

Ministry Council Meeting Minutes

June 22, 2020 at 6:30pm via Zoom conference call

Attending: Judy Belter (chairperson), Rev. Jason Valendy, Rev. Estee Valendy, Melanie Grice (recording secretary), Lou Tiner, Erik Skaarer, David Gerig, Keith Bierley, Toni Bliss, Ellie Skaarer, Jules Plewes

Judy called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

Estee opened in prayer.

Old Business

The minutes from the last meeting were approved via email vote and published on the church website. There were no objections to continuing with this process in order to publish the approved minutes in a timely manner. Judy requested that Melanie also send the agenda before each meeting to Carol for publication.

Finance Update

Erik reported that May giving was down a bit from the previous month, but still strong. Compared to May 2019, it was higher. Trustees did a great job at holding down expenses. The Facilities department expenses were down about \$30,000 from April to May.

The Paycheck Protection Plan loan is expected to be completely forgiven.

The Finance Committee plans to go over all financial policies and procedures one at a time to review and make updates as needed.

A small sub-committee was established at the last meeting to evaluate whether to stay on an interest only loan or go to a full payment.

Worship Team Update

Estee reported that the Vine and Branches worship services will start on Thursday, June 25. Ushers were trained on June 18. Lou has been very helpful with details in determining how to conduct worship services safely.

The usher schedule is almost completely full. Reservation links went live on June 19 and will close Wednesday, the day before worship, to allow time to prepare seating charts for social distancing. As of this meeting time, the following reservations were made:

4pm (full) – 25 reservations, 39 total attendees

5pm – 8 reservations 14 total attendees

6pm – 7 reservations, 21 total attendees

7pm – 10 reservations, 23 total attendees

The at-risk (4pm) service had the biggest response, so the worship team may designate two of the times for high risk individuals the following week.

On July 16, a group of ushers and the worship sub-team from Ministry Council will evaluate the three weeks of services and decide on next steps.

Erik asked if the recent uptick in COVID cases had been taken into consideration. Estee asked for a delay to answer the question since Jason had data to share and was finishing a book study on another call.

Lou said capacity is extremely limited to allow for social distancing. He feels secure even though he is personally in a high-risk category. Attendees at 4pm will be required to wear masks. He is unsure of what the tipping point would be to actually cancel services. He is putting his efforts into determining how to have worship as safely as possible.

Judy said the handling of this issue gives her a great deal of confidence. She is eager to hear Jason's report. She asked what happens when reservations are full.

Melanie explained the ShelbyNext form. When a service reaches the maximum number of reservations, a message displays explaining that maximum capacity has been reached. She will add a note for next week's reservations explaining how to be added to a waiting list.

Children and Youth Update

Keith explained that the team broke into two groups to discuss Nursery – 6th Grade and 7th Grade – 12th Grade. There was a lot of input, with 15 or so volunteers.

Youth Ministry may do a few events starting in late June, pending further COVID information.

On Wednesday, June 24, part of the committee will meet again to decide next steps and begin putting a plan in writing. It's important to keep in mind that children and youth events have additional requirements since so many volunteers are required for Safe Sanctuary compliance.

Judy asked if Building Blocks will follow KISD actions on re-opening. Keith said that is the most likely scenario, but Building Blocks is subject to some licensing that KISD is not. There is a long list of requirements that Nancy and Kristin are working on. As of today, the plan is to open on their usual date in August.

Keith sat in on a conference call last week hosted by seven large churches. None of the churches had opened children's ministry events and none were even close to opening nursery. We expect nursery to open later than all other activities due to the difficulty of social distancing.

When Team Update

Jason joined the call and shared a screen with a spreadsheet of updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC has checklists for safety going in public places and protocol recommendations for events and gatherings.

There was a press release today from the governor with details about new cases in Tarrant and surrounding counties. There was a record 444 cases in a single day in Tarrant County yesterday and the spread level is still "substantial". The spreadsheet created by the When Team also records the daily percentage of tests that are positive. This statistic is triggering concern because it has been in the 15-20% range most days, and is not yet slowing down or plateauing.

Lou revisited Erik's question. Do we need to put in tipping points or metrics into place for deciding when to pause the process of re-opening?

