

“Have Faith” Initiative”

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

Notes from 7/16/20 meeting (via Zoom)

Greg Burris opened the meeting and thanked all for participating on behalf of Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, United Way of the Ozarks, the City of Springfield and Greene County. There were 84 participants on the Zoom call. Greg welcomed all newcomers to the call.

Co-chair of the Have Faith Initiative, Rev. Bob Roberts, welcomed the group, and Vickie Hicks provided the opening prayer.

Co-Chair Rev. Mark Struckhoff welcomed the group and introduced Mayor McClure. The Mayor discussed the City Council meeting held on Monday, July 13. The City Council voted on the mask ordinance, and there were many speakers in favor and many more opposed. After six and a half hours of public presentations, the ordinance passed eight to zero with one councilman abstaining. Cora Scott, Public Information Officer for the City of Springfield, provided additional details about the meeting as well as the current COVID-19 dashboard.

Mayor McClure turned the floor over to Jon Mooney, Assistant Director of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. Jon said the number one source of new COVID-19 cases is coming from community spread. The second source comes from gatherings. Over the last two weeks, there have been 30 new cases a day and that it does take the health department over 24 hours to investigate the current caseload. Their gold standard is to investigate within 24 hours. At the time of the call, there were 600 people in quarantine.

Commissioner Harold Bengsch spoke briefly about the Cares Funding that will soon be available. The county created an online application and tracking program before they opened the application process. Dr. Lyle Foster will oversee the Cares Funding distribution with the help of a 30-member committee. The Commissioner also praised the amazing work being done by the Health Department.

Rev. Mark Struckhoff then welcomed our panel to discuss the topic of “Systemic Racism in the Ozarks: A Pandemic Within a Pandemic.” Cora Scott moderated the panel discussion. The panelists were:

- Imari Stout, Black Lives Matter
- Dr. Lyle Foster, MSU Sociology Professor, and Owner of Big Mommas Coffee
- Jamille (Mia) Jones, United Community Change
- Rev Adrienne Denson-Ewell, Campbell United Methodist Church and Vice President of the local NAACP chapter

The insightful panel discussion lasted for an hour. (As to not take away from the impactful conversation, we have chosen to post the audio recording at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PaWibi9uhuP11bbLIC4-hlKMzHhYUmoX/view>.)

Rev Mark Struckhoff closed the meeting with the announcement that he has accepted a position with the Missouri United Methodist Foundation in Columbia and that he will be moving there by August 1. He spoke with admiration for the Springfield Community after living here for 40 years. Many in the audience thanked him for the service, including Mayor McClure. Rev. Jenn Simmons has accepted the Have Faith Initiative Co-Chair position and will start immediately.

Rev. Struckhoff closed in prayer, and the meeting was adjourned.