

GSLC COVID-19 TASK FORCE MINUTES
October 11, 2020
12 noon via ZOOM

Attending: Sara McCormack (chair), Rick Blum (staff), Jared Stellmacher, Sarah Iverson, Tracy Dahl, Sarah Schaettle, Betsy Johnson (Re-opening), Stephanie Barth (Re-opening), Paul Friesen, Andrew Seaborg, Rick Thomas, Diane Kohrs

The meeting started at 12:04.

Pr. Chris started with an opening prayer.

Discussion of WI Council of Churches Recommendations

The Wisconsin Council of Churches sent out a press release last week urging churches statewide to return to physically distanced ministry.

Sara asked for thoughts about this press release.

- *Pr. Chris says he received it and thought we should talk about it.*
- *Paul agreed with their recommendations, but he thinks we're following them already. He thinks we continue the path we're on. But he said we also need to pray to encourage people to wear masks. He still doesn't think people are wearing them enough.*
- *Tracy thinks it's important to communicate that we're following guidelines recommended by others. Betsy agrees, but we need to communicate it.*
- *Pr. Chris says he feels good that the group thinks we're already following guidelines and that we can communicate it that way.*
- *Paul said it's also important to watch what's going on in our community. An example is the UW. We had a problem 3-4 weeks ago, and Chancellor Blank sent a strong message to the students, and the students are now following the guidelines. That means we're ok in Madison. The problems in the state are up north.*

Revised Phase 2 Implementation Updates

Outdoor worship

- *Stephanie suggested to keep it going as long as possible.*
- *Sara said it's better to add on than to go backwards.*
- *Rick B. said next week will be the test, since the novelty will wear off, and the weather will be colder.*
- *Pr. Chris said his mind is split. We could've been doing it in August, but we were working on different plans.*

- *Jared said I'm comfortable doing them, it's not a lot of work to do. There's not a lot of equipment to move.*
- *Pr. Chris said we will need a pastor to do baptisms at 10:30 and preach.*
- *Andrew wants to have some fun with it, as the weather gets colder. A Lambeau themed service? An ice fishing theme? He thinks it would engender an awful lot of goodwill.*
- *Tracy said I love that it looks safe. As a music person, I was interested in hearing from Jared and Sarah.*
- *Paul thought it was great there. It was also good to watch online. I think the novelty might play a role. He thinks attendance may go up next week but start dropping as the weather turns.*
- *Sarah says I'm all for fun, but I don't want to further isolate people who can't come.*

Small group indoor gatherings

- *Rick B. said Men's Bible Study went well. However, Rick B. also mentioned group leaders need to keep working in the system and not let their guard down. He said some groups were getting too relaxed after their first time.*
- *Betsy said she and Stephanie would follow up with groups to make sure they're maintaining proper protocols.*
- *Paul said he thinks small groups are fine if there are not too many people, and we have the ability to contact trace, if necessary.*
- *Sarah S. asked whether we had enough signage? Rick thinks we could use more.*

Baptisms

Pr. Chris said we had our first one today. It will air next week. He welcomes feedback from the group once it airs. No one is choosing to have the parents baptize their own kids and have the pastors do the words. He wonders whether we should have a seashell for the baptism. (Tracy loved the idea.) The godfather couldn't be there, so he was there via Zoom. We still have 23 baptisms.

Funerals

We've reached out to the 5 or 6 families who want to do funerals. No one has decided to do a socially distant funeral.

Weddings

Pr. Dara made the call to cancel her participation in a wedding in Green Bay this month because not enough steps had been taken to keep the area germ free.

Reopening Task Force updates/requests

- *We had a Younlife request for space use, but Stephanie doesn't think it's appropriate since we're not allowing our own youth to meet. That led to a long discussion about AMPED. Could AMPED small groups meet indoors? The task*

force thought it would be ok, if they went through the proper protocols. Sarah thought Becca might want some clarification.