Jason said the group has looked at the possibility of moving back from yellow to red if needed. Overall cases in the U.S. remain about the same, but are unevenly distributed based on where restrictions are loosened. The team has no recommendations yet, but is considering the issue and gathering information.

Judy requested more information about today's report from the governor.

Jason said the report indicated the rates of positive tests are going up, but restrictions are not expected to be rolled back. The governor reiterated that Texas is still open for business.

In summary, the When team is comfortable with the status of plans, especially with Vine and Branches operating one week at a time, and phasing the staff back into the building slowly. Vine and Branches is a go for this week, and will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Erik pointed out that we need to be careful about conflating the success associated with the excitement of being back in the Sanctuary for Vine and Branches with a decrease in health concerns. They may not be related.

Estee said she checked in with pastors from both White's Chapel and Arborlawn, which both re-opened Sunday worship. Both churches had very low attendance. It seems that people are not yet ready for in-person Sunday worship.

Estee is in favor of letting people into the Sanctuary in non-Sunday worship capacities so they have an opportunity to be in sacred space, but leave Sunday worship online only for now.

Jason shared a metaphor of a room full of smokers to demonstrate how COVID spreads, particularly in crowds and indoors. Dr. Smith, who has been advising the When team, has indicated that our protocols will help lower risk.

Staff Re-Opening Team Update

Keith is scheduled to review the plans in a meeting with the full staff on June 30. He requested that Ministry Council not share details of the plans until after that date so that staff members have an opportunity to hear the entire presentation.

The team was comprised of staff and SPR members. They tried to put something together to provide structure, but also a great deal of latitude to accommodate concerns.

Keith shared his screen (Appendix A), a spreadsheet of procedures for moving from red to yellow to green. Staff members have been working mostly from home, with the exception of custodial and maintenance staff. He stressed that accommodations will be made for those who are not comfortable or have other obstacles such as child care or elder care. At least through July, the building will remain closed to most visitors.

Jason said Meals on Wheels was approved to come back to the building because of extreme circumstances. The upcoming election and other situations will be considered one at a time.

Lou asked for clarification on the process since he evaluated Meals on Wheels' protocols. Will he have the authority to make decisions?

Judy said that Lou has demonstrated that he involves the right people and would not make decisions in isolation. She said that he should have the authority that must be aligned with the responsibility and accountability he has already assumed.

Melanie said she does not recommend taking on that responsibility as a single person. In her experience, it leads to resentment when those requesting access are denied.

Keith said his opinion is that neither Lou nor any other single staff member or volunteer should have unilateral decision-making authority.

Melanie said she has created an electronic form for staff members use. It will go to Jason and Estee, who can consult with whomever might have applicable information, then pass on for room scheduling if needed.

Jason said that all requests will be considered one a time a time. All voices that need to be a part of each decisions will be consulted.

Lou said he has years of work experience in gaining consensus, and he has no problems working this way going forward.

Judy asked that when exceptions are made that we communicate with the congregation to explain the reasoning.

Keith covered protocols for visitors and briefly went over staff procedures for being in the building (Appendix B). He said we will communicate with the congregation about policies and make clear that even though staff is back in the building, it is not open for drop-in visitors.

Keith also covered cleaning protocols (Appendix C).

The plan is very fluid and is expected to change as needed based on circumstances. The plan is to publish some information that is of general interest. Other information will be shared with staff and not kept secret, but the information is mostly helpful only to staff.

Judy reminded the group to hold this information until after the staff presentation on June 30. Communication to the congregation about these procedures will help everyone understand how complex the process is and what kinds of protocols to expect as more ministries re-open in the building.

Erik asked that the minutes not be published until after June 30.

Melanie said she would prepare the minutes and distribute to Ministry Council for review, but will not ask Carol to publish until after June 30.

Estee noted that she and Jason would be out of town for the next scheduled meeting and asked that it be moved to August 3. The group agreed.

The Lay Leadership Team report will be presented at the next meeting.

Judy thanked Jules and Ellie for working on staff profiles.

Jason closed in prayer at 8:15pm.

