

BCC Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Date: 7/12/2020

Submitted by: Sanjay Cherian

In Attendance (via Zoom videoconference):

Name	Role	Voting?
Catherine Merrill	Minister	N
Ann Desrochers	Moderator	Y
Carol Cherian	Deacons/Fundraising	Y
Sanjay Cherian	Clerk	Y
Susan Haight	Trustees	Y
Amy Razzaboni	Outreach	Y
Bill Dunbar	Finance	Y
Rena Duncklee	Treasurer	Y
Candy Tiner	Publicity	Y

The meeting started at 10:05 am with a prayer from Rev. Cath. We had a voting quorum.

Research into Online Giving

- Ann invited John Panto to present what he had learned.
- Paypal is very popular with churches.
- EasyTithe is another – it was sent to the capital committee for review.
 - Has a 30 day free trial. Others don't have that.
 - 15-20,000 churches use it.
 - Has a mobile app.
 - The website's online giving form can have our church's logo, button, etc. Not all platforms allow logos, etc.
 - It comes with texting capabilities at competitive rates.
 - Includes free tools for raising money in the future with capital campaigns, etc.
 - Allows donations to be designated to a particular purpose.
 - Has a kiosk feature so it can be used for Christmas Faire, THMs, etc. to accept credit card payment.
- Cath: does easyTithe support recurring giving? Yes. It also supports checking accounts as well as credit cards.
- Cath: does the donor have to set it up or for non-technical folks, can they provide data by paper for us to fill out? John: It's a one-time setup. Ann: maybe we can bring a computer to the church like we did for background checks and have people fill out on site with our help. She doesn't want to have church holding onto people's financial info.
- Ann: suggests we do the free trial and test it with a small group of people, take home meal payments, etc.
- Cath: given that we're behind on revenue, we should do anything that might help. But as a software engineering professional, should we have a collection of use cases that we make sure to test?
- Ann: we should trial it with the capital committee and the Cabinet to start.

- Cost:
 - \$10/month security fee
 - per-transaction fee believed to be 3% and 39c.
 - If we got big enough, there's a \$29/month recurring fee.
- The security fee is to cover several compliance requirements.
- Candy moved to start a free trial of EasyTithe, Rena seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Calendar Review

- Susan: AA is waiting to hear from us. She told them we're working on guidelines. They're also struggling with zoom vs. face-to-face meetings. They know that they've lost some members but gained others. They are perfectly willing to follow our guidelines.
- Cath: are we concerned about the Scouts coming back? Candy hasn't heard from either the Girl scouts or the Boy scouts. Cath: what should we tell them if they call?
 - Ann: Even if churches go back to in-person worship, everyone she's consulted says they should offer nothing for youth and no Sunday school, because it's hard to keep kids compliant with best practices.
 - Susan: it's likely to be a while before they want to start again.
 - Carol: those organizations are likely to have their own safety criteria.
- Cath: if someone approaches us to use our Fellowship Hall, we should politely decline because we can't maintain the necessary hygiene standards. The only exception is funerals or weddings where Candy should let Cath know and Cath will see if there's another way to make it work.

Review of Prior minutes

- Ann moved to accept the prior meeting minutes as sent, Sue seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Thoughts On Reopening the Church

- Bill: looked to see what could be done upstairs to be safe without overburdening us.
 - He blocked off every other pew. People would alternate sitting at the leftmost or rightmost end of the pew to maintain social distancing.
 - He removed the cushions from where people will be allowed to sit, wrapped them in large garbage bags, and put them where people won't be sitting. The idea of using the benches without cushions is because hard surfaces unoccupied for 7 days are safe with normal cleaning. Each pew has a different sized cushion so we need to keep them together.
 - Hymnals and Bibles can be put in the Deacon's room.
 - We can designate one stairway as upward bound and the other as downward.
 - We could actually hold a service upstairs right now because the room's been unoccupied for a long time.
- For the bathrooms, Lysol spray can be used and meet CDC guidelines.
- The sterilizing machine is due to arrive between August 5th and August 20th. We can use that in the future.
 - This machine uses ultraviolet and ozone to disinfect the room it's in.
 - Ann: does the machine do fabrics? Bill: yes, it's what Boston public transportation is using.
 - The concern is around the hard seats being uncomfortable.
 - Bill: once the machine is here, we can start using it. Each room needs some unoccupied time after using the machine to allow the ozone to dissipate.
 - Re: AA, we will have to run the machine right after people have been there. John N is willing to learn how to operate it.

