late. We must pay families to help with medical expenses or else they will give the infant to traffickers who can afford to pay more. (Our orphanage was completed and opened in 2017) the average life span of a child in the sex trade is 7 years – so traffickers are always looking for replacements. The majority of the children who have gone through our mission were about to be trafficked or taken from traffickers.
The majority of government documents are written in English yet, the majority of citizens (especially the poor) don't speak English, some don't even speak Filipino – only their local dialect. We advocate for the poor in all areas of the government assisting them to get earned benefits, social security, health benefits, and avail themselves of many government services of which most poor are unaware (vaccines, scholarships, marriage services, etc). This has been a part of our ministry since 2009.
- **Curriculum** – since our inception in 2009, we have taught many classes (from Bible Study and basic Christianity to "how to make a budget", financial management, and learning English etc) We have created curriculums and classes that our staff are now teaching today. We have also raised up Pastors and teachers from our mission, as well as now creating children's

programming for teaching faith to Pre-schoolers. Recently, my daughter completed her course work and was certified to teach [the only person in the Philippines to have this] the TBRI (Trust-Based Relational Intervention <https://child.tcu.edu/about-us/tbri/#sthash.3uXWlYpY.dpbs>) this proven method teaches us how to work with children who never made proper childhood attachments and help them to “rewire” their brains to healthy attachments. To be a healthy adult, these attachments are crucial – and to have a successful adoption – these are imperative emotional needs. We are now the ONLY place in the entire country certified to help in this area and are now consider one of the Country’s premier facilities by the Department of Social Welfare. (We were receiving national attention before this because of our faith based differences from other orphanages) So we are promoting nationally new curriculums

- **Disaster Response** – Since 2009, we have been locally and nationally responding to disasters. Since the Philippine Archipelago is located within the ring of fire, we annually deal with Typhoons, Earthquakes, Tornados and Flooding in a moderate to severe form. We have done food relief, transportation, housing assistance and spiritual support during crises here. When the city of Tacloban was leveled by Typhoon in 2013 – we were chosen by the Idaho charity Domes for the World to help demonstrate their new kind of typhoon proof dome buildings for the nation as we had already built 5 domes on our property. In the season of Covid, our mission has distributed more than 1 metric ton of rice to the poor (along with harvests from our Gardens) and continued to work in medical relief.
- **Ecumenical Relations** – I have served with the pastoral counsel in San Carlos city (nearly every Christian church from independents to the Baptists and Methodists are involved) since 2009. We have facilitated our mission volunteers (groups who visit) to host joint concerts, training seminars, medical relief, cleft palate surgeries, puppet shows, and food distribution. Plus we have participated in the events hosted by other churches. I have also preached and sung and played piano at many other churches in our communities.
- **Education** – We have worked with the existing schools in our communities to bring in programming, help with English, and support their work. We have provided regular seminars on nutrition, first aid, financial management, debt reduction, etc for our community since 2010. We recently opened our Pre-School with a licensed teacher– but because of Covid – it is currently only our children (children are not allowed to attend school and our communities are too poor to have other options for education) I also currently teach the children once a week on Zoom.
- **Faith and Worship** – We have engaged in daily worship since our having staff (2010) and have grown to Sunday Night services geared for little ones. (Again our area has been locked down – meaning you can’t leave the property except those who have a pass and only on the two days to which you are assigned -
- **Grants and Scholarships** – Our mission regularly provides Grants and loans for medical need, as well as some education assistance. Our only criteria is that persons be willing to participate in a work program at our mission. We begin the program with 3 days volunteering and 2 days paid in work suitable for the person(s) receiving funds. If they do well for 2 weeks, we flip the programs so they are 2 days volunteering and 3 days paid. They can take pride in early rewards and bringing money/food home to the family. During that time they labor alongside trained staff who share their faith and principles of work and earning and care of the Lord and the mission. If they make it to the 50 % mark, their loan becomes a Grant and the debts forgiven. At this point they are able to understand and receive the Grace of God which before they felt was something to which they were entitled. This has been a very successful program for those who have completed it – all have gone on to gainful employment and new ways to help support their families. They have also evangelized others and prevented others from serious medical conditions by bringing them to the mission before their condition becomes untreatable.
- **Hands and Feet (service Opportunities)** – one of our foundational principles since the beginning was providing a safe place for people to experience mission and ministry in an Emerging, Majority (3rd) World Nation. Our first volunteer in mission was 2010 and we have regularly hosted individuals and groups since. We tailor the experience to the group coming. We also have internships for those interested in mission on a longer-term basis - 3 mos to 2 year commitments.
- **Hunger and Poverty** – We regularly give food to any who ask. We have several elderly persons with no family for whom we regularly deliver food stuffs. We have a Garden Ministry where we grow many fruits and vegetables. When we have large harvests, we donate the majority to our community government for distribution to the poor. We also work in providing cooking fuel (after every storm, we gather, cut, bind and distribute wood to the poor for fuel. We offer all the previously mentioned educational opportunities as well as job training. We also offer clothing and shoes donated by churches or mission volunteers, and since we put in our water filtration system, we have clean water to give away as well for those who can’t afford to buy it. (water born diseases and parasites are the number one cause of illness amongst the poor in the Philippines)
- **Matthew 25 (asking churches to commit to feeding & clothing the poor, and visiting the sick and imprisoned)** – We are absolutely committed to this principle and teach on this section of scripture as the justification for “Love Action.” I have already described a lot of our commitment to the poor and sick. We have also helped 3 prisoners be released or not imprisoned

falsely. We support a local church with an active prison ministry. We care for the sick and elderly. When an elderly woman in a nearby neighborhood lost her bamboo home in a storm. We went for a week to salvage what we could, use materials we had at the mission and pushed for donations and we rebuilt her home in a better spot on her property. She and her mentally ill son continue to be part of our regular care.

