

A RETURN to Ministry

The pandemic is dragging on much longer than expected and is demanding much more of churches than we ever dreamed it would.

Since mid-May, Virginians have been able to gather for in-person worship at 50% capacity with proper adherence to CDC and state guidelines. Carrying out ministry in this mode has proven a challenge. Two questions churches are struggling with are (1) how to clean meeting facilities in a way that is efficient and sustainable for cost, time, and manpower; and (2) how to restart children's ministry.

Solutions

Coastal Community Church in Yorktown has developed solutions that are both sustainable and reproducible by most churches.

Coastal Community was planted in 2002 by Pastor Shaun Brown and a team of faithful co-laborers. Currently, it meets on three campuses in three cities with multiple services at two of its campuses. Jeff Frye (director of operations) and Michael Bard (associate pastor of family ministries) have both been central to Coastal's ability to operate well.

With three campuses and multiple services, many surfaces need to be cleaned every Sunday. All hard-surface, high-

touch items are manually wiped down by a team of volunteers. Their cleaning process is efficient enough to disinfect the worship and ministry rooms due to electric fogging machines (found on Amazon for around \$200). Their large worship center can be fogged in 10 minutes. With another 10 minutes for the room to "rest," it's ready to be used again.

In order to quicken the drying process and reduce wet surfaces, foggers were chosen (instead of misters). Trained volunteers and small group leaders have been trained in how to use them. Several battery-operated Ryobi foggers were also purchased to use in church vans and buses.

A hospital-grade, peroxide-free disinfectant is used by the church that leaves a pleasant citrus smell. HALT is the brand they use. Made by Spartan Chemical, it requires 2 ounces per gallon of water. Frye explained, "a church can use any disinfectant, based on their own needs and circumstances."

In-Person Worship

Coastal was among the first churches to resume in-person worship once it was permitted by the governor's order. The church exercised due diligence in complying with the state guidelines and recommendations in each reopening phase. They determined that not coming

back together as the body of Christ would have been more detrimental than any effect of COVID-19.

Children's Ministry Reopened

In July, Coastal began to offer nursery and preschool care for infants through five years old. This was made possible in part by the rigor and efficiency of their cleaning processes. It was also made possible by volunteers.

Bard and church leaders created a procedure manual before the children's programming resumed in order to train volunteers regarding the new processes for cleaning, health, and safety.

In August, first through third graders were welcomed back and met together in a large room, where they resumed LifeWay's Gospel Project video and teaching curriculum. In September, fourth through sixth graders returned.

Serving One Another

In the face of the pandemic, church leadership has modeled responsible action and church members have, in turn, responded with fellowship and a commitment to continue the church's corporate mission of serving one another and their community.

Helping Other Churches

Frye has helped over a dozen churches and ministries in the Hampton Roads area find solutions for their virus-related cleaning needs. If you would like more information about Coastal's cleaning process or about reopening a children's ministry, you can contact Jeff Frye or Michael Bard (see below). ■

RESOURCE:

For more information on the disinfecting and cleaning process at Coastal Community Church, email:

jeff.frye@gocoastal.org

For more information on reopening children's ministry, email:

michael@gocoastal.org

