

# Reopening Status: A Report from the Board

The BRUU Board of Directors met Thursday, June 17, and discussed where we are in terms of reopening the building to in-person meetings. We started with the facts and our UU principles and we ended up with changes in how the building is to be used starting now.

## *But First, the Bottom Line*

The Board decided as follows:

- Continue to further develop the AVION project. In the meantime, explore interim AV system that Tony Main recently used for a multi-platform event in BRUU sanctuary. We'd like to have dry runs in July, limited congregation sizes in August, and full return in September.
- Urge all BRUUers who are eligible to be vaccinated to get the vaccination.
- Encourage those who are not fully vaccinated to continue to wear masks.
- Allow groups of up to 50 individuals to meet indoors at BRUU or at BRUU-sponsored events, as long as they are vaccinated. This includes renters, such as a yoga studio or small party. The organizer can decide whether to require masks of participants. This takes effect immediately.
- Put off a decision on allowing renters with more than 50 guests until the new Board takes office in July.
- This means moving the food pantry storage out of Fellowship Hall. We will need a plan to accomplish that, and the Board is meeting with Laura Crowne to flesh that plan out.

## *Background Facts*

There were 13,491 new cases of coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in the US as of June 16. As of that date, there had been almost 33,500,000 total cases identified in the US and 409 deaths from covid-19 bringing the total US dead to more than 600,000. 312 million vaccine doses have been administered, including over a million on June 16. Many other metrics are trending in the right direction.

The Board has already OK'd outdoor gatherings, and the annual picnic was a fabulous success.

The Reopening Task Force's annual report set several metrics for reopening. They were:

- Greater than 60% vaccination in the DC/Maryland/Virginia area. This has been met in Maryland, but not DC or Virginia, although both are close.
- Covid ActNow metrics across the DMV are at the lowest level of risk. This has not been met.
- Number of new cases confirmed daily is at or below 1 new case per 100,000 people a day. This has not been met.

- Number of infections by each infected person is less than 0.88 additional persons. This has been met for all three jurisdictions (DC, Maryland and Virginia).
- COVID-19 testing is widespread enough to identify new cases and test positivity is 3 percent or less. This has been met for all three jurisdictions.
- One metric involved contact tracers, but those have never been put into place.
- Hospitals have capacity to treat a surge of COVID hospitalizations, with less than 50 percent of available ICU beds in use by COVID patients. Virginia and Maryland are in good shape with this metric, with DC lagging.
- The metrics need to be met for Manassas, Manassas Park, Prince William County, Fairfax County, Fauquier County, Warren County, Loudoun County, Fairfax City, the District of Columbia, Montgomery, Arlington, and Alexandria City for a month. We are not there yet.

Several coronavirus variants have been identified, and a new vaccine was found in tests to be effective against the original coronavirus but less effective against the variants. There is a distinct possibility that the variants of coronavirus will spread and cause another increase in infections and deaths. If that happens, we may be forced to shut down again both at church and in the larger society.

Many private and government buildings remain under coronavirus restrictions, including masks and physical distancing. Some private buildings allow entry to self-identified vaccinated people without masks.

Many people remain unable to get the vaccine. Some are under the minimum age, others have health issues that prevent vaccination.

### *Principles*

We want to be inclusive.

We want to protect the health of our members, friends, and visitors and their families, as well as the broader public.

We want to be together when we can, consistent with public health.

We want to respect the rights of adults to make decisions about their own health risks.

I don't care much about what everybody else is doing. BRUU is actually ahead of many UU congregations but not as open as some non-UU congregations. In a quick survey I did of UU churches in the Central East Region, only 1 of 10 is open now, and it has 51 members. We need to make a decision that is right for BRUU. In making that decision, we need to recognize that we will not please everyone, that we may have to reverse course, and that we will never be sure we have made the right decision.

### *Conclusion*

We are not yet at the point where resuming in-person worship is advisable, based on the Reopening Task Force's metrics. We also do not have the level of tech equipment in place that would make dual platform worship successful at this point. The AVION project (big thanks to

Tony Main and Brock Hudson) has looked at scoping and getting proposals for audiovisual equipment to allow that to happen. Based on the Board's discussion Thursday with Ralph Giffen representing the Endowment Committee, we are not ready to sign a contract to upgrade our audiovisual equipment.

Respectfully submitted,  
Martin Crim, President (until June 30)