- Stephanie said it might depend on the kids involved. Some of them might be energized by meeting in person. Zoom may not help the kids connect.
- Sarah S. asked whether the teachers and kids could be surveyed to see which ones need in-person interaction.
- Andrew said his kids are losing interest in AMPED because they don't want to watch a screen.
- Sarah said be gentle with Becca on this, because she's put a lot of time in to make this work online.
- Tracy said if we went to in-person, I would want it to be sporadic, because I don't want to break what we do have going on.
- Betsy said she and Stephanie should reconnect to figure out whether we could offer this to small groups. But she knows she must keep Becca in the loop.
- Stephanie said she would be ok with letting Young Life come, if we're set for our own groups. (NOTE: Rick T. will reach out to Young Life and tell them "Not yet." However, if we get this issue straightened out with AMPED, we would consider letting them rent space next month.)

Staff questions/requests

Singing - recommendations and protocols - outdoors

Singing - recommendations and protocols - indoors

- Jared said the whole singing thing involves outdoor worship. Sarah sang one song outside. Diane K.'s group is meeting inside, and they do sing. He really wants a protocol about what is acceptable.
- Paul said singing scares him to death. He thinks outside is fine.
- **Practice singing inside needs to be less than 30 minutes, with singers wearing masks, a group less than 5, in a large ventilated room. And the social distancing for singing should be at least 10 feet.** He thinks this could be ok. He said singers need to be aware of the direction you are singing. He said you can't be singing towards somebody.
- Jared likes those guidelines.
- Paul also asked if there's a way to monitor the behavior of the kids.
- Diane K. said her group has had two rehearsals, one for instruments. We did have a rehearsal with singing outside. She thought if we use mics, kids won't have to sing as loud. She says as of now, she has 4 singers.
- What about Echoes of Grace?
- Tracy said Echoes wants to be of service to worship. We did some zoom performances early. We did have a chance to sing outside that aired today. We were far apart. We can put together small groups. We could record Christmas music outside. We want to be helpful....but safe.

- *Jared said a discussion of Echoes participation segues very well into Advent and Christmas. Jared is concerned that we can't use the choir because even if you go under 5, many choir members are in high risk groups.*
- *Tracy asked whether choir members are desperate to sing? Jared didn't think so.*
- *Paul thinks the vaccine should be available by late winter, and people 65+ should get the shot first. He said once that happens, we can look at bringing the choir back.*

Program planning updates/status

Advent and Christmas recommendation request

- *Pr. Chris said we really need to start planning Christmas.*
- *Tracy doesn't think we can do it in person if things stand the way they are right now.*
- *Pr. Chris said people don't necessarily come to hear the Christmas sermon. He says everyone wants to come sing Silent Night together.*
- *Once we figure out what Advent and Christmas Eve look like, we can fill in the rest.*
- *Sara asked whether we could do a service outside just to sing Silent Night outside?*
- *Sarah I. said we have deep resources, but we need to figure out to do it. We need to have the time to do it well. Amy Miyamoto said, "I'm fully aware we may not be able to meet in person at Christmas this year, but I can also see it being the most meaningful Christmas ever."*
- *I think if we can determine now that we were going to go with a virtual Christmas we can use one off events to fill in the holes.*
- *Sara asked for task force input.*
- *Sarah S. said if we wanted to sing outside, we could hum.*
- *Diane K. said I would be worried about who can and can't participate.*
- *Someone suggested sending family packs with candles to members so they could sing at home, a virtual Silent Night.*
- *Paul said from a public health point of view, I think it's unwise to think that we can have in-person worship for Christmas. And when the weather goes south, people would be forced inside.*
- *Sarah I. said this will be good if we have enough time to plan.*
- *Betsy said Christmas is one of the most important services of the year, but it's also not the time to restrict services. I would be ok with the staff focusing on virtual, and trying some oneoff events.*
- *Stephanie said I agree where we're going, but there are some churches that will be doing something in person, and some of our members will attend.*
- ***Sarah S. moved to not hold Christmas Eve services indoors. Paul seconds. The motion was approved unanimously.***
- *Pr. Chris appreciated having this conversation and having Jared and Sarah hear it.*

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer at 1:40.