

“Have Faith” Initiative”

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

Notes from 8/27/20 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 48 participants on the Zoom call. Greg welcomed all newcomers to the call.

Co-chair of the Have Faith Initiative, Rev. Bob Roberts promoted next week’s meeting on Tough Talks by Francine Pratt. As a reminder, the September 10 meeting is canceled. Rev. Roberts introduced Rev. Chanta Chhim, Seminole Baptist Temple, to open the meeting in prayer.

Rev. Roberts then turned the floor over to Mayor McClure. The Mayor discussed how we have a united City Council even in the face of recent opposition to the masking ordinance. The current masking ordinance will expire on October 11, so the Council will begin to review data to decide on the next steps.

Harold Bengsch, Greene County Commissioner, presented the county report. The CARES Act applications are moving along very well, and several organizations have been selected to receive funding. Lastly, Commissioner Bengsch shared a story about a local child who has been hospitalized for over a month and reminded us that children can also get seriously ill from COVID-19.

Cora Scott, Public Information Officer for the City of Springfield, then told the audience about the messaging the city is now using: Wear your mask, watch your distance and wash your hands. She also announced the Springfield/Greene County Community Remembrance Ceremony on September 19, 2020, at 1:00. The event will be live-streamed <https://cityview.springfieldmo.gov/>. It will be a healing moment to memorialize the deaths of the three black men who were lynched on the Square in 1906.

Rev. Roberts introduced Clay Goddard, Director of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. Clay encouraged the listeners to pray for the Mayor and City Council as they are working through very tough times, and the public often uses unkind words. There were 112 cases reported yesterday. As of the call, there have been 2,805 cases and 29 deaths in our community. It’s important to remind people that a mask is a piece of the puzzle and that we need to remember to physical distance and to stay home when we are sick. The Faith community has done this right.

Clay was asked to comment on the upcoming flu season. He says that early reports from the southern hemisphere are stating that the flu case numbers are lower because

people are physically distancing and wearing masks. He did encourage people to get the flu vaccine and to be aware that flu symptoms mimic COVID symptoms.

Clay was asked about the positivity rate in our community. He stated that we are at 13%, but he expects that to drop as more test results come in and that it is a lagging indicator. He said the statewide rate is 11.2%, but he expects that number to drop as well because negative tests are often the last ones entered.

Rev. Roberts thanked Clay for his hard work and turned the floor to Rev. Simmons.

Rev. Simmons spoke about her church's recent neighborhood blood drive. They did the blood drive in conjunction with a few neighborhood homeowners' groups and a non-profit that meets in their building. She said the Community Blood Center of the Ozarks (CBCO) did a great job organizing the event and provided a safe experience. She introduced Anthony Roberts with CBCO, who told everyone about the current blood shortage in our community because of the lack of blood drives. He said they supply blood to over 40 hospitals. If your organization would like to host a blood drive, please contact him at robertsa@cbco.org or 417-227-5301.

Greg Burris then introduced Shane Schoeller, Greene County Clerk, who oversees our election process. Shane will be back to talk about the election process later in September, but he spoke briefly about the need for election judges. They will need over 800 workers for the November 3 election. They will offer training online or in-person, and you can go to their [website](#) to apply.

Janet Dankert, CEO at the Community Partnership of the Ozarks, introduced our guest speaker, Amanda Stadler, Coordinator with the Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness for the Community Partnership of the Ozarks. Amanda's presentation on Crisis Cold Weather Shelters can be viewed here - https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/10h6vqn6_NMddNDTnpmRTICVUZW9Uj6iG.

Amanda then answered the following questions.

Q: Are children allowed in these shelters? Great Circle and Isabel's house offer cold weather shelters for children, and there is limited space at The Kitchen for families to stay together. One Door also provides hotels for some families.

Q: Is Safe to Sleep included in this program? Safe to Sleep is a year-round women's shelter, and they are not included in the Crisis Cold Weather Shelter's numbers.

Q: Could members of the shelters actually staff the shelters in exchange for pay or a hotel room? It's a great idea, but there is no funding tied to these shelters, so that piece would need to be figured out. Plus, churches have their own protocols for their buildings.

Q: What training is provided for those staffing these shelters? That is typically left up to the churches that are hosting these individuals.

Q: What is the best estimate for total unsheltered and children unsheltered? Usually, 200 individuals are unsheltered every year. They are unaware of any unsheltered children.

Q: Deanna Carpenter mentioned that her group creates Emergency Warming sacks. She asked if they would be helpful this year. Amanda added that those types of care packages are appreciated.

Greg thanked Amanda for her presentation. He turned the floor back to Rev. Simmons. She asked Faith Leaders to consider partnering with Amanda to help meet the need.

Rev. Simmons asked for committee updates starting with the Food and Supply Drive Committee. They are still working with the sheltered homeless and providing three-day food boxes. Special thanks to East Sunshine Church of Christ, who is supplying all the food in September. He reminded everyone that the “Stuff the Truck” food drive will be held on September 18 and 19, 2020. Additional information on this project will be forthcoming.

The Spiritual and Mental Health committee has provided more resources on the shared drive related to racism and community spiritual leaders. (www.uwozarks.org/have-faith)

Rev. Simmons appreciated the Healthcare Heroes' activities and all who took part in that effort.

Rev. Simmons closed the meeting in prayer, and we were adjourned.