

“Have Faith” Initiative”

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

Notes from 9/24/20 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 49 participants on the Zoom call. Greg welcomed all newcomers to the call.

Rev Roberts, Have Faith Initiative Co-Chair, welcomed the group and announced the upcoming programs:

October 1, Ways Faith Leaders are Connecting with their Members

October 8, Springfield Greene County Health Department’s New Dashboard

He then turned the floor over to Dr. Judith Gonzalez, Hand-in-Hand Multicultural Center, and Cox Health Psychologist, to open us in prayer.

Mayor McClure, City of Springfield, told the listeners that they had a great visit with the EPA Administrator last week. He told everyone that the current masking ordinance expires on October 11. City Council had a study session on Tuesday, September 22, and heard from the Health Department, Brent Hubbard from Mercy, Steve Edwards from CoxHealth, and others. There is a strong consensus to continue masking through December. On Monday, October 5, the City Council will vote. They expect a lot of public input. Because it is an Emergency Ordinance, they will hear comments and vote during the same meeting.

The City has recently had good discussions with Springfield Public Schools and with university leaders. The Mayor believes they are doing the right things. As the hospital leaders indicated on Tuesday, we are a masked island, and we are significantly impacted by what is occurring around us. The September 22 meeting was very informative and is available here: <https://cityview.springfieldmo.gov/tuesdays-with-council-september-22-2020/>

The floor was given to Jon Mooney, Assistant Director, Springfield-Greene County Health Department, to share brief updates. The hope is that we are past the most recent spike. Their messaging is around the three w’s – Watch your distance, Wear a mask, and Wash your hands. There is currently a large number of individuals in quarantine. Jon reminded everyone to take quarantine seriously. If you quarantine, you may still get sick, but the disease stops with you. Quarantine is difficult, it’s an inconvenience, but if we don’t do it, the disease will spread rapidly.

Recent numbers from the Health Department:

- 113 new cases on Wednesday
- 6,202 cases, total to date
- 67 deaths, majority in September

- 160 currently hospitalized

Jon asked everyone to check out the new dashboard. It contains individual and organizational numbers with a 7-day rolling average

- <https://health.springfieldmo.gov/5068/Coronavirus>- dashboard
- <https://cityview.springfieldmo.gov/update-to-our-interactive-online-dashboard/> - link to a video explaining the dashboard

The Health Department has also released Halloween guidelines - <https://health.springfieldmo.gov/5302/Halloween-Tips/holidaytips>.

Question: Can you provide an update on hospital capacity? Jon said to please watch the Tuesday presentation and that the local hospitals are increasing the use of their capacity. They are stressed, but not at capacity.

Question: What about the possibility of people who cannot wear masks carrying medical exemption cards/notes from doctors? It is not in the ordinance. Feasibility and enforcement would be difficult.

Cora Scott, Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement, then spoke. She said there is a system in place for comments regarding the masking ordinance. Visit, <https://www.springfieldmo.gov/FormCenter/City-Council-6/Leave-Comments-for-City-Council-About-Ma-374>

Greg Burris then introduced Shane Schoeller, Greene County Clerk. Greg indicated that Shane might be as busy as the Health Department right now.

To view Shane's presentation:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/10h6vqn6_NMddNDTnpmRTICVUZW9Uj6iG.

To view or share a video with details about safe voting: <https://vimeo.com/460652187>.

Question: When will mail-in and absentee ballots be counted?

They now have a high-speed counter, and they will begin to scan ballots on election day. Those will be the first results released that day.

Question- So, say you plan to vote in-person, you're not worried about COVID19 risk, etc. but then you are diagnosed or instructed to quarantine say ten days, five days whatever before the election, that doesn't give you enough time to get an absentee or mail-in option. We've got thousands of active cases and people in quarantine in Greene Co. that presumably will be true November 3, and in the weeks leading up to that, but those people don't know today that that will be the case for them?

They have bi-partisan teams of people that will come to your residence. Ask as soon as you know you cannot get to the polls. Please don't wait until 5 pm on election day.

Question: If voters spoil their mail-in ballots, or file a lost ballot report if they never received it, can they go to their polling locations and vote on Election Day?

Yes, you will sign an affidavit at the polling place. It will be provisional and then verified.

Question: For mail-in ballots that need to be notarized, is there a listing of best places and ways to get that completed?

The Missouri Secretary of State's office has a listing <https://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/MailinNotary>. The League of Women Voters may make a list available locally.

Question: I applied for a mail-in ballot, but have not received it yet; when should I expect it? They are in the process of mailing them out right now. His department had to wait on some ballot language to be finalized. They are processing the 9,000 ballots that have been requested.

Co-chair Rev. Jen Simmons thanked Shane for his presentation and turned the floor over for committee updates:

Tom Ryan, with the Food and Supply Drive Committee, requested a lead person to help coordinate the food delivery on October 5 and 8. Please contact Tom at tomkryan@aol.com. Tom told of one person at the Welcome Inn that needs a new wheelchair (this request has since been filled). Lastly, Tom said that the CARES Grant would help stabilize this program for feeding the sheltered homeless.

Last week we requested someone to chair the Coming Together in Faith Committee, and Deanna Carpenter has stepped into that role. More information from this committee to come.

Rev. Simmons reminded everyone that the documentary *Songs from the Street* is available for church viewings. Contact Christie Love at christie@theconnectinggrounds.com.

Lastly, Rev. Simmons reminded everyone on the call that there is a need for emergency cold weather shelters. Please reach out to Amanda at Community Partnership of the Ozarks to learn more, 888-2020.

Rev. Ericka Gravely, Asbury United Methodist, closed the meeting in prayer.