

SPECIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH & WESLEY FOUNDATION
August 6, 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members: Jack Basiago, Sam Bonsall, Rebecca Connelly, Dave Flick, Kelly Grimes, Jane Harris, Scarlett Miller, Phil Mohr, Al Stewart

Non-voting Members: Becky McGee, Greg Milinovich, Sarah Voigt

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

RETURN TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP:

The purpose of the special meeting was to review the results of the congregational survey regarding the return to in-person worship and to determine our next steps. The following points were raised/discussed:

1. The number of people who said they were ready to return to in-person worship was larger than expected, however, the survey results did not provide us with a clear mandate. The congregation is very split about what we should do.
2. Much has changed since the survey was administered in June; many areas of the country have seen an increase in COVID-19 infections.
3. The return of Penn State students within the next two weeks and the impact it will have on the local community is of great concern to many.
4. Our bishop has urged pastors in our conference to limit in-person gatherings, despite the fact that churches are exempt from the governor's latest restrictions.
5. The possibility of holding an outdoor in-person worship service was discussed. Various venues were suggested, including local parks, a drive-in theater, the church parking lot, and a farm or field. G. Milinovich stated that he had already done some quick checking of local parks, and all are booked. He expressed several concerns about the other suggested venues, including lack of restroom facilities, inadequate or no sound system, and insurance coverage, but indicated that he is open to exploring other possibilities for an outdoor service and will continue to do so.
6. Many survey respondents reported that they like the prerecorded worship services we are currently posting online. G. Milinovich explained that once we do return to in-person worship, the plan is to live-stream the service for those who are not ready to come back, rather than prerecord it. This will be a much different, and perhaps less rich, worship experience from what we are offering now (no live music, for example).

Following the discussion, Council members agreed that there are too many unknowns at this point to set a timetable for returning to in-person worship services. It was agreed

that this needs to be communicated to the congregation as soon as possible, along with a brief summary of the survey results. D. Flick will draft a statement for that purpose, which will be included in the next "What's Happening?" weekly email. He will share it with Council members for feedback/approval prior to sending.

REOPENING ABBA JAVA:

S. Voigt reported that Abba Java is planning to reopen the week of August 24th with reduced hours (10-3, Monday-Thursday) and reduced capacity (25%). Either she or Karen Morgan will be stationed at the entrance to monitor capacity and ensure that masks are worn. A plexiglass barrier is being added at the kitchen counter; some of the furniture has been removed to allow for social distancing. All food items will be prepackaged; there will be no self service. She is working with Ken Musser on a cleaning plan.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Harris, Church Council Secretary