



God is calling us to be an evolving community of faith inspired to embrace our future as we:

- *Deepen our commitment to each other*
- *Nurture our spiritual vitality and growth*
- *Live a life of loving influence in the world*

COVID-19 WORKING GROUP MEETING, 19 May 2020

via Zoom video conferencing

Chair: Kathy Shortt

Present: Joe Gaspar, Karen Schertzberg, Barb Leask Wynne and Richard Jackson (secretary).
Regrets: Heather Power, Jennifer Allan

Opening Prayer (Joe Gaspar)

Motion to approve the agenda was moved by Karen Schertzberg and seconded by Barb Leask Wynne. **Carried.**

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 7th Working Group meeting was moved by Barb Leask Wynne and seconded by Karen Schertzberg. **Carried.**

New Business (Kathy Shortt)

- Covid-19 Working Group: Barb Leask Wynne urged that the present name be kept but that the Working Group might include the Property and Worship & Music Committees. She noted that she could represent the Finance Committee of which she is a member.
- Return to Worship: Greg Case of First United Church has suggested having a united front for all the United Churches in Waterloo and that they set a closed-until-date of September 6th during which time we would have no in-person services. That does not mean we would reopen on September 6, it means we would be having no in-person services until that date and we would make a further decision as September 6 approaches. Action to be recommended to the Council.
- Karen Schertzberg suggested that Melanie Chisholm's office be prepared (i.e., Dutch door) for opening of the Church. Kathy Shortt referred the Working Group



to the section on 'Start the conversation' in the attached Framework for Reopening document. See Action item below.

- Consensus was reached that it is not prudent to spend a lot of time and energy working out the details of the phases of the Reopening Plan until we have more direction.
- Furthermore, Karen Schertzberg will discuss with Alan Switzer what additional cleaning supplies will be required for reopening. See Action item below
- Barb Leask Wynne recommended that all bibles and hymnals be removed from the pews before a return to worship because they are no longer necessary when the hymns, prayers and bible passages are projected on the screen.
- Joe Gaspar will recommend at Council at their May 26th meeting that the Worship Committee should attempt to define new ways to broadcast our Worship Service to those who cannot or prefer not to attend in person. Will this involve new hardware or software to broadcast from the sanctuary and, if so, at what cost?

Motion: Barb Leask Wynne moved that Kathy Shortt, on behalf of the Covid-19 Working Group, propose to Council that the Worship & Music and Property Committees be represented on the Covid-19 Working Group. Seconded by Karen Schertzberg. **Carried.**

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Recommendation (Kathy Shortt) to the Council that a closed-until date be set for September 6 during which time there would be no in-person services. This date would present a united front for all Waterloo United Churches.
2. Karen Schertzberg is to suggest to the Ministry & Personnel Committee to extend the conversation regarding (i) additional steps that need to be taken to keep staff safe upon reopening and (ii) those changes needed to accommodate those additional steps.
3. Karen Schertzberg to discuss with Alan Switzer what additional cleaning supplies will be required for reopening.
4. Joe Gaspar to recommend at the May 26th meeting of Council that the Worship Committee should explore new ways to broadcast our Worship Service.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Framework for Reopening (a compilation of recommendations and constraints)

Closing Prayer: The meeting ended with Joe Gaspar leading us in prayer.

No further meeting of the Working Group is presently scheduled.



Parkminster United Church

COVID-19 Working Group Meeting, 2020-05-19

Kathy Shortt (Chair)

Richard Jackson (secretary)



ATTACHMENT

Framework for Reopening During the Pandemic

Prepared by Kathy Shortt

I have summarized some of the key ideas from the documents that we reviewed to provide a framework for our discussion at the Covid-19 Working Group meeting

Overview

1. The safety of staff, volunteers, church members, and all those we serve needs to guide our decisions about reopening any activities.
2. Parkminster has a vulnerable population with many seniors and as a result we need a cautious and careful approach to reopening church and activities.
3. Our reopening framework will be governed by the Guiding Principles from the United Church General Council as well as directives issued from the Provincial and Regional Governments and Public Health. Waterloo Regional Facilities (libraries, arenas, pools, community centres) etc. are closed until June 30, 2020. City of Waterloo says it will take them 2 weeks after the decision to reopen to get up and running. Schools will not reopen until September.

General Council recommends three phases for a Gradual Reopening During the Pandemic

- Phase 1: Reopening the Building during the Pandemic : Small groups may meet in person in small numbers, with social distancing and masks. Worship will continue to be online only, with some exceptions for outdoor worship.
- Phase 2: Reopening In-Person Worship during the Pandemic : Worship and other activities resume in church buildings, with social distancing and other measures.
- Phase 3: Full Return during the Pandemic : For worship and other gatherings, you will still need to consider the health and safety regulations of your province.



Regional Council Suggests Three key items on which to start work now:

1. Form a return-to-church committee

Consider who can best serve in this role: Chair of the Governing Body, Chair of Ministry and Personnel, Chair of Worship, Chair of Property, any public health specialists in your community, etc.

Have the governing body:

- a) Name the Committee; and
- b) Determine if the Committee has the authority to make decisions on the return-to-church details or whether the Committee brings their recommendations to the Governing Body.
 - Are we happy with the name of our committee COVID-19 WG?
 - Should the Chairs from Property and Worship be asked to join our committee?

2. Return will be gradual; what are the plans for this in-between time?

There will need to be social distancing in worship and there can be no singing as this disperses droplets over greater distances. Passing the peace will look different as will collecting the offering. There will have to be plenty of changes to what was.

Additionally, communities want to include what they have experienced during the lock-down. They do not want to lose new innovations that have enlivened them. How will that happen?

For example, If you have ever been the on-line participant when several others were at an in-person gathering, you will know that simply watching is not the same. But there is a difference when everyone is engaging on-line in the same way.

To include some of these new things, what other duties might need to be dropped? Does each community of faith and their ministry personnel need to do everything? Will communities of faith consider partnering? For example, Church A might have online worship this week and in-person next and work together with Church B whose schedule is the reverse. There is an option that works for everyone every Sunday. The lock-down has facilitated connections with people who were not present in person before. Will the next stage offer opportunities to connect with other communities of faith to share ministry in ways that were not considered before?

It doesn't look like we will be returning to worship services before September. Is it prudent at this time to expend a lot of time and energy working out the details of the phases of the Reopening Plan until we have more direction?



3. Start the conversation between staff members and the Ministry and Personnel Committee now.

Some staff members may be vulnerable themselves or have a vulnerable member of their family that may impact what their return to the space is like. What additional steps need to be taken to keep staff safe? What changes are needed re duties: additions and removals to accommodate those additions? Ministry and Personnel has started this conversation with regard to Melanie's office situation and is the time right for Ministry and Personnel to start conversations with our other staff members? What do we need to report to Council with regard to a Framework for Reopening?