

UCM Covid-19 Task Force Final Minutes
Twenty-first meeting 9/23/21

Present: Claudia Clark, Barbara Conrey, Joel Dennison, Liza Earle-Centers, Scott Hess (facilitating), Judith Hinds (recording), Leslie Parr, Verdis Robinson, Noah Sexton, Peter Thoms.

Agenda:

- Changes to minutes of 8/23/21
- Changes to the agenda
- Comments/feedback from church members/community/Board/ET
- Updates to State or CDC or UUA guidelines
- Air quality and AV updates (Barbara)
- Changes to reopening guidelines
- Messaging
- Other business
- Next meeting

1. Changes to Minutes

None.

2. Changes to the Agenda

Scott announced that Cass Madison and Jen Matthews have agreed to contribute their medical expertise to the TF. Neither could be here today.

Joel wants to address us re the reopening guidelines. Peter has questions about guidelines.

Claudia added singing guidelines to the agenda. Liza has an issue with the outdoor guidelines.

3. Feedback/Comments from Others

Joel has a proposal, representing himself and a few other congregants he has talked with – this is addressed under item #6.

4. Guidelines – State, CDC, or UUA

Nothing new here that we are aware of.

5 Air Quality Project Update

Engineers' drawings are nearly complete. Bids will come next. The AQP team hopes work may begin in late November, and may be complete by January. The AV (tech) project in the sanctuary has been folded into the AQP because of overlapping physical space needs. Next AQP team meeting will be 9/28 at 5:30 pm – open to congregation.

6. Reopening Guidelines

Vermont's Covid numbers do not currently meet our reopening guidelines. Joel and others are questioning whether our guidelines still need to be so limiting. They were developed pre-vaccine. Our threshold figures for community spread were borrowed from another UU church. Are they still valid in current conditions? Lengthy discussion followed.

Some (unknown how many) congregants, especially youth and isolated adults, are growing desperate for more human interaction. Other local churches are holding services. We don't know the status of their ventilation systems, or how they are managing to limit attendance. More research is needed here. The worship team would welcome real human participation in services – it's difficult "preaching to the pews."

Joel proposed a congregational survey, and submitted a possible draft. Liza noted that Jeremy Beaudry is a professional survey creator/interpreter who could help if UCM goes this route. Board approval would be needed for a survey, and Board would have to be involved in any policy decisions to be made as a result of any survey. (Psychological/spiritual needs of congregants vs. health/safety risks.) It's not just a question of numbers.

The TF recommends to the Board that they consider conducting a survey. Scott will forward Joel's draft to them along with Jeremy's contact info.

Logistical questions still open include:

If/when we are able to open at 50% capacity (Phase 1), how will we manage the cut-off limit? How will people sign up to attend services? Who will enforce distancing, masking, etc.? We should consult other churches that are already doing this to see how they've managed.

7. Messaging

Was not discussed. ET has been handling this. Scott will remove it from the agenda.

8. Other Business

(a) Outdoor Guidelines: Liza pointed out unnecessary language in the opening paragraph about "existing groups" being allowed to meet in private homes. We recommend to the ET deleting the words "only" and "existing." The intent is that each new group formed would have an inclusive covenant so that all members could participate either in person or online, as they choose.

(b) Singing Guidelines: The ET requests that we establish some singing guidelines based on the choir's experience with singing together at NBNC and the Grange hall. A sub-group of Donia, Judith and Liza will work on this.

(c) We need to add our TF meetings to the church calendar. Scott will send the info to Emily Seifert, who is currently managing the calendar.

9. Next Meeting: Thursday, Oct. 7th, at 5:30.