

Asbury United Methodist Church Council

Minutes of November 24, 2020 Meeting

7:30 PM via Zoom

In Attendance: Elizabeth Tawil, Dan Haas, Anne Haas, Nancy Cody, Nancy Beers, Karen Beer, Scott Karsner, and Pastor Jen Karsner, Owens Walker, and Vickie Whitley, Director Asbury Preschool & Clubhouse.

Open in Prayer

Minutes

We approved the minutes from the November 19 meeting.

Karen Beer asked for a discussion of preschool payments to the church since the church BGE bills are below budget but we decided to table that discussion until we had decided the opening/closing policy.

Indoor Gatherings

The purpose of this meeting was to set the criteria for opening/closing/reopening our facilities for indoor gatherings.

At our prior meeting, we had decided that the Anne Arundel County case rate ([New Cases per 100,000, 7-Day Moving Average](#)) was the best metric to use to measure the rate of transmission. Vickie asked whether the county case rate accurately reflected the risk for the Arnold/Severna Park area. Dan shared zip code level data and it showed that the county case rate was representative for the Arnold/Severna Park area.

We discussed why, although technically we fall under the day care guidelines [Maryland COVID 19 Guidance for Childcare Facilities](#), it made sense to use the county case rate since we need to consider the broader threat environment and we can't separate ourselves from what is happening around us.

The Anne Arundel County Public Schools criteria requires virtual learning when the case rate exceeds 15. (The county health officer has said that when the case rate is 15 or higher, we will begin to see a rapid increase in COVID infections.) When the case rate is between 10 and 15, the Anne Arundel County Public Schools criteria says that, if the county is already in hybrid/in person learning, it may continue. New hybrid/in person learning may not begin unless the case rate is 10 or below.

Looking at the county case rate from March – November, the only time it exceeded 15 was in November when we decided to temporarily close our buildings.

After much discussion, we voted and approved the following metrics:

- County case rate of 15 or higher – our buildings will be closed for indoor gatherings and the church council will meet to determine the steps for closing down the building.

- County case rate of 12 or below – our buildings will reopen for indoor gatherings and the church council will meet to determine the steps for opening the buildings.

Even though the buildings are closed for indoor gatherings, we will permit minimal staff necessary to livestream Sunday worship from the sanctuary.

(The day following our meeting, Pastor Jen posted this [video](#) explaining our decision.)

Outdoor Gatherings

We discussed outdoor gatherings and decided that we will continue our conservative approach and follow whichever guidelines (state, county, BWC) are the most restrictive. Our bishop has asked us to privilege life and to follow the social gathering guidelines which currently limit outdoor gatherings to 25. We are already following those guidelines.

Next Meeting

We didn't set a date for the next meeting. We will need a meeting in December to approve the 2021 budget.

Vickie Whitley closed us in prayer and the meeting adjourned at 9:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Cody