

GSLC COVID-19 TASK FORCE AGENDA

March 7, 2021

12:00 via ZOOM

Attending: Bob Beggs (chair), Pr. Chris Enstad, Sara McCormack, Rick Blum (staff), Sarah Iverson (staff), Rick Thomas (staff – facilities), Paul Friesen, Betsy Johnson, Diane Kohrs, Greg Simmons, Paul Hutson, Paul Bekx, Tracy Dahl

Bob started the meeting at 12:05.

Pastor Chris did the devotion on John's verses about Jesus sending us an advocate.

John 16:5

Bob outlined the meeting topics.

February minutes:

*Bob asked for approval of February minutes. **Greg moved, Paul H. seconded.** Paul F. says he wants to change his quote from "Overly cautious" to **Justifiably** cautious." Paul and Greg OK'd amending the minutes. **The motion was approved unanimously.***

COVID-19 Data:

Paul F. then talked about the Dane County data as of March 7. He said we have good news. The amount of people vaccinated has gone up, 70% of 65+. (Paul said the stats came from Channel3000.com. He is not sure if that is one or both shots.) Cases are dropping, but in the past week, the numbers have stabilized. Hospitalizations are also down. We can be optimistic.

UW-Madison is a barometer. There have been some worrisome outbreaks. 400 students reported cases in the past month. As a virologist, it tells me the virus is still out there. His students said large gatherings at one of the residence halls was the outbreak. Some were wearing masks, some were not.

Pr. Sheryl said in the sermon today that we are not going to be able to come out the way we were. I would not be surprised if we are living with this virus for years to come. Fauci worries about people that will not get the chance to get vaccinated. He expects we could masks for years to come. He also warns that the shots were 95% effective, not 100% effective.

He also recommends that if you have an opportunity to get the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, get it.

Dane County Data:

Dane County, however, is become much more lenient. Their new guidelines go into effect Wednesday. It can be 150 inside with food, 350 inside without food, 500 outside.

GSLC Staff Worship Plans: *Pastor Chris started the conversation by saying Matt Wentzel would be comfortable reopening in 60-90 days. Pastor Chris believes we should do it much sooner.*

Churches near us are reopening, and he thinks we need to start happening.

There is going to be a tent. We're putting it in Verona for logistics.

I think the staff is ready to start working on reopening. But we need to communicate it well.

Sarah I. said we want to set the parameters to welcome all.

Tracy Dahl added that she went back to school 2 weeks ago. It was terrifying...and it was great.

She thinks if we could start doing some of the things we're doing at school, I'd feel comfortable coming back.

Pr. Chris also said he thinks the board doesn't need to be involved make all the small decisions. He thinks the board doesn't need to be involved unless there's a big diversion from Dane County guidelines.

Sara M. says the board wants a motion to approve, but without real specifics.

Pr. Chris says we may need to increase the number of meetings or emails to get the process moving.

Paul H. asked about capacity? Rick T. said 550 in Madison, 475 in Verona. However, you still have to keep 6-foot numbers. He thinks with 6', it's probably 150 in Madison and 100 in Verona.

We may not need to worry about it if we're not reaching old numbers.

Paul B.: I'm not as worried about capacity inside. I'm worried more about flow. I think we can do it.

Betsy: that's what the work group has been discussing.

Pr. Chris: would there be objections to have people start coming in?

Paul F.: I think we absolutely should. But I think we are transitioning. I think the Task Force needs to approve concrete plans.

Bob said that given that, what are we comfortable with.

Paul F. said somewhere is 25-50%. But they must be masked and distanced.

Rick T. thinks we should start with 50, then after 2-3 weeks go to 100. Rick B. said right now we are set up for 50 in Verona.

Betsy wanted to know if we wanted to start outside and move it inside only.

Pr. Chris reminded people that we have an online service, and that will continue, and we need to remind everyone of that.

Sarah I.: I think a lot of members are comfortable outside, but not inside.

Paul H.: I think we need to start inside, and maybe move outside as the weather gets nice. I think we should consider letting vaccinated people come in as a starting audience and work from there.

