



Financial Affairs Committee Investment in Property and Loan for Watsonville Public House – June 2020

From the earliest days of the church, we have been called to go to where people are, build community, and engage in the exchange of ideas as Christ's ambassadors. In that spirit, our denomination developed and grew by helping new congregations purchase land and build churches that acted as houses of worship and community gathering points in the city center. As a continuation of this enduring call, the Rev. Robby Olson, a minister member of The Presbytery of San Jose has formed Watsonville Public House: A Nonprofit Community Brewery (WPH), that will host Beer Church Watsonville (BCW), an established PC(USA) 1001 New Worshipping Community.

Breweries are a contemporary gathering point, building community and encouraging the exchange of ideas. WPH will be a fully functioning brewery with a tap room, serving excellent craft beer to the people of Watsonville and the surrounding region and providing a venue space to support local non-profit partners. Rev. Olson, an accomplished home brewer who is poised to make the transition to professional brewing, will be WPH's executive director and head brewer. In post-Christendom, there is a significant segment of the population who are uninterested or unwilling to come to a traditional church. A brewery, on the other hand, is a nonthreatening environment to those who identify as "nones" or spiritual but not religious (SBNR). Rev. Olson has discovered a passion and calling to minister to nones and SBNRs. His exploration of that call through Beer Church Watsonville has opened doors and begun building a community of spiritual engagement. WPH widens the successful ministry of Beer Church Watsonville into a large, public gathering place in the heart of Watsonville.

Rev. Robby Olson presented a ministry plan and request to the Financial Affairs Committee of the Presbytery in December 2019 and together we embarked on analysis and consideration of the feasibility with him. After six months reviewing various options, the Financial Affairs Committee of the Presbytery approved the \$1.2 million purchase and \$1.85 million renovation budget for a commercial property in the center of downtown Watsonville that will be owned by the Presbytery and leased to Watsonville Public House. The Presbytery is under contract for this property with an anticipated closing in July. Watsonville Public House will be receiving a \$700,000 loan from the Presbytery with a 10-year payment for brewing equipment and startup costs. Together with loan repayment, WPH intends to tithe the profits to the Presbytery, anticipating that a per capita model doesn't fit this ministry model.

Rev. Olson has been employed by the Presbytery as an evangelist/chaplain at large to the Watsonville community since February 2020, funded by a two year grant provided by the United Presbyterian Church of Watsonville prior to their dissolution in January 2020. Committee on Ministry approved this grant based contract, which was offered in lieu of severance and in recognition of Rev. Olson's ongoing call to serve Watsonville. We are grateful to the Session of UPC Watsonville for making this decision regarding the grant for Rev. Olson. It is important to note that the investment and loan has been made from the Presbytery's investment funds and not the assets from the dissolution of UPC Watsonville. An Administrative Commission is currently discerning the use of those assets. Our prayer is that the outcome of that Administrative Commission honoring the legacy of UPC Watsonville, the new Watsonville Public House, and the faithful congregation of Westview Presbyterian Church are all used by God to serve the community of Watsonville for many generations to come.

Watsonville Public House has filed for incorporation and will be a non-profit formed for the purposes of furthering the mission of the Presbytery of San Jose. Legal work for the formation of Watsonville Public House has been donated to the Presbytery by a premier business tax attorney. Rev. Olson will be the executive director and a board will be formed with a majority of seats held by members of the Presbytery or its churches.

We are sharing this information with the Presbytery because this is a new and exciting ministry for us and a significant investment. Please join us in praying for success of this new ministry as it develops, and that God will do amazing things through us as we engage in the community in a new way in Watsonville. We have attached a summary of the vision and ministry plan that was presented to Financial Affairs Committee by Rev. Olson.

Sharon Rowser

Chair of Financial Affairs Committee

Watsonville Public House:
A Nonprofit Community Brewery
Good Beer. Good Community. Do Good.

