

TCN Meeting Notes 05.12.20

Church in Austin TX had their first in church service on Mother's Day.

- Had 20-25% of the average attendance. Also did on-line worship.
- Big takeaway was that they communicated with their congregation 2 weeks in advance on what to expect.
- They had 30 volunteers that were trained in advance and were required to wear gloves and masks and sign a waiver to release any liability for the church. (Check with your insurance company for waiver details.) Volunteers held signs up welcoming people (greeters) and sign to give them directions. They had music playing as people entered. Volunteers agreed they had no symptoms, nor did their family unit.
- Went the precautionary route vs. restriction route as with restriction you must enforce.
- People were seated 6' feet apart unless they were a family unit and then seated together.
- Masks were not required by attendees and about 30% of the attendees did not wear masks. They had masks available for anyone that wanted one.
- The volunteers mitigated the congregating in the lobby and assisted people to their seats. Most congregating occurred outside. People followed the social distancing. THEY WERE EXCITED!
- They only had one service so no cleaning between services was required. They had volunteers that sprayed the restrooms every 15-20 minutes.
- They did not do reservations as they felt that was not in the spirit of how they wanted to invite people back. They wanted to make it EASY. The service was the same length as usual but they did not do communion.
- They had a plan if they had more than 25% of the people show up in two different areas. Not the same, but the people would be together.
- They shared ahead of time a document that said if you are thinking of attending please check out this document "AM I AT RISK" (CDC) and if you are, you should probably stay home.
- This church did not require masks but had them available; they encourage people to bring them home. Masks are difficult to get so if you require them, you may have difficulties.
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Call your insurance company to see if they have any guidelines to mitigate your exposure. Typically if you follow the CDC and state guidelines, you can be defended.

If someone gets the virus in your staff or congregation, you cannot disclose the individual due to HIPA. Check with your local health entity to determine if you need to stop meeting and for what length of time.

Questions were brought up about the different cleansing methods such as fogging, but nothing was a sure thing. Some have ordered equipment but it is at least a 30 day wait time.

Thermometers were discussed, but it takes a long time to get them and people are most contagious two days before they show any symptoms so the temperature taking is more of a comfort thing. Any temp over 100.4 is a warning.

Vacations – some staff that are being paid and not working want to go on vacation, but churches are not sure when they will be needed; employees that are working many hours may need to take vacation. Some churches asking staff to take vacation but employees are saying no as they have no place to go. You need to do what is best for your church.

PPP Loan – verify with your bank the date of the loan as that has varied with some banks and recipients.

Planning for reopening in phases with the first phase having no nursery or child care or youth ministry on site.

Special Funds: some churches are setting up special funds for COVID-19 to assist people and then planning on moving the excess into the general fund. NO! Set up a fund that gives you flexibility such as a Good Samaritan fund that you can continue to use once COVID-19 has passed.

Check TCN website for more COVID-19 resources.