

UCM Covid-19 Task Force Final Minutes
Thirty-third meeting 3/17/22

Present: Dawn Evans, Scott Hess (facilitating), Judith Hinds (recording), Rev. Joan, Jen Matthews, Leslie Parr, Gale Pekar, Janet Poeton, Donia Prince, Peter Thoms.

Agenda:

- Changes to minutes of 3/3/22
- Changes to the agenda
- Feedback from Board, ET, congregation, other groups
- Debrief of first in-person service (Joan)
- Status of Montpelier mask mandate (Jen)
- Reference metrics for Covid
- Vaccination vs. testing for staff
- Choir: soloists – precautions for congregation
- Reopening guidelines – yellow and green stages
- Reopening guidelines – non-worship meetings
- Other business
- Review of topics for next meeting
- Next meeting

1. Changes to Minutes

None.

2. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Feedback from Board, ET, Congregation, Other Groups

None.

4. Debrief of First In-person Service

It went well. The testing requirement (Stage Red) presented some logistical problems. So far the number of people signing up has been lower than expected.

5. Montpelier Mask Mandate

Has been cancelled by City Council.

6 and 9. Reference Metrics and Guidelines – combined

There was wide discussion of the changing Covid circumstances and new guidelines from the CDC and UUA. The UUA has dropped metrics-based guidelines. CovidActNow (our previously chosen metric) has discrepancies. Should we use a different one, or none? They are all less reliable now that so many people are using at-home tests and not reporting the results. Other local churches have all been meeting regularly and singing without apparent outbreaks of illness. We still have no ventilation.

We did not come to any firm decision regarding metrics in general. We like the idea of proceeding with small incremental changes.

We recommend changing the Stage Orange guidelines (in place for the rest of March) to allow congregational singing with masks, IF the worship team and tech team are comfortable with it. We have not yet made a formal recommendation regarding Stage Yellow. Perhaps the draft should include something about ventilation? Joan will work on wording and recirculate the draft before the next meeting.

7. Vaccination vs. Testing for Staff

The staff policy adopted earlier this year may already be out of date. We discussed the question of whether “natural” immunity (induced by prior infection with Covid) is as good as vaccinations and/or boosters. The research we’ve seen presents diverse conclusions regarding strength and longevity of natural immunity. There is growing research and evidence on the effectiveness of “hybrid” immunity, i.e. immunity from vaccination coupled with infection-induced immunity. We decided to recommend that infection-induced “hybrid” immunity be accepted in lieu of a booster.

Current policy (approved by ET 2/23/22) reads: “An employee is considered up to date on Covid vaccination 14 days after receiving two doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and a booster vaccine.”

We recommend adding a new sentence, to read as follows: “Exception: An employee who has experienced a breakthrough infection following full vaccination is excepted from the booster requirement by virtue of their infection-induced immunity.”

We did not discuss testing today, so may have future recommendations for changes to this policy.

8. Choir: Soloists – Precautions for Congregation

Postponed again.

9. Reopening Guidelines – Yellow and Green

See #6 above.

10. Reopening Guidelines – Non-Worship Meetings

We did not have time to work on general guidelines for other meetings. We did discuss the upcoming OWL class for 5th and 6th graders. We recommend they be allowed to meet in the vestry, with all the usual requirements for being in the building (masks, signing in, etc.). If the facilitators and the parents agree, then the class members could discuss and make their own covenant around masks as part of their other covenantal agreements.

11. Other Business

Should UCM require vaccination for all adults who work with children under 5 (who are not currently eligible for vaccination)? Item for future discussion.

12. Review of Topics for Next Meeting

Reference metrics

Vax vs. testing – for worship, and for staff

Soloists

Guidelines for Stage Yellow and Stage Green

Guidelines for non-worship meetings

Soloists

Vax for adults working with pre-schoolers

13. Next Meeting: Thursday 3/31/22, 5:00 PM.