Vision for Ministry

“Seek the Peace and Prosperity of the City”

In 1860, eight years before the incorporation of Watsonville, First Presbyterian Church (later United Presbyterian Church) was planted and a sanctuary was constructed one block east of the downtown plaza. Presbyterians in Watsonville have a rich history of and commitment to providing hospitality in the city center and building community by welcoming all into the family of God’s beloved children. Hospitality is sharing what we’ve been given, including the ability to create and maintain space for blessing. This is what presbyteries do and it has served them well. While real estate and improved buildings offer potential investment returns, Presbyterians invest in space and use it to serve the Kingdom of God. Today, traditional churches find themselves on the margins of our culture; as a people who believe the gospel of Jesus to still be relevant and critical, the time is right to explore new and creative opportunities to bring that message into the city center.

The majority of people in our communities do not attend church on Sunday mornings; some have left the church, many have simply never been affiliated with any religion. A significant and growing portion of the population identify as a “none,” when asked about religious affiliation, or as spiritual but not religious (SBNR); these people are beyond the reach of most traditional church-based ministries. While the religious affiliation is lost, the hunger for community, connection, and meaning is alive and well. One of the venues filling this void is craft breweries. Brewery taprooms function, in many ways, in a church-like role—a central gathering point of a community. Locals regularly gather, often coming alone with the expectation of encountering their friends and acquaintances (old and new), sharing deeply with their friends and beer-tenders, and upon departing, feeling seen, heard, and cared for. Brewery communities regularly come together to support each other in times of need, whether fundraising for hospital bills or in consolation after the loss of a loved one. *Beer Church Watsonville (BCW) is a ministry response to this reality.* Rather than surrender the loss of a large percentage of the population, BCW recognizes the natural community building within a brewery and seeks to infuse it with ministry, to invite people into deeper conversations, and to help people discover and give language to their spiritual experience. Giving language to spiritual discovery is a preliminary step to discovering Christ, whether in a traditional church or not.

Beer Church Watsonville

Through BCW, Rev. Olson is working to establish a new ministry around an old idea: building community and engaging in ministry in the city center. Beer Church Watsonville, in its current iteration, is ready to transition from informal gatherings in a small living room to a more structured, more intentional outreach to a much broader range of people. From before its days as a 1001 New Worshipping Community, BCW has been a community building opportunity that has presented Rev. Olson with a wide array of ministry opportunities from spiritual conversations, to officiating weddings, to pastoral hospital visitations. While sitting in Rev. Olson’s living room, tasting his latest home brew at BCW, people will frequently say something like, “Hey Robby, you’re a pastor; I’ve always wanted to ask...” All of a sudden, pastoral opportunities to share faith, theology, ecclesiology, etc. are dropped in the lap of a pastor unlike anything he’s seen in a sanctuary or fellowship hall.

BCW has been actively building a brand in Watsonville and the surrounding region. Among the legal uses of home brew in California is in-kind donations to nonprofit fundraisers. Since 2015, BCW has been brewing beer for local nonprofit fundraisers. The benefit has been myriad. Among the gains, significant good will has been built along a wide cross-section of the community as BCW is now recognized and associated with the

nonprofits that community members already support. Not only that, a wide-ranging population has tried our beer and has been impressed. The expectation is that BCW brews beer people want to drink and supports nonprofits they want to support. While BCW began as both the name of the brewing arm and of the ministry arm, there are three reasons it is necessary for the brewing arm of the ministry to change its name. First, *Beer Church* is a copyrighted brewery name in Michigan. Second, in a city with a large Spanish-speaking population, one must be careful with names that may not translate well across languages and cultures. Finally, the new brewery name, Watsonville Public House, will not be confusing to the average patron who is seeking a pint of beer and not yet looking for spiritual engagement.

Watsonville Public House

Watsonville Public House (WPH), a new 501c3 brewery, will have a majority Presbyterian board of directors, making it eligible to be insured by the Insurance board, like Emmanuel House. WPH will be a fully functional brewery, brewing and serving craft beer to the people of Watsonville and the surrounding region. Rev. Olson is an accomplished homebrewer who is poised to make the transition to professional brewer without forsaking his call to ministry in the Kingdom of God, within the PC(USA). The nonprofit business of WPH will serve as both a tentmaking opportunity for Rev. Olson as well as a gateway to minister to a significant portion of our community who are unwilling and uninterested in entering, much less entering into membership in a traditional church.