Appendix A

STAFF RE-OPENING - RED TO YELLOW TO GREEN

	CONCEPT	RED TO YELLOW	YELLOW TO GREEN
1	Meeting with Staff to review plans	1 week prior to re-opening the office. Staff Meeting - Tuesday, June 30th at 10:00AM	As needed
2	Custodial Staff Review	Meet 1 week prior to review re-opening policies. Review Checklists for cleaning - June 29-July 3	On-going reviews and update/modify procedures and policies as necessary
3	Staff will return starting July 6th	Supervisors will meet with their reports to determine return to office schedule. At home option remains through end of July	Fully staffed on a daily basis
4	Staff Attendance Policy	Accommodations will be made to address exceptions	Fully staffed on a daily basis
5	Masks and Gloves	All staff will wear masks when not in their office or cubicle. Gloves not required	Will follow local, state and CDC guidelines
6	Office and Other Buildings Policy	Office and Other Buildings - Staff Only. The Outside Grounds are open subject to revised Church Policies. Exceptions determined by Pastoral Staff.	Open to everyone
7	Visiting Office	By Appointment Only - Exceptions determined by Pastoral Staff	Open to everyone
8	Masks and Gloves for Visitors	Masks are required for all visitors and must remain on during visit. Gloves are optional	Will follow local, state and CDC guidelines
9	Elevator Usage	1 person at a time	Regular guidelines in effect
10	Restroom Usage	Limit of 2 per restroom	Regular rules in effect
11	Staff Family	Not permitted during Yellow Phase	Regular guidelines in effect
12	Staff Testing	Done at home by staff member. Stay home if your temperature is high or not feeling well	Utilize Employee Policy Handbook

STAFF PROCEDURES AND POLICIES – RE-OPENING THE CHURCH OFFICE

ENTERING THE BUILDING

- Take your temperature at home daily and do not report to work if you have a fever or other symptoms that may indicate you are symptomatic for COVID -19. Follow Handbook policy to report your absence
- Wear your mask (gloves are optional) when you enter the building
- Wash hands upon entering the building. Use the sink in the Reception Area

INSIDE THE BUILDING

- Wear your mask if you are outside of your office or your cubicle. They are not required in your office or cubicle. Recommend you keep door closed
- If you leave your office or cubicle, please wear your mask
- Maintain Social Distance (6 Feet) at all times
- Knock before entering someone’s office, and stay outside until invited in. It’s OK to have a conversation with the person standing at the door. Stay at the barrier of the cubicles and try to remain 6 feet away from the person in the cubicle
- Please do not congregate in the Workroom or Lobby
- For the present, please do not eat lunch in the Workroom. Eat at your desk or go outside and maintain social distancing. Do not take your office chairs into the WorkRoom
- RESTROOM USAGE – Limit of 2 per restroom. The Custodians will refresh and clean 2 times each day.
- ELEVATOR – 1 Person at a time
- COFFEE POT – if in use, clean with wipes before and after each use. Recommend you bring your own coffee or tea each day
- COPIER – Use wipes to clean Copier Screen and Keyboard, and any other areas you touch before and after using the machine

REVISED POLICIES DURING THE “YELLOW” STAGE OF RE-OPENING

- The Church is closed the public. **It is open for Staff use only.** People should not be permitted to enter the building unless they have an appointment. Requests for appointments should be approved in advance by Pastoral Staff. This information will be communicated to the congregation across all social media channels. We know there will be necessary exceptions (check signers, money counters) but the goal is to keep the staff safe and limit access to all the buildings. All visitors will be required to wear a mask while they are in the building. There will be a “designated room” for meeting with visitors.
 - There may be some groups who meet after office hours or on weekends (Scouts, Youth Groups, etc.). These groups will need prior Pastoral approval
 - In lieu of meeting in person, recommend meeting via Zoom, telephone, off site, etc.
 - We will establish a procedure to reserve the meeting room, get approval from Pastoral Staff, and clean/sanitize the room after the meeting (It is likely that the staff member having the meeting will be responsible for cleaning the room after the meeting).
- Notary service will be suspended during the “Yellow” Phase of the re- opening process
- Please do not bring any family member into the building. We want to minimize the number of people in the building
- The doors will be locked. Everyone has their own personal access code. Please do not share with others in the congregation
- People are still encouraged to use the grounds outside, but they will not be permitted to enter the building to visit, use the restrooms, etc.

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE, OR MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO COVID-19, CALL PASTOR ESTEE, PASTOR JASON OR MELANIE GRICE AND THEY WILL REVIEW THE PROCEDURE WE HAVE IN PLACE WITH YOU.