*Bob: am I reading the room that 50 inside would be welcome? **Tracy moves, Paul B. seconds.** Paul H. Clarifies we're talking about worship. **The motion was approved unanimously.***

Reopening Task Force:

Betsy started talking about the Re-Opening Task Force. They had a good meeting February 25. However, they had some questions.

Are temperature checks necessary for in person worship?

Paul B. – would we be faulted for doing it? NO. Would we be faulted for not doing it? YES. Therefore, I think we should.

Tracy D. we're not doing them at school because we'll have a backlog of kids. Rick B. says I don't think there's a backlog at 50 but would at 100. Pr. Chris thinks it does cause a backlog, and the staff doesn't like them.

Paul H. envisions ushers doing the temperature checks. The greeters are not shaking hands, so maybe they should take temperatures. Bob warned you have to get close to take temperatures. Paul F. also asked if we do use this, will we kick someone out?

Betsy: I think we're going to have more problems than not doing them.

Rick B. could you put a clause when you register, telling them they have to follow the rules, including not coming if they have a fever?

Greg: if we start with vaccinated, are temperatures going to need to be taken?

Pr. Chris: I think requiring vaccination violates our welcome statement. (Diane K. also reminded everyone via chat that kids won't be vaccinated for a while.)

Bob: my advice to Betsy is see if the workgroup can come up with a convenient way to do it. If not, put a warning on the registration.

Prior to Covid, our routine was to close the doors to the sanctuary at both locations at the start of Worship for security reasons. We believe that leaving the doors open to avoid too many people needing to touch the doors and to allow for increased airflow is more appropriate. Do you agree?

Paul F. asked Rick T. whether opening doors would make a difference. Rick T. thinks the bigger risk is door handles. Paul F. thinks we should keep the doors open.

Paul B. asked whether we've looked into hepa filters. Rick T. said he has changed the filters to MERV-13, which is like a heap filter. We now have to change filters monthly.

Is it acceptable for people to remove their masks to engage to take Communion? We believe the best way to distribute would be individualized wafers/juice (like the ones handed out for Ash Wednesday). We would recommend handing them out when they are entering church. They would take Communion in their own spots and dispose of the containers in garbage cans in their rows or placed near their seats to maintain 6ft social distancing. Masks would be put on again immediately after taking Communion. How about Communion for outdoor services? Can masks be removed? Same procedure?

Tracy says the description from Betsy about communion is how every kid in Dane County is eating lunch right now. Paul F. asked whether we could bring our own bottles? ☺

The task force agreed the proposed plan for communion is the best way to do it at the start.

Should we avoid paper bulletins? Use QR code for phones if people want to view in hand? Or place Bulletins on chairs prior to people arriving for in person worship to avoid hand/hand or person/person contact? Screens exclusively? (Per other input, this is only appropriate for indoor service. There are no screens to use for outdoor obviously.):

Rick B. says he would like to put his thumb on this scale and say to start that we should not use paper bulletins. He was a little more unsure about outside, but would like to avoid them as well. No one objected.

Can we serve coffee outside?

Paul F. said yes, but it has to be done safely.

Does 50 include staff?

Betsy said she thought the Dane County guidelines didn't include staff.

Board approval?

Sara M. said I think the board needs to approve it.

Singing? How do we handle congregational singing? The workgroup thought no for now. Jared's thought would be to start with 2 or 3 musicians.

Paul F.: good question, singing scares me to death. Bob says that may be an aspirational goal. Paul B. agrees. Pr. Chris: that may help people self select.

Paul B. CQY – continuous quality improvement. Need to make a plan that works at 50, but can be expanded to 75.

Staff recommendations would be important.

Pr. Chris reminded everyone we have a process in place. But we may need to quicken the pace as we get closer to reopen.

Pr. Chris said we need to talk about office and groups at our next meeting.

The meeting ended right after the task force prayed the Lord's Prayer and a horrible foul was called on D'mitrik Trice in the Wisconsin-Iowa game, appx. 1:30 p.m.