WPH will provide a gathering place of welcome for anyone who walks in the door—no religious strings attached. BCW, a separate ministry entity, will create voluntary gateways for ministry—table discussions, book groups, speakers—as well as building toward a weekly worshipping community. While the exact structure of that worship will develop with the community, Rev. Olson envisions conversational teaching/discussion, prayer and meditation, and music, all surrounding a potluck meal and communion.

Why a brewery?

The Apostle Paul made great tents. While we have no Yelp reviews of Paul's wares, we do know well his passion for excellence in ministry and his call to work as if unto the Lord (Col. 3:23). Paul would not stand for making Jesus a shabby tent. Rev. Olson has a gift and a passion for brewing excellent beer and a track record of using that beer to build community and foster spiritual friendships. While a brewery is an excellent vehicle to attract people and support a ministry, it is not a magic bullet. BCW is not about beer; it is about using the unique gifts and skills of the pastoral leadership, already established in Watsonville, to invite people into an intentional community, moving towards spiritual discovery and growth.

Rev. Olson recognizes the potential dangers associated with alcohol. Beyond complying with all laws and ABC regulations, WPH is committed to helping people make good decisions—whether that is to drink responsibly or not to drink at all. Making good on this commitment begins with excellent staff who endorse this vision and feel ownership of the brewery mission. All beer-tenders will be LEAD trained and our policy will be conservative in cutting people off for the night. While over imbibing does take place in breweries, the culture of brewpubs is much different than that of a dive bar. Craft beer is not enjoyed by guzzling, but rather by tasting and savoring. In the inevitable case that a patron is inebriated, our role in helping people make good decisions shifts to helping them get home safely by calling a ride.

Breweries are natural gathering spaces, fostering community, conversation, and allowing people to let their guard down. Within their brewery, brewers are a sought-after conversation partner. The opportunity to engage people as the “Brew Pastor” greatly reduces that walls that go up when new acquaintances find out they are speaking with a pastor (“Are you a *pastor* pastor? At a church?” Followed by skepticism, condescension, or an explanation of why they don’t go to church).

With extensive home brewing experience, as well as professional and academic training, Rev. Olson is ready to meet the technical challenge of professional brewing. He was the only home brewer invited to serve his beer at Santa Cruz County's SF Beer Week 2019 event (31 pro breweries, cideries, and Rev. Olson), featured in the Watsonville Wine, Beer & Art walk 2018 and 2019, trained and certified at the accredited U.C. Davis professional brewing program (in which the renown Prof. Charlie Bamforth described one of his beers as "a well-balanced, damn-fine beer;" of another he said, "I wouldn't change a thing!"), mentored through one-on-one shadowing with the head-brewer at Seattle's Rooftop Brewing Co., and participated in three collaboration-brews with Elkhorn Slough Brewing Co. In preparing for the business side of a brewery, Rev. Olson has completed University of Vermont Business School's certification classes in Craft Brewery Operations and Management, as well as Craft Brewery Finance and Accounting. While he recognizes the need for outside help and business expertise, these courses have prepared Rev. Olson with the knowledge and know how to avoid many common pitfalls into which brewery startups fall, and to be better prepared to respond to unforeseen challenges.

Why now? Why Rev. Olson?

BCW began organically when Rev. Olson recognized that the vast majority of his community would not even consider attending worship services at his congregation, The United Presbyterian Church of Watsonville. While the congregation was friendly, with good music and preaching, most people who have left the churches of their youth, or never attended church, are not interested in finding a new "church home." Rev. Olson found the spark for BCW when he began to use his avocation, home brewing top-notch beer, to serve his passion and gift for engaging nones, SBNRs, and post-church-going people. As might be expected in an 85% Latinx town, many people who have left the church of their youth have some degree of cultural Catholicism—possessing a little knowledge without a defined practice, theology, or ecclesiology. What's more, Rev. Olson discovered that there was no need for or temptation toward any sort of bait and switch, people voluntarily came to Beer Church gatherings and, because genuine community was fostered, people wanted to engage Rev. Olson *because* he is an ordained pastor, not in spite of it. BCW began to grow and run into two significant problems, there is simply a space limitation in Rev. Olson's small living room and there is a limit when considering who is invited into one's home. BCW is ready to make the leap from the living room to a larger public venue that keeps the integrity of both Beer Church and the distinctly non-church-y location.

