

**Las Placitas Presbyterian Church
Called Session Meeting Minutes September 27, 2022**

Class of 2023

Jacque Fletcher
Lynn Coburn
Virginia Watkins

Class of 2024

Lauren Skinner
Janice Langdale
Bill Lumm

Class of 2025

Leigh Plante
Steve Chewning
Judie Hendry

***** THIS MEETING WAS HELD BY ZOOM.**

MEETING OPENED 6:02 Moderator Rev. Richard Holmes

DECLARATION OF QUORUM (1/3 of Session plus Moderator) Carl Allen

Session Members Present: Jacque Fletcher, Lauren Skinner, Lynn Coburn, Bill Lumm, Steve Chewning, Janice Langdale, Virginia Watkins, Judie Hendry

Session Members Absent: Leigh Plante

Guests Present: None

On September 25th during the 10:30 am service, an incident took place which we regret caused many people alarm. A member of our congregation pulled out a knife with an approximately six-inch blade during the portion of the service in which prayer requests are shared. This person did not threaten anyone with the knife or point it at anyone, and the incident ended with this person handing the knife to Pastor Rich. But for several minutes they did not put it away after being politely asked to do so. They also resisted efforts to be disarmed.

MOTION: The person displaying the knife is always welcome to worship with the LPPC congregation by zoom, but they will no longer be allowed on the church property. In addition, LPPC has immediately instituted a policy barring deadly weapons. Anyone who violates this policy may be barred from the church after the first offense.

APPROVED

Based on this Session action, Pastor Rich and Clerk of Session Carl Allen will contact the person involved via email and letter to inform them of Session's actions. In addition, an email will be sent to the congregation describing the incident and detailing Session's actions.

On September 29, 2022 the following email was sent to the congregation:

Session Response to Incident Last Sunday
Dear Members and Friends of LPPC:

Last Sunday, September 25th during the 10:30 am service, an incident took place which we regret caused many people alarm. A member of our congregation pulled out a knife with an approximately six-inch blade during the portion of the service in which prayer requests are shared. This person did not threaten anyone with the knife or point it at anyone, and the incident ended with this person handing the knife to Pastor Rich. But for several minutes they did not put it away after being politely asked to do so. They also resisted efforts to be disarmed. Unfortunately, this is also not the first incident of threatening behavior which this person has displayed in our church.

It is the goal of our pastor and Session to ensure that our church is a welcome space for anyone who wants to worship with us. We are also mindful of Jesus' words when he told his disciples "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." But a welcome space must be a welcome space for everyone, and we cannot maintain a welcome space for everyone if some people are made to feel that their safety is in jeopardy when they worship with us.

In an effort to maintain this welcoming space, at a meeting on Tuesday, September 27, the Session voted that the person who displayed this threatening behavior is always welcome to worship and meet with us over Zoom, but they will no longer be allowed to be on the property belonging to Las Placitas Presbyterian Church. The Session deeply regrets having to make this decision, but they believe they are left with no other choice when the safety of the congregation is in jeopardy. Pastor Rich fully supports the Session's decision. Pastor Rich and the Session also pray that their vote to exclude this person from the property will only be temporary, and they hope a day will come when they can allow this person back on the property once they are convinced that this person no longer poses a threat to the congregation. The Session will keep the congregation advised of any change in its decision.

At its meeting on Tuesday, the Session also voted to adopt a policy banning deadly weapons from the church building. The Session reserves the right to exclude anyone from the church property if they choose to violate this policy.

We hope that everyone reading this email will know that the decision to exclude anyone from our property is a heartbreaking one. At this moment, everyone involved in this decision is in a state of deep pain, and they have no doubt that this decision will cause deep pain for our congregation. But we believe we must do whatever is necessary to keep the congregation safe and welcomed, even when doing what is necessary is painful. I know that everyone will join Pastor Rich and the Session in praying for our whole congregation and especially for the person whom this decision affects the most.

Blessings,

Pastor Rich and Clerk of Session Carl Allen

ADJOURNED WITH PRAYER 7:39

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED – CARL ALLEN, CLERK OF SESSION