

UCM Covid-19 Task Force Final Minutes
Twenty-fifth meeting 11/10/21

Present: Liza Earle-Centers, Barbara Conrey, Vic Guadagno, Scott Hess (facilitating), Judith Hinds (recording), Rev. Joan, Cass Madison, Jen Matthews, Janet Poeton, Donia Prince, Verdis Robinson, Meredith Warner.

Agenda:

- Changes to minutes of 11/3/21
- Changes to the agenda
- Comments/feedback from church members/community/Board/ET
- Air quality and AV update
- Feedback/response on operations of other local religious institutions (Peter)
- Reopening guidelines (Jen and Cass)
- Protocol/policy if a Covid-positive case occurs in-house
- Communication/decision-making by TF
- Other business
- Next meeting

1. Changes to Minutes

None.

2. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Feedback/Comments from Others

The Board hopes to send out a congregational survey before Thanksgiving. Turnaround time will likely be about two weeks. The Task Force's role is still to focus on safety and science. The congregation may have other priorities. It's up to the Board to decide policy.

4. Air Quality/AV Project Update

No new news.

5. Other Religious Institutions

Peter has send out a survey asking for info from other churches in Montpelier and Barre. No replies yet.

5. Reopening Guidelines

Ref. Link: [May 4, 2021 Reopening Guidelines](#).

Cass and Jen drafted a document similar in format to the Nashua UU church's guidelines, including orange, yellow and green operational phases. We all need to digest the details and submit comments. Some questions to consider (among others): Is Covid Act Now the best reference point for us to use? Is the orange-yellow-green framework useful for UCM? How detailed should we be about singing? Medical exemptions? Positive tests? Potential exceptions? Vaccinations?

Comments (preferably in Google Docs) are due by Monday evening 11/15, to give Cass and Jen time to collate our responses before the next meeting. Please prioritize your top 3 most important issues/comments/questions/likes/dislikes.

6. Protocol/Policy for Positive Tests

Blended into previous agenda item.

7. Communication/Decision-making by the TF

Meredith had emailed some questions for us to consider (see email text appended to these minutes). We did not delve into these in any detail. To be continued?

Membership in the TF has evolved over time. Some original members have left; some new ones have joined. Joan clarified that staff members are not actually TF members, but of course their voices carry weight. Board representation has varied and will likely continue to do so. We appreciate having at least one Board member at all our meetings. Scott will check in with Peter and Noah regarding their status.

8. Other Business

Janet informed us that she has asked the ET for permission to use the building for a Neighbors Helping Neighbors activity on 11/20. It will occur mostly outdoors but they would like access to the building. This point is just for our information – decision to be made by ET.

9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, Nov. 17th, at 5:00. (Only one week away.)

Text of Meredith's 11/6 email regarding communication process:

Hi all,

I have some process questions that may result in changes to the minutes in #3. I am unclear about what agreements are actually made. The notes say of the CTF: "*We {CTF} are willing to respond to their {ET, staff} requests as quickly as we can, using email when a meeting isn't possible.*" I didn't observe substantive discussion and agreement via consensus or vote on this from all CTF members, unless I am to assume by not objecting that members are in agreement. Are all CTF members willing to create/decide recommendations to the ET via email? If yes,:

- What is the expected timeframe for email responses?
- Are there any members with particular expertise that their input is essential?
- How many people from the CTF need to respond to an email to make the recommendation official?
- If the CTF doesn't respond in a timely manner to an email, does the ET feel good about making decisions on ad hoc acceptance without a CTF recommendation?

Some thoughts on broader communications: The CTF has decided to make ad hoc approvals for in-person activities that are outside of the current reopening guidelines. While I imagine this has been happening at a small scale all along, I feel this increase in activity needs to be communicated more directly to the congregation beyond minutes— perhaps through the ENews or a post on the website. I was imagining something like: "*While we currently have not met the criteria for the approved UCM Reopening Guidelines, the CTF is making recommendations to the ET and Staff on an ad hoc basis for safe in-person activities at UCM in the near-term. The CTF is also discussing the possibility of changing the reopening guidelines to allow for increased in-person activities at UCM.*" Congregants may be confused when they begin to see announcements for in-person activities, or pictures of those activities, or the choir in the vestry-- since our current guidelines disallow this. I am happy to help facilitate the creation of a broader communication of this change to share with the congregation.

Being clear about CTF processes feels particularly important to me in a time when ad hoc decisions beyond our approved guidelines are happening. (*Especially when we are seeing record breaking numbers like we did Thursday.*) I feel these are safety measures and for that reason, require particular clarity and transparency with our church community.

I am fine to hear feedback/answers on this in the 11-5 meeting instead of responding via email.

Last, Barbara referenced the UUA guidelines, so I wanted to share a link for anyone who isn't paying attention to their periodic updates. Here is the most recent which it delta specific: https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/delta-guidance?fbclid=IwAR3mLLiVMZhPAhGi8PGVgKbU_v6ZT0O9dQf3Y-WYPx-G4DU9Qy8aOVDN18I

Thanks,
Meredith