

RE-OPENING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MEETING DECEMBER 2, 2020

This meeting took place by Zoom due to restrictions in place during the Coronavirus pandemic.

John McFall will act as chairperson until Chris Mortlock can attend the meeting in progress.

Present

Topher Beck
Margo Bettger-Hahn
Dan Leaver
John McFall
Pirie Mitchell
Arlene Roberts
Karen Schuessler
Vivienne Wardle

Joined during Meeting

Mary Bee Haworth
Chris Mortlock

Regrets

Marion Hearn

Neil Eadie has resigned from the committee due to health concerns. The committee will miss Neil's calm presence, and his knowledge of the church building and congregation.

Opening Prayer Pirie Mitchell

Action Items from last meeting

1. Update letter from committee

Vivienne Wardle provided an update letter to be published in the Newsletter to the congregation.

2. Deep cleaning following a service

Margo is awaiting response from the London-Middlesex Health Unit concerning deep cleaning after services. The current guidelines are to deep clean if there is a report of a positive test by one of the attendees.

3. Extending church closing following Christmas

Dan reported that Western University is extending their Christmas break for another week. This makes sense since their students may be traveling over the holidays to different zones and visiting with different people.

An extended school holiday was proposed by the Ontario government.

University Hospital numbers have risen for hospitalization of Covid patients. The staff at

the Dearness Home are currently in an outbreak of positive cases.

London, Ontario is still considered a Yellow Zone by the government guidelines. If we rise up to an Orange Zone, there are no changes for worship. The number is still 30% of the church capacity for indoor services. We have kept our indoor worship numbers to below 50. The opening of the balcony has provided space to ensure social distancing. If London is raised to a Red Zone, there are definite changes to worship.

Motion proposed by John McFall

If the category for London moves from Yellow to Red, the committee will meet to re-evaluate in-person worship and forward our recommendations to the Leadership Council, who have the final decision on opening and closing.

Second

Vivienne Wardle

Passed Unanimously

4. Survey

At the last meeting, we discussed a follow-up survey of the congregation. Arlene suggested that the survey focus on the people already coming to in-person worship. It would ask them about their comfort level and what would make them re-consider coming to the church - eg. London moving up to a Red Zone. Arlene recommended open-ended questions that would let congregants write their thoughts and feel free to open up communication.

The committee decided that another survey would not be advantageous now. The Leadership Council would decide on whether the church will stay open or close, based on the government guidelines. It is important that we justify our decisions based on the current science.

Agenda

1. Possible closure of the church

London moving to a Red Zone would not mean an automatic closure, but it would prompt a Re-opening Committee meeting, discussion and approaching the Leadership Council for their decision based on our recommendations.

2. Christmas Eve Service

Pirie had a request from a congregant to consider a Christmas Eve service to allow a small number of the congregation to meet together in the sanctuary and share communion. Pirie forwarded this request to the Spiritual Life Committee.

Wesley-Knox has a history of wonderful Christmas services and the community will certainly miss them. However, if the church was open on Christmas Eve, it would be difficult to keep within our number limits, even if we have a sign-up in place. People in the neighbourhood would see that the church is open and may wish to come to the service. Safety becomes a concern when you have to deny entry to people.

Motion proposed by Topher Beck

The Wesley-Knox sanctuary will not be open for in-person worship on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2020.

Second

John McFall

Passed Unanimously

The Committee will communicate in the newsletter that there will be a virtual Christmas Eve worship service that everyone can watch together. It will be a special service with timpani, bells, voices and words that continue the beauty that Wesley-Knox has traditionally brought to Christmas services.

Karen Schuessler asked for approval for her plan to have a small choral ensemble from the Senior Choir come together to record one anthem for the virtual service. They will be social distanced in the balcony and the recording will be completed in 30 minutes. John will record and Karen will lead the group. The recording will be scheduled when staff members are present in the church to comply with the regulations concerning a limit of 50 people in a staffed facility. Karen will plan the date of the recording following these guidelines.

Motion proposed by Margo Bettger-Hahn

A small choral ensemble of approximately 12 singers from the Senior Choir will record one anthem for the Christmas Eve video service. The singers will be masked and socially distanced.

Second

Topher Beck

Passed Unanimously

3. Christmas Eve Carol Sing

Karen Schuessler and the Senior Choir are planning to join together in the church parking lot at 7 p.m. on Christmas Eve to sing carols. They are missing the camaraderie of their in-person rehearsals and worship and would like to just gather together for their own Christmas celebration. This will be a private, personal gathering that will not be publicized. The Parking lot will be blocked off to traffic. The outdoor gathering maximum is 25 and Karen expects about 15 people would participate. Of course, if London moves up to a Red Zone this would have to be reconsidered.

Closing Prayer Dan Leaver

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 9, at 7:30 p.m.

This meeting may be cancelled if there are no changes or items to discuss.

The committee would meet again in January.

An ad hoc meeting can be called at any time, if there are changes in London's Covid status.

