

GSLC COVID-19 TASK FORCE MINUTES

January 10, 2021

12 noon via ZOOM

Attending: Rick Blum (staff/clerk), Sara McCormack, Pr. Chris Enstad, Paul Friesen, Betsy Johnson, Bob Beggs, Kristi Jones, Rick Thomas, Sarah Iverson, Stephanie Barth. **Not Attending:** Tracy Dahl, Matt Wentzel, Diane Kohrs, Andrew Seaborg

The meeting began at 12:02 p.m. with an opening prayer from Pr. Chris.

Devotion – (1 Kings 19) Paul Friesen provided the devotion about Elijah hiding in the cave from Queen Jezebel. The devotion talked about how God got Elijah out of the cave, which can serve as an analogy for us as we face the challenges going on in the world.

Approval of November minutes – Sara asked for approval of the minutes. No one objected.

Chair report-

Future chair and VP – *Sara explained that she is tentatively expecting to be named president at the congregational meeting on February 7. Therefore, the plan is to have tentative Vice President Bob Beggs take over at the next COVID-19 Task Force meeting, since Sara will have a larger role as president in other areas.*

Thank you to Andrew and Stephanie – *Sara also thanked retiring president Andrew Seaborg and Reopening Task Force co-chair Stephanie Barth for serving on the committee and for Stephanie for working on reopening issues. Stephanie said she thanked everyone for their support, but she plans to keep serving on this committee. She's also excited about the new board members expected to come on in February.*

Potential new committee members – *Sara asked whether anyone wanted to name any new people to the committee. She said if you have someone that makes sense, let Bob know.*

Merging of COVID-19 and Reopening task force – *Sara said the idea of merging these two committees has been talked about at the Executive Committee level. Sara thinks it may make sense, since we think reopening may become more of the focus in 2021. Paul Friesen said I think the merger makes sense to me, although he thinks the COVID task force members may play a bigger role as we come out of the pandemic. Betsy agreed, and think merging the committees would streamline the process and require one last step.*

Paul moved that the COVID-19 Task force merge with the Reopening task force. Betsy seconds. The motion was approved unanimously.

Diane Kohrs update -*Sara also updated the task force that Diane Kohrs will not be on the committee for a while because of suffering a mild stroke Christmas Eve. She is out of the hospital and recovering at home. The biggest impact will be on her balance and her gait.*

Update on cases –

Sara asked Paul for an update, and he said we're over the hump in respect to the surge that peaked in the middle of November. Paul says it's not clear why. There was a lull before Christmas, but we are starting to see a spike again. As classes start again, it's not clear whether we will reach a plateau. Nationally, we reached a high rate of loss of life, and Christmas will not help. The vaccine is here, but the delivery is going slower than expected. Wisconsin is ranked pretty low for delivery of vaccine

nationwide. Paul thinks we'll see a blip of an increase in Dane County and in the state, but then it should start dying down. Paul expects high risk people will be vaccinated in the winter, and the rest of us will be vaccinated by summer.

Kristi said once we get more vaccine, they plan to set up a vaccination site in the Alliant Energy Center. However, she expects they may want to get into the neighborhoods as well. Rick asked for contacts at Dane County Madison Public Health.

Paul said there will be much stricter tests for students to return this time to UW. He thinks the university is much more on top of it this time, which he expects may limit another surge.

Requests from staff -

Rick B. deferred to Rick T. for details.

Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby - Rick T. explained that two Cub Scout troops would like to use our gym in Verona as a setting for their Pinewood Derby this year. It's one of their biggest events of the year. One would be in January and one would be in February. However, only scout leaders would attend the derby in person. Scouts wouldn't attend in person. They would make their cars, get it to scout leaders, and the leaders would broadcast the "Derby" via their cell phones at Good Shepherd. We would expect 4-5 people tops to be in, set up the derby, and run it. We would limit it to 10. Rick T. said we would have to approve groups to return for this to happen. Paul Friesen said he's 100% in favor. Rick T. asked for any objections, and there were none.