Why Watsonville?

Rev. Olson and his wife, Jenni Veitch-Olson, are called to and deeply connected in Watsonville, having spent years laying the groundwork for a successful outreach ministry. It is deeply difficult to break into communities as a spiritual leader if the community is not an established congregation. But, with deep community ties, comes trust from community members and opportunities to engage. Rev. Olson, beyond being pastor at Watsonville United, is a Watsonville Police Department Chaplain; a Watsonville High School boys basketball coach; was on the committee to hire the current Police Chief; was on the committee to update Watsonville's alcohol ordinance; is among the team of executive directors steering the twice yearly Watsonville leadership conference, *Live Pajaro Valley*; and has been identified as "The Pastor of Watsonville" by city staff and council members who have invited him to lead several prayer vigils like the one at the Strawberry Festival after the Gilroy Garlic Festival shooting. Veitch-Olson is the chair of Watsonville's Planning Commission, a recent candidate for city council, organizer of demonstrations against violations of immigrants' rights, as well as women's rights, and she is Planned Parenthood Mar Monte's Major Gifts Officer for Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, based in Watsonville.

How will WPH & BCW be connectional in the presbytery?

Presbyterians are Rev. Olson's people (even the ones who don't like beer). For this reason, he is excited to stay connected to the Presbytery of San Jose and to elevate the priority of the ministry of BCW in his efforts to establish a brewery and center for ministry in downtown Watsonville. In working with the PSJ, WPH will be a nonprofit, requiring a board of directors to work with Rev. Olson as Executive Director. This board will be made up of a majority of Presbyterians, with the remaining members being Watsonville community members.

It is unlikely that BCW will incorporate as a congregation with traditional membership, thus per capita is not likely to be a part of the future of BCW. One alternative that Rev. Olson is especially fond of is WPH tithing to the Presbytery out of its profits. While it is not required that 1001 New Worshipping Communities or NCDs offer this sort of financial participation in the presbytery, this tent-making brewery will have the means to demonstrate its commitment to the presbytery and the mission of God in and through the presbytery via this financial partnership.

Finally, it is in the DNA of the PSJ to seek partnership in new ventures—often seeking at least three. This three-legged stool begins with Rev. Olson's vision, passion, and sweat equity to establish himself in the community of Watsonville, locate funding sources for WPH's brewing equipment, and to see this ministry and tent-making venture through to reality. Second, in its twilight months, Watsonville United's session has stepped up to reaffirm and support Rev. Olson's calling to minister in Watsonville, a call they recognized just over seven years ago; their provision of two years of Rev. Olson's terms of call gives WPH and BCW the time needed to get up and running. The third leg is the Presbytery, using a portion of investment to seed new ministry; the PSJ has the opportunity to step into the historical role of presbyteries buying land and building centers for hospitality and worship.

The time is right to join together to explore the new thing that God is doing in Watsonville and in the PSJ.

Watsonville Public House:
A Nonprofit Community Brewery
Good Beer. Good Community. Do Good.

Timeline:

November 2019	COM approved Rev. Olson's position, funded by grant from UPC Watsonville.
December 2019	Rev. Olson provided a ministry vision to Financial Affairs.
January 2020	Financial Affairs reviewed a historic property for purchase that was subsequently rejected for feasibility issues.
February 2020	Rev. Olson began COM approved position as "Evangelist/Chaplain to Watsonville" and he sought advice from real estate broker and local design/ build contractor for market analysis and planning.
April 2020	Watsonville Public House filed incorporation paperwork. Rev. Olson developed updated financial forecasts and plans.
May 2020	Rev. Olson identified a property in Watsonville and sought Financial Affairs approval for property acquisition and renovation. Financial Affairs approved negotiations for property and approved a \$700,000 loan for equipment.
June 2020	Financial Affairs approved purchase of property for \$1.2 million (under contract June 3 with closing expected in July) and approved proceeding with a design/build firm in Santa Cruz county.
July 2020	Anticipated close on the property and development of renovation plan.
Spring 2021	Anticipated opening