

# **“Have Faith” Initiative”**

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

### **Notes from 11/5/20 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 40 participants on the Zoom call.

Mark Struckhoff, former Have Faith Initiative Co-Chair and Executive Director of the Missouri United Methodist Foundation open the meeting in prayer

Rev. Roberts welcomed Harold Bengsch, Greene County Commissioner. This morning the commission approved more CARES funding. Forty-two small businesses will receive funding to help carry them through this difficult time.

Mayor McClure reminded everyone that the masking ordinance lasts until January 9. He then announced that City Council would host two listening sessions, November 9 and November 23 to hear from the community on key issues, including equality. A survey will go out as well, to provide useful data for in City Council’s annual retreat.

As a part of the City’s Tree Lighting ceremony, the Mayor asked faith leaders to consider ringing their church chimes/bells on November 21 at 7:55 pm., as a symbol of unity for the city.

Katie Towns, Assistant Director of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, then said the county had crossed the 10,000-case mark earlier this week. This week we saw a daily 27% increase. They attributed the increase to the colder weather last week. There are 176 in the hospital, 32 in ICU, 34 on ventilators, and 69 are Greene County residents. They believe this is the second if not the third wave. CDC reports over 231,000 deaths to date. As a comparison, last year 22,000 people died from the flu. This pandemic has taken more lives than many significant events in history, including the Vietnam War and the Korean conflict.

There were 77 Greene County deaths in October, but in the first five days of November, there have been 17 deaths. She reminded everyone that masking works and to use a face-covering no matter the distance.

With the holiday coming, please carefully consider your plans. The city will be issuing guidance soon.

Question: Have they discovered any long-term health effects from the virus? There is discussion in the medical community about possible neurological and heart effects. There is still much that is unknown, but they are learning more every day.

Question: How soon can someone donate blood after recovering from the virus? Katie suggested you contact the Community Blood Center of the Ozarks for guidelines. Plasma is needed, as it aids in recovery.

Question: What is the timeline for the vaccine distribution? The Health Department is still waiting for information from the State. Many manufacturers are in the final stages of testing. Once the process is complete, they will know more about distribution. When the State releases its vaccine distribution strategy, the department will finalize its plan.

Cora Scott, Springfield's Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement, said her department is in a continuous battle with misinformation. They are now focusing on Thanksgiving and Holiday gatherings, and they will put out guidance. She is grateful the local media has upped the distribution of their masking videos. They hope to add more billboards.

They recently asked hospital leaders what our group could be doing to help. Steve Edwards, Cox, - Thank everyone for continued support. He said Cox is emphasizing safety driven by science. Protect those you love by masking. And he asked for our community to support health care workers; they need love, thoughts, and prayers. He also asked church leaders to take care of themselves.

Brent Hubbard, Mercy – He asked that our group continue to support masking and distancing. He asked for the continued support of Merciful nights, the program that helps our neighbors who need shelter. Please continue to pray for healthcare providers. You can visit, [Prayersformercy.com](https://www.prayersformercy.com) to leave a message for Mercy leaders and healthcare providers. He also asked that pastors consider ways to minister to hospital chaplains.

Cora announced that our group is considering ways to encourage healthcare providers by the writing of physical cards. More details to come.

Janet Dankert introduced Dr. Shelly Farnan from Burrell Behavioral Health. Dr. Farnan started the Be Well Community at the beginning of the pandemic. You can view her presentation at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iTBDanGuOLQG0IFD0MgSZyQYn-xlmlHv/view?usp=sharing>

Rev. Simmons asked if there were any committee reports

Tom Ryan, chair of the Food and Supply Drive Committee, stated that the CARES Act funