

## “Have Faith” Initiative

### The Faith Community’s Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak

#### Notes from 4/2/20 Meeting (via Zoom)

Greg Burris, CEO of United Way of the Ozarks, welcomed the group on behalf of Janet Dankert, President & CEO of Community Partnership of the Ozarks; Brian Fogle, President & CEO of Community Foundation of the Ozarks; and himself, then opened the meeting.

Rev. Bob Roberts provided an opening prayer.

Greg, Janet and Brian stated that City of Springfield and Greene County leaders had approached the three organizations and asked them to help coordinate the faith community’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak. They recognized that much work is already being done by individual churches, but the intention of the “Have Faith” Initiative is to focus the response on the most critical needs. CPO, CFO and UWO have already surveyed the region’s nonprofits and amassed a “master needs list” that can be used to focus efforts.

Springfield Mayor Ken McClure and Greene County Commissioner Harold Bengsch each welcomed the group, emphasized the importance of the faith community, and thanked the participants for joining the meeting and heeding the call to action.

Clay Goddard, Director of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, provided an update on the status of the COVID-19 outbreak and response strategies. Clay reemphasized the importance of physical distancing and asked churches not to host in-person services at this time, recognizing we are approaching Holy Week. Clay stated that he understands this is a “big ask,” but using technology and other ways to worship while complying with the “stay at home” order is critical in our community’s fight to “flatten the curve” and limit the spread of COVID-19. Clay responded to a host of questions from participants. Clay was asked how the faith community can help support our community’s healthcare workers; he will think about it and get back to us. Some of the other comments and questions posted on the chat board included:

- Does the community need more locations for food distribution?
- I know someone who is a small rural church pastor who is offering a class with some basics of doing church online, some basics of Facebook, basics of in-home video recording, simple/free things small churches can accomplish with a little bit of knowledge - you can email for more info [kimpolchow@gmail.com](mailto:kimpolchow@gmail.com)
- The City’s Department of Workforce Development will do a Facebook Live to answer questions about filing for unemployment, etc.
- Chamber is doing that prayer breakfast live stream from 2nd Baptist church and finalizing those details. How can all of us impact that?

- Are any of the churches involved applying for Payroll Protection Program under the CARES Act 2020, a loan through the SBA that can be forgiven if used for specific purposes?
- This is a spreadsheet for meals, volunteer teams can identify the dates/times needed.  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pkDA3Dk4fYMMugozQ9Q35X0XSLT-xVdj\\_Ut1oyaGw7c/edit?fbclid=IwAR1jtmIsmn5YFfo2ksUxflWqjBVy2jPtT0vi-3PEF\\_UIE0YeloH\\_e7dXs](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pkDA3Dk4fYMMugozQ9Q35X0XSLT-xVdj_Ut1oyaGw7c/edit?fbclid=IwAR1jtmIsmn5YFfo2ksUxflWqjBVy2jPtT0vi-3PEF_UIE0YeloH_e7dXs)

Addition links and resources provided in the “chat” feature during this meeting included the following:

- [springfieldmo.gov/coronavirusresponse](http://springfieldmo.gov/coronavirusresponse)
- [Health.springfieldmo.gov/coronavirus](http://Health.springfieldmo.gov/coronavirus)
- [www.coxhealth.com/innovation/masks](http://www.coxhealth.com/innovation/masks)
- [sbj.net](http://sbj.net)- CJ Davis (Burrell) is doing a free webcast on the COVID 19 Mental Health Crisis on April 3, 2pm. This will likely be recorded and posted on SBJ’s web site following.
- The COVID-19 Hotline is 417-874-1211 - please share this number with your congregations.

Janet Dankert and Brian Fogle outlined the top needs identified by area nonprofits at this time:

- Funds (for supplies, operations, etc.)
- Supplies (hand sanitizers, cleaning supplies, toilet paper, etc.)
- Food (for clients)

The master list of needs can be accessed from any of the three organizations’ web sites, and will be updated as additional information is received:

- [www.cpozarks.org](http://www.cpozarks.org)
- [www.cfozarks.org](http://www.cfozarks.org)
- [www.uwozarks.org](http://www.uwozarks.org)

Greg introduced Rev. Mark Struckhoff, former CEO of Council of Churches of the Ozarks, and Rev. Bob Roberts, Second Baptist Church, as co-chairs of the “Have Faith” Initiative.

Rev. Struckhoff and Rev. Roberts outlined the initiatives four goals:

- Conduct a “supplies drive” to collect and allocate items our nonprofits need most to serve the most vulnerable in our community
- Support our community’s spiritual and mental health
- Determine how our community can best come together in faith during this time of physical distancing requirements
- Serve as a communication conduit, both from faith leaders to civic leaders and from civic leaders to faith leaders

Rev. Struckhoff and Rev. Roberts asked the participating faith leaders for feedback and asked what they currently need. A variety of topics were discussed. Rev. Struckhoff and Rev. Roberts indicated they are considering the creation of a smaller “steering committee” in order to organize the efforts under each goal.

It was decided that hosting these Zoom calls on Thursdays at 11:30 worked well for the majority of the participants. Thus, the next meeting will be April 9, 11:30-12:30. An email invitation will be sent by Vickie Hicks, United Way of the Ozarks.

Rev. Saehee Duran offered the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned.