

GSLC COVID-19 TASK FORCE AGENDA

September 13, 2020

12 noon via ZOOM

Attending: Sara McCormack (chair), Rick Blum (staff), Paul Friesen, Betsy Johnson, Sarah Schaettle, Andrew Seaborg, Betsy Johnson, Rick Thomas, Stephanie Barth

The meeting began at 12:01 p.m. with an opening prayer from Sara M.

Discussion on Phase status

Current Dane County numbers and trajectory -

Paul says the current Dane County numbers and trajectory are not good. However, 90% of the numbers are UW. He also says Public Health Madison Dane County telling others not to go downtown is ridiculous. He says we really have to wait 14 days to see what happens. He says many of the campuses around the state are facing the same problem. (Note: according to statistics from the New York Times, Wisconsin has 7 of the 20 highest metro areas in the country with increasing COVID-19 numbers as of Sept. 14. Madison is 10th.) I think we still need to be careful.

Holy Yoga update –

Quilters update –

Betsy: Yoga and quilters didn't happen because of weather.

UW Madison numbers and trajectory –

Sara asked whether our numbers would be going down if the students didn't show up. Paul said if they didn't come back, we'd probably have been able to go to Phase Two. Of note, he says the UW is not seeing increases due to classroom usage. He also says they're not seeing a big increase in staff catching COVID. So, it seems to be student interaction in social settings that is driving the increase.

Paul - There is also a fear of parents of UW students getting infected. The biggest concern from the church perspective would be if a UW student came home and gave it to their parents, and their parents brought it into Good Shepherd.

Sarah – Are there anything specific requests that we've had to turn down so far?

Rick T. – The Pentecostal church would like to meet but can't. They may go elsewhere. However, he thinks reassessing in a week or two is reasonable.

Communication of Phase status whether changing or staying the same -

Sara – we got a letter from a member saying they don't think the communication has been good on the topic.

Andrew – it's hard, because there's no central repository of information for COVID-19 at church. Someone did point out that on the heading of gslcwi.com, there's a button directing people to the Forward Together document. However, that part of the site could be fleshed out a little bit more.

Pr. Chris – The other problem is the plan is constantly changing. My wife is on their 4th reopening plan in 3 weeks at Edgewood. However, I think our plan matches up with our governance.

With worship, there's a desire by staff to have some sort of idea of plan going forward to the end of the year. He thinks it would free up a whole lot of energy if we had some certainty on that topic. (However, this was not discussed during the rest of the meeting.)

Reopening Task Force updates -

Betsy said 4 or 5 groups have reached out about possibly meeting. One AMPED group really wants a social distanced meeting.

Stephanie said Betsy told her God's Hands and Feet want to get into the building to do shoebox Christmas production. They would want 4 or 5 people in at once.

Paul - I don't think doing that is a problem.

Rick T. – I think it would work just fine, if it's 4 at a time. I wouldn't use the Fellowship hall downtown, because it is too close to Little Blessings, but they could use a different room (youth room?)

Paul – We need to start testing the waters sometime.

Betsy - there are 2 men's groups, and 2 women's groups who would also like to meet inside the church. It seems reasonable to me.

Rick B. – I don't have a problem with this, but it sounds like if we approve this, we're in phase two.

Sara – Maybe that's what we need to communicate. Groups reached out, testing the system.

Pr. Chris - I want to have someone responsible for each group, I want accountability. As an example, Pr. Chris talked about the Synod assembly that was held at our church in August. These were all people good people connected with the church. However, event they let their guard down. Rick B. relayed a story of seeing people carry around open cups of coffee, and how two dozen people crowded around the tv in the lobby to watch the proceedings, even though they weren't socially distanced.

Paul – He suggested having coordinators at events carry extra masks and offer them to people who aren't wearing them.

Sarah – She suggested also having chairs clearly marked. Designate chairs 6 feet apart.

Rick T. – I've installed touchless faucets and paper towels. I think limiting people to one person in the bathroom at a time is a good idea. I have occupied buttons up, but he thought he needed something more visual.

Sara - She asked if we start letting groups in, should we open one or both campuses?