- Cath asked whether spacing attendees every other pew and alternating left/right would be sufficient. Bill thinks it would result in about 5.5 feet spacing between people by visual estimate. Sanjay thinks it's more like 4 feet with natural head movement.

Thoughts From This Morning's Lawn Service

- Cath: would like the amplifier in a separate location so she has the whole board she stands on to work with during the service.
- Her knee needs replacement so she needs to be able to sit immediately after the service. That sitting chair needs to be where people can put away equipment without getting close to her.
- Cath thought people were pretty much able to maintain distances during socializing afterwards. Carol said the group near the cars as she was leaving may have been a bit closer than 6 feet but it was okay on the lawn.
- Cath: was she audible from the amplifier? Yes, including from the back.
- Cath: could hear people fairly well during joys & concerns. Some people took their masks off for audibility – it wasn't necessary and the ambient noise would have been as bad if we had been in the building.
- Was the lack of music problematic? Consensus was yes. We can have instruments (but not wind) or plug a phone into the amplifier for music playback.
- Collecting money shouldn't have consisting of people coming right up to Rena. Should we have a basket? Amy: we should use a box with a slot on top. Cath remembered the Pastoral Relations box we already have and we thought that would be a good solution.
- Cath: worried about keeping people away from her to protect her parents. Outdoors, people kept some distance so she felt better about repeating it. She wants to check with people who weren't there how they felt watching the recording knowing there was something in-person happening. Did they feel left out?
- Someone asked about protection for the microphone from wind noise? Cath: keeping the amplifier off the board would have given her the ability to move more freely to avoid noise without feedback.
- Cath: was it okay not to have rain plans?

Thoughts On When Next To Meet In Person

- Do we want to do it again soon? Consensus was yes but not for a communion service.
 - Sanjay: we should wait 3 weeks, longer than one incubation period.
 - Candy: wants to do it in 2 weeks with communion.
 - There was discussion Sanjay couldn't follow about how Cath concluded that 2 weeks from now wasn't a communion Sunday.
- Cath: is willing to do bring-your-own communion on the lawn on August 9th. How do we feel about that?
 - Susan: we should do it on August 2nd, with a rain date of August 9th.
 - Candy notes we'd have to touch our masks and move them out of the way to take the communion so we may not be safe even with BYOC.
 - Cath: has to touch so much stuff before the service, she's not sure she can be safe taking communion.
 - It was noted that the mask requirement was for people who can't be 6 feet apart so with 6-foot spacing, we should be able to take the masks off to eat safely. Sanjay observed that 6 feet is a statistical parameter, not a magic hard limit to the virus's propagation capability. The group's sense was that people needed more time to think this through so we should do a Zoom communion for next time.
- When do we next try meeting in person?
 - Candy votes for an 8/2 meeting, 8/9 Zoom communion.

- Carol: if it's going to be rainy on 8/2, will Cath have enough time to flip the services and do communion 8/2 and the outdoor service on 8/9? Cath: yes.
- Candy moved that we meet in person on August 2nd meeting and have a Zoom communion on August 9th, Susan seconded; the motion passed unanimously.
- Cath: if she's feeling twitchy based on trends, she will send an email calling for a cabinet vote.
- Ann: should we change the safety guidelines based on today's learning? Bill: should we change "no music" to "no breath powered instruments"? Ann will update the document with a footnote.
- Ann asked Sue to talk about her conversation with Sue Laub about what cleaning she can help with.
 - Sue L is not comfortable with UV. She thinks doing the bathrooms would be okay.
 - Would it be very difficult for her to help us maintain during COVID? She could clean the bathrooms, vacuum, and take out trash but anything more would be difficult.
 - Cath: is it worth having Sue L do the kind of cleaning she did before or is it not worth the coordination overhead? After discussion, Bill said we should run the machine first and then let Sue clean.
- Sanjay: there is a safety concern with getting ozone in the lungs.
 - Bill will make signs for 2 hour "do not use". One hour will be for machine use and one hour for ozone decay.
 - Ann: would like to limit the number of people who operate the machine, to limit our own liability.
 - Carol: we need to make sure the signs are clear about the danger.

Finance & Treasurer's Report

BCC YTD Financial Summary	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs Expenses + / -
June	\$33,147	\$43,010	(\$9,863)

- Bill: we were \$450 short of breakeven in the past month. Rena says this month will be better.
- Rena & Bill have nudged TD bank to send us the Affinity Program check.
- Bill thinks we're doing okay financially.