- **Presbyterian History** – The Presbyterian Church has a long history of mission and my family has a long history with the Presbyterian Church. My Great Grandfather (see photos below) Rev. Richard Sidebotham (Princeton class of 1899 – the famous missionary class where every graduate committed to foreign mission) and his wife Effie Alden Bryce Sidebotham (the church organist at First Presbyterian Church Lapeer MI), established the first Presbyterian church in Busan Korea. He was instrumental in the bible being translated into Korean and started 5 churches on the Busan peninsula. There is a room in the museum in Busan dedicated to my family. Richard's father and two brothers were also Presbyterian ministers. Their son, my grandfather Alfred Bryce Sidebotham was ordained to the Presbyterian church. My Father studied at San Anselmo, but ended up an engineer. However he was finally ordained just before his 70th birthday. I certainly understand what it is to be a presbyterian – and my place in the church. We teach about the Presbyterian church and what God did and is doing at our mission. I was deeply saddened that the Presbytery of the Yellowstone has shown little interest in mission.
- **Racial Equality** – We strive for raising up the poor and the darker skinned folks who have less privilege than the lighter skinned folk. As whites, we are afforded much privilege in the Philippines. We eschew that privilege when it hurts others, and use it to our advantage when we can use it to help the poor get a foot in the door or a leg up. We also educate about the dangers of skin whitening products and preach the “brown is beautiful” message proudly. We are conscious of language and television as well as the toys we bring in to be both culturally and gender sensitive.
- **Women's Ministries** – besides the above, we promote the independence of women and teach women how to pull themselves up. Most of our staff are women. We have special nights twice a year to affirm the women in a special way, as well to affirm the men. We point out laws that are gender bias and teach our staff to be aware and to try and change the world a little at a time where they live.
- **World Mission** – I think our involvement here is self explanatory as we are a foreign mission. However, in our study and prayer time, we daily pray for and educate about other ministries around the world. Right now there is much education and prayer over the situation in Afghanistan.
- **Worshipping communities** – We are a worshipping community and since covid, have become a morning and evening worshipping community with evening vespers and morning collects. As well as Sunday worship and children's worship. Because of Covid, people aren't allowed to leave their homes, so our community has shrunk to simply the children and staff living on the property. But when the day comes the doors open again and people are allowed to travel and visit, our worship is open to anyone. Then we will again regularly have staff family members and community members present.

In Conclusion:

1. I have done nothing immoral, illegal, inappropriate or “un-presbyterian” in all of my ministry. Especially since 2005 where I have been serving in mission.
2. The only reason I was dropped from the rolls is because the Presbytery of the Yellowstone wasn't interested in the work to allow me to “labor outside the bounds” or “validate” my ministry. Nor were they to allow me to transfer to another Presbytery who would have done so.
3. The work I have done, both in Korea and in the Philippines is in keeping with my call to ministry and the principles of the PCUSA.
4. I have a legitimate call to a PCUSA congregation in San Angelo, Texas.
5. If you reinstate me, I will be transferred to another Presbytery (Tres Rios) and never bother any of you again.

Always hopeful in Christ,

Esther Berg

Presbytery of Yellowstone

George H. & Kathleen A. Goodrich
Co-General Presbyters

Caroline Fleming
Stated Clerk

Susan Seibert
Administrative Assistant

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November 7, 2021

Dear Esther,

As Stated Clerk I am writing to inform you that the Presbytery of Yellowstone voted on Friday, November 5, 2021, to deny your request for reinstatement to ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Because of this decision and your removal from the minister rolls of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 2009, according to the polity of our denomination you cannot present yourself as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the PC (USA) either active or retired.

Yellowstone Presbytery does lift you in prayer and wishes you well in the future God has for you.

Sincerely,
Caroline Fleming
Stated Clerk



December 1, 2021 email from Esther to me

Hi Caroline,

I was wondering when you would be sending the justification for the committee/Presbytery decision to NOT reinstate me.

minutes of the Presbytery and Committee or subcommittee would be fine.

FYI - ordination in the PCUSA is for life. I am and always will be a PCUSA minister unless I renounce the jurisdiction or have disciplinary action taken against me to remove my ordination. I have not nor do I have any intention of doing so, nor do you have any grounds for such judicial action.

I am not "authorized" so I may not celebrate the sacraments, nor moderate session. However, I am not serving as a pastor (tho they wanted to call me as such) but rather as a lay person - consultant. I am not in violation of any rules of the PCUSA. So your "cease and desist" while interesting and telling, does not apply to what I am doing.

Thank you for your assistance, I look forward to hearing from you.

many blessings

Esther Berg

Esther Berg
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