Ash Wednesday – Ashes to Go – We tried to do this last year, and only had 25 people. We were debating whether to provide ashes on the forehead in the drive thru, or as a to-go kit (Holy Cow/Rick T.) The directors had a lengthy discussion about this idea last Wednesday. The idea: on Ash Wednesday, people would drive by and either a) get a packet of ashes to administer at home or b) have ashes applied in their car. Other items that could go home (but hasn't been fully determined yet) are Sunday School packets and/or Home Communion. The plan would be to do it at both campuses from 11:30-12:30 and 5:30-6:30. We would do 1 online service at 7. Ashes could be applied by people watching the service at home.

Rick B. asked whether it would be permissible to apply ashes in person. Paul is a little nervous about applying ashes. Paul said you would have to use different gloves each time. Pr. Chris said they would wear face shields. Paul said I feel much better about providing packets of ashes than applying ashes. Pr. Chris said he would like to bring these concerns back to staff and table the issue for now before we determine if we go forward with applying ashes.

Shrove Tuesday – Pancakes to Go (Holy Cow/Rick T.) Rick T. would like to provide pancakes and bacon to members and others via the Holy COW as part of Shrove Tuesday this year. It would operate similar to the Thanksgiving meal to go. Rick T. said he'd have plenty of volunteers. Rick T. asked whether there's any objection to serving members on Shrove Tuesday. There was none.

Drive-by family blessing in January (Joanne) – Sarah was having conversations with families who thought there was a desire to have blessings for families. It would be Sarah or Joanne or someone else touching their car and blessing them as they drove through. Sarah was thinking just Verona at this point. Betsy said there doesn't seem to be any risk there.

Small group and in-person gatherings revisited: Rick T. said he would be good to let groups of 10 or less back in again. Stephanie said if Rick T. feels comfortable, it's well within the Dane County guidelines. Paul said he'd be ok with it, but with the knowledge that we could step back if we had another spike. Betsy said a lot of schools are going back in hybrid models (except for Madison). Paul thinks we should

go on a case-by-case basis, but not communicate a reopening. Kristi says she still believes the hospitals are still full, and she'd be reluctant to open too fast. Bob said we peaked with 180 patients in November. Current COVID in-patients are about half of the spike. Rick B. said the task force makes recommendations and executive committee approves them. Rick said the executive committee doesn't meet for 8 days. Rick B. asked whether we can keep an eye on the dashboard, bring the task force's recommendations to the executive committee, along with the numbers, and have them make a decision? Paul said he'd be supportive. Pr. Chris said we're only talking about 3-5 groups. Paul asked Rick T. whether any groups meeting was high risk? Rick T. said some were older, but they do seem to self-select. Sara asked for a motion. **Betsy moved that the task force recommends to the executive committee to allow small groups that were meeting in November to return to meet, as long as there is no spike in cases in Dane County in January, as long as they follow the protocols. Pr. Chris seconds. Motion approved unanimously.**

Reopening Task Force updates

Betsy/Stephanie

12:25p

Gym use protocols – Sara said whether we have any specific protocols for the gym? Rick B. said we don't, but we could. Stephanie said we may want to prepare for it. Right now, she is using gyms around Dane County. Rick T. said I think we would want to talk with LBPS about it, since they use it for their operation.

Looking ahead - Easter worship

Pr. Chris said we can make plans and make changes based on the available realities. Easter is earlier this year, so I'm prepared to do it online. However, if we get decent weather, I could see doing elements outside. He hasn't heard any negative comments about Christmas. Sarah said all demographics seemed to be receptive to everything we did.

Action items/recap

Pr. Chris will go back to the staff on Ashes to Go.

Sara will take the merger of the Task Forces to Exec., along with taking the recommendation of bringing back small groups.

Closing and Lord's Prayer

Sara ended by saying she has been honored and privileged to lead and work with this group. Pr. Chris thanked Sara, Betsy and Stephanie for their leadership of both groups, and helping us feel like we're not making decisions in a vacuum.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer at 1:17.