

## **Worship, Music and Arts Committee**

Tuesday, August 10, 2021 – Meeting Minutes

Meeting commenced at 6:35 pm.

Present in-person: Jared Stellmacher, Donna Maysack, Judy Kalan, Don Nelson (Donna's prayer group), Judy Johnson (Donna's prayer group), Mike Harper (Committee chair). Present via Zoom: Betsy Johnson (Board representative), Karen Smith, Barb Bredel, Beth Marshall, and Keith Osterman (Donna's prayer group).

Welcomed Donna's Prayer group to our meeting and invited them back to come to our future meetings.

Devotions—Karen Smith

Entitled "Streams of Consciousness."

Great Devotion on using prayer in challenging times -- dealing with COVID and its variants. Discussed praying for our church leadership, community, friends, family, and unknown persons struggling or experiencing hardship during these times. Used Ephesians 4:14-21 as the opening prayer.

Next order of Business: current Surge in COVID-19 delta variant. Still a lot of unknowns. Everyone hoped to find ways to continue both in-person and virtual services regardless moving forward. Even though the plan is to move all services on Sunday, September 19 at both campuses indoors, discussion encouraged us to think about keeping an outdoor worship opportunity if weather permits, especially if the surge continues and worsens. And, for those families with younger children who have not been offered vaccination opportunities.

Judy Johnson: apply what we have learned about ourselves to the model going forward. Use our "Worship Lens." We've learned a lot: living more into our mission and vision, bridging our campuses through worship and fellowship, and finding new ways to connect (including virtually).

Don Nelson: Interesting to learn that 60% of our congregation continues to worship regularly online. Our virtual congregation is important, and we need to remain aware of their significant presence and participation. Big gains are being made by offering virtual church. Also asked for clearer communication from leadership on all policies implemented going forward. Especially why the church is doing it and how this might help – including listing reasons for implementation. This would create more transparency in understanding decision making. More reasoning behind decisions.

Beth Marshall discussed importance of children in church and school wearing masks for their own protection since they have not had the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Joanne Zastrow has told church school teachers, helpers and children that masks will be worn when in class.

Keith: Discussed creating a clearer and a more substantive mask policy and guidelines for indoor worship.

We had a general discussion on wearing masks indoor as opposed to outdoor. There was consensus that if we continue congregational singing indoors, mask wearing should be mandatory, since unmasked singing has proven to increase chances of spreading the virus. Implement social distancing by spacing seating was also discussed helping reduce the potential of virus spread. This does not necessarily mean that the pastors or musicians would have to mask, since they are at a greater distance already from the congregation. Also discussed returning of handbells, adult choir, and worship bands at Verona for September worship. There was a discussion on whether the choir should startup and wear masks during rehearsals and services. Jared is recommending masks as are other church and school/universities in the area.

**BOARD RECOMMENDATION:** develop a clearer and more substantive mask policy and guidelines for indoor worship and indoor activities in general. If we are requiring masks for some groups, encouraging masks for others...it's confusing and not inclusive. The committee feels as though it would be prudent to require masks while indoors. A comprehensive policy both creates consistency in our messaging and reenforces our mission and vision of loving and caring for all our neighbors. Although many people in our congregation have been vaccinated, our younger population (children) have not yet had the opportunity. Why would we not all mask to help make them and their families feel more comfortable and safe in being community together?

**QUESTIONS FOR COVID TASK FORCE:**

1. Is singing still recommended?
  - a. Congregational singing (masked?)
  - b. Choirs (in general)?
2. Should we consider enhanced social distancing again by blocking off pews and spacing chairs?

Donna lead our closing prayer as Keith then concluded with the Lord's Prayer.

Meeting. Adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Next meeting is Tuesday, September 14, at Good Shepherd Madison at 6:30 pm.  
Room/space to be determined.