

**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](mailto: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