Rick T. – He thought he could allow groups in both locations.

Paul – He said as long as we use the largest room available, we should be ok.

Rick T. – I think we've got enough big rooms for groups to use. They can use the lobby in Verona, or the lobby, Peterson Hall or the Good Shepherd Room in Madison.

Pr. Chris – I think if this group is ok with it, we kick it to the Reopening Task Force and have them work on the planning. I want to make sure the processes are in place.

All Saints outdoor worship update –

Betsy, Stephanie and Scott Barth all attended at All Saints Sunday, where they held outdoor worship. The process works like this: You pull up in your car, and are met by two greeters as you come in. They were checking off names. They also had an offering box. They had people directing cars to specific parking spots. Scott and Stephanie grabbed two chairs and sat down at a socially distanced location designated by the ushers. The service was about 30 minutes long. They had speakers set up. It was very simple. She was also livestreaming at the same time. There was no singing but did have an electric organ playing familiar tunes. There was no communion this service but they are doing it the first Sunday of the month.

After the service, people attending were told to remain seated. Stephanie said everything is simple, but well done. About 60 people attended. Average age 65-70.

Betsy – it was a mix between that age and middle age families.

Stephanie – I think the key thing was it was simple. Nothing fancy. They've been doing it for just a few weeks. Kristin says people have been really flexible.

Sarah – The ages would totally fit in with what I'm seeing.

Betsy – at this service, the only person that spoke was the pastor. We're a bigger congregation than All Saints, so we might have to design it differently for our needs if we were going to try something like this.

Rick B. – He asked is there a demand for this?

Betsy – She asked whether we should we do a survey?

Pr. Chris – He said surveys can be tricky at this church. He said the staff decided Wednesday that didn't want to do this.

Stephanie – I don't know why you couldn't stream it from a phone.

Sara – Paul and Sarah, do you have any objections to an outdoor service?

Paul – I think it is a safe endeavor. It might also be useful, to practice social distancing. An outdoor service is perfectly safe.

Betsy – If we can say out loud if people are interested, and we don't feel a survey is appropriate, how do we let our members know where to go if they have questions or they want to have a say?

Pr. Chris – He wanted to make clear that he doesn't see the survey as the problem, but the reaction to it. He also said if we move off our phased plan, it will make things a little crazy for staff.

Sara – She thinks we need to communicate out phase 1.5. She thinks the task force believes Good Shepherd could do an outdoor service in phase 1.5.

Pr. Chris – He asked for clarification and asked if we're proposing a phase 1A or 1.5, blending elements of Phase 1, 2, 3.

Sara – She said she wasn't clear on what we should call this phase, but she thought we need to add a 5th phase.

Pr. Chris – He also asked for clarification if we we're thinking about worship as a one-off event. He asked, since the staff is already rearranging our Wednesday night service to blend in with AMPED starting this month.

Paul – He said a Phase 1.5 makes perfect sense. It's a safe plan.

Andrew – I think it's very important to maintain the quality of our offerings. I am also very sensitive from overtaxing the staff. Thank you, Paul, for your input. If we can do a simple service, I like it.

Pr. Chris – what does this mean for an outdoor baptism, weddings and funerals?

Stephanie – She said she asked Kristin at All Saints if they did an outdoor baptism, and says they did, with the family doing the baptism (pouring the water over the baby, with the blessing coming from the Pastor.) That went very well for them.

Pr. Chris – He asked whether we should we say we're in phase 2, but the group believed a different labeling was necessary.

Sara – She asked whether we have enough members of the task force to vote, since only 3 members of the COVID task force were present? Pr. Chris reminded her that even ex-officio members are allowed to vote in such a proceeding, as long as they are not told specifically not to vote.

Motion –

*Sara asked for a motion that the COVID-19 Task Force recommend to the board that the church move into a new phase in the Forward Together reopening plan that incorporates elements of Phase 1, 2, and 3 from the plan. The elements were all ideas talked about at the Meeting. Paul F. moved and Sarah S. seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.***

The meeting ended at 1:10 with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Blum (clerk)