Trustees Report

- Susan: we have electrical issues that need to be addressed. The outlet in the mailroom that supports the copier is not working. The lights in kitchen have historically never worked properly. Peter B had switched out ballasts in the past. We have 2 sets of switches that don't work correctly.
 - Susan is going to call Stellos and have them look at things. We should let her know of other issues.
 - Cath: the chandelier as you come in the side entrance is not working.
 - Cath: should we ping Steve Martinos as he still has positive feelings for the church? Susan: the number we have for him is for Stellos.
- Cath: could somebody sweep up the pistachio hulls outside the side door?

Outreach Report

- Amy is keeping in contact with the town welfare officer.
- She asked Bill if money is still not going out to the organizations we support? Yes.
- Do we still have some money left to help Brookline organizations and SHARE? Yes.
- The rest of Outreach's activities can wait until we get closer to fall.

Publicity Report

- Primarily FB posts.
- Cath: did we get any feedback on the lack of bell ringing? Candy: no.
 - Sue: talked to and thanked the police officer who was monitoring speed in the area.
 - We had removed the rope so no bell ringing was possible.^[SEP]
 - Someone had emailed Cath and cc'd Candy with the idea of a raffle drawing where money would go to the food pantry to and the winner gets to ring the bell.
- Amy: The Hollis-Brookline rotary sends out an email newsletter. She signed up for it and thought it was good. Once we start getting back into normal operation, this may be a good outlet for some of our publicity. Anybody can sign up to receive it.

Deacons' Report

- The Deacons didn't meet in June. They will be meeting next week (July 19th).

Minister's Report:

- Mostly just trying to improve worship experience with remote/zoom worship and now in-person worship. Zoom worship is more intimate and personal, and contain no jokes since there will be no response. It's a challenge meeting these different requirements. This week, we had to support both online and in-person worship so it was unique meeting both sets of requirements. She is reaching out to people so let her know if anyone needs special care.

July 2020 (through 7/5)

Since this goes in the church's record, the Covid-19 global pandemic led the church to stop in person meetings and services on March 13, 2020.

- Averaging 25.9 hours/week, which puts me between 66 hours under and 39 hours over since Sept. 15. This time last year, I was 9 to 117 hours over.
- Pastoral counseling over the phone.
- Virtual coffee hours on 6/14, 6/21, 6/28, 7/5
- Online Prayer Group: 6/10, 6/17, 6/24, 7/1.
- Gathering Joys & Concerns ahead of the service.
- Coordinating with Chief Quigley and Tad Putney about cancelling the July 4th bell ringing.
- Church punch list with communication rough drafts about cancelling the July 4 bell ringing.
- Massive file-a-palooza in my office. Buttoning up the church on July 3rd.
- Sending July 5th service from my church office to assure myself (and everyone else who was worried about the July 4 bell ringing) that all was well.
- Zoom Worship rehearsal on June 18 to make June 21 Zoom worship go a bit more smoothly (thanks, Sanjay!)
- BTS book group reading Jeff MacDonald's Part-Time is Plenty (6/12)
- BTS on-line seminar: The Future of the Church after Covid-19 (6/11)
- As I contact church members, confirming and updating the Clerk's membership spreadsheet.
- Connecting with Rev. Tanya Stormo-Rasmussen from Hollis.
- Planning for September to November worship services.
- Celebrating the July 4th holiday.

Services:

- 6/14: Endurance leads to compassion, which is why Jesus asks it of his disciples.
- 6/21: [Zoom worship as well as on-line] Engaging with indifference is an act of love.
- 6/28: Listening to the prophets when history is changing its flow through time.
- 7/5: Accepting Christ's deliverance from sin by allowing our definition of sin to grow up.

Regular Meetings:

Cabinet, Clergy Support, Moderator/Minister

New or Other Business

- Ann: The conference is strongly recommending that congregations give pastors an extra week or two off because they're doing heavy lifting. They're making recorded services available to support that. Horton Center worship is on 8/9 so Cath will think about timing. At some point, her life requirements may necessitate a week off and the Deacons are supporting her with this.
- Susan: if it looks like any youth activity is far down the road, she would like to clean out the 3rd floor and any other areas of arts & crafts material and offer them to the school or families that choose not to go back to school. She wants us to start thinking about this as a possibility. Ann: request that the story baskets for the Godly Play curriculum be preserved or given to someone who'll use that curriculum as we invested a lot of money into it. Susan: is thinking of pipe cleaners and other things that would be useful for families that need to school at home but may not be able to afford supplies. Amy supports this idea.

The meeting was closed in prayer at 11:23 by Rev. Cath.