

Ministry Council Meeting Minutes

August 24, 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, Amanda Stansberger, Polly Soulsby

Guests: Lisa Ham, Rey Gonzalez

Judy called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. Polly introduced Lisa and Judy asked for everyone to introduce themselves.

Judy referenced the ground rules for Ministry Council created in February. One was to track time and do our best to stay within the requested allotments. She asked that everyone try to adhere to this guideline and said that she would also keep track of time.

Judy asked how everyone in the group feels about potentially meeting in person. Two in the group would prefer not to, so Ministry Council meetings will continue to be on Zoom for the time being.

Jason shared a devotional about the prodigal son parable from Luke. He tied in the various emotions from the characters in that story with how some of our congregation will feel about returning to in-person worship.

Finance Update

Erik reported that July giving was down a bit from the same month in 2019, but still strong. Expenses were up slightly in July compared to the same month in 2019, but this difference is due to there being three pay periods in July 2020.

Melanie and Dan have filled out and submitted the forgiveness application for the Paycheck Protection Program loan. They expect that the loan will be fully converted to a grant.

The outside audit summary was presented to the Finance Committee at their last meeting. The auditors gave KUMC a clean bill of health. They had some suggestions, but no corrections.

Youth Update

Jules announced that the Youth Council has met twice.

Ellie said they are starting family groups in an effort to increase attendance and build relationships.

Jules said they have worked on a covenant.

Ellie said they continue to meet for Collide on Zoom. They also recently welcomed 7th graders into the program.

Judy asked how many students are on the council. Ellie said there is one student from each grade, plus two at large members, as well as she and Jules. They were selected after an online application was sent through the Youth News email. Ellie and Jules also reached out to students individually and asked them to apply.

Estee said that her 7th grader really appreciated the personal welcome.

Re-Opening Sub Teams

When Team Update

Jason sent documents in advance of this meeting for members to review.

Lou asked who was setting the trend line, which is downward in Tarrant County.

Jason said the team was originally tracking info from the CDC. They decided to begin tracking Harvard Medical instead for consistency with federal numbers. They can now see that Tarrant County seems to have peaked less than a week ago and is trending downward. The threat level has moved from the bottom of red to the middle of orange.

The team is aiming to get to at least the high part of yellow to move forward with indoor corporate worship opportunities. If the trend line continues, Tarrant County will move to yellow in the next few weeks.

Judy asked if all teams should start making plans to put in place for the yellow light phase.

Jason said yes, but of course the trend could change anytime.

Jason shared his screen of statistics from online worship, which has leveled out at around 700 devices. Many congregants have switched to online giving a well. He is proud of the church for staying engaged in so many ways.

Adult Ministries Update

Polly said the team had a meeting on August 12. They have discussed having a face-to-face meeting to look at the list of non-respondents to the paper survey. Jason will send a link to help facilitate reserving a room for this purpose.

Polly wants to make sure that everyone is contacted and does not feel forgotten. She and the team plan to make personal contacts to see if anyone needs help getting connected. They will make guidelines for Tech Buddies and recipients. The team is also interested in offering tech class for everyone, not just senior adults.

Lisa said that she was previously Director of Instructional Technology in Keller and now works on special projects. She has lots of experience training teachers on how to use tech in classrooms.

Lisa recommends a Cyber Safety class for senior adults, and another similar class targeted at young parents. She also recommends a class with instructions on using platforms such as Zoom and Facebook. She noted that even if KUMC moves into the yellow light phase, there are some congregants who will not feel comfortable returning and will need to stay home.

Estee asked what the first step would be.

Lisa said the team would discuss in the next meeting, but it might be troubleshooting tips. She is open to suggestions.

Judy asked what the team needs from the Ministry Council.

Polly said she would appreciate help with guidelines for Tech Buddies. She would like to send out a draft to the Ministry Council for comments before our next meeting. She would also like for pastors to weigh in on plans for cyber safety programs to make sure they are in line with the goals of the church, looking at both short term and long term needs.

Estee clarified that she and Jason are trying to divide responsibilities more clearly. Estee will take the lead in this area.

Children's Ministries Update

Keith said these ministries are still in the red light phase. Kristin and Danielle have been working to engage children online and at drive through events. They have opportunities available such as Park and Pray and Backyard Bible Club.

Building Blocks will open September 8 for 3 and 4 year olds. A task force has reviewed all the information and believes BB can open safely. They will not offer kindergarten this year. They did not want to put families in a bind if the school had to close for any reason since KUMC is not equipped to offer remote instruction.

Lou added that BB had a licensing inspection today and passed with flying colors.

Staff Re-Opening Team Update

Keith said staff is also still in red light phase, but many staff members have voluntarily chosen to work part or all of their hours in the building, which is still closed to guests. The staff will review the situation in their next full staff meeting in September and decide on next steps. He noted that KUMC is nearing the 6-month mark of not having in-person worship, which is wearing for the staff. He asked for patience as staff members deal with both personal and professional challenges.

Worship Re-Opening Team Update

Estee said the worship staff had a meeting last Tuesday and brainstormed possibilities. They are not ready to put a firm date on the calendar, but they are considering restarting Vine and Branches. A possible date would be September 24, pending improving data after Labor Day. The next planned step would be to add an in-person 8:15 worship, which would require reservations and follow the same protocols as Vine and Branches. The 9:30 and 11:00 services would continue to be on Livestream only.

Estee asked for feedback from the Council on whether they think the Worship Re-Opening plan is too cautious or too aggressive.

Polly asked about the attendance at the Vine and Branches service. Estee said there were about 95 attendees across 4 services.

Amanda asked about feedback following Vine and Branches. Estee said all feedback she received was positive and people felt safe.

Lou said the first service at 4:00 was the highest attendance. It was advertised as being for higher risk people. The Facilities team is ready to go with new sanitizing equipment. He thinks the timeline makes sense considering the trends.

David said he appreciates the approach the team has taken. He has also read information from the conference and believes KUMC is in line with signals from them.

Erik said he thinks the plan is sound and that it is better to be cautious.

Melanie said she has learned in years of church work that it is impossible to please everyone. She trusts the work of the team and suggests communicating with the congregation to let them know how the decisions were made.

Jules compared Vine and Branches to Keller ISD starting with half days, seeing what works on a smaller scale. She said that the higher attendance at the 4:00 service demonstrates that safety is very important to the congregation.

Keith said he believes Vine and Branches will help with implementation. Outbreaks usually occur about 2 weeks after large gatherings, so it will be important to review the data after Labor Day. He recommends offering 3 Vine and Branches services rather than 4, perhaps spaced out more with 90 minutes rather than 60 between start times. He affirmed Melanie's point about communicating with the congregation.

Ellie said she agrees with erring on the side of caution, particularly with school re-opening. She said the statistics show that people are getting into a groove of attending church at home, so there is no need to rush back to in-person worship.

Polly said she is glad that the team has spent so much time and effort considering this issue.

Estee asked if the team needs to come back to the Council before setting a firm date to move forward, or if the consensus is to set a date when the team is ready.

Judy said the body seems to support moving forward. She recommends an email to keep the Council informed, but there is no meeting needed.

Facilities Update

Lou said he is reviewing conference, state and CDC protocols to look for changes. He does not anticipate much change, but wants to make sure we are compliant and up to date.

Lou shared a presentation from the Trustees. They are working on budget planning, including multi-year issues. The Trustees are recommended to have at least 3 female members. The terms of all current female members expire this year, so they are recruiting.

At this time, the Facilities department has an open custodian position. Also, Lou is stepping down as volunteer Facilities Director at the end of the year, so that position will also be open.

Work that has been accomplished so far this year:

1. Front entrance refurbished
2. Sidewalk repairs
3. FLC roof and ceiling repaired
4. Drainage project led by Tom Belter
5. Outflow drain to retention pond led by Paul Anderson
6. Music suite lighting
7. Sanctuary portico ceiling stucco repair

8. Sanctuary dome lights cleaned and repaired
9. Many other smaller projects

Other Business

In the interest of time, Judy will send an email with next steps for Ministry Council.

Estee closed in prayer at 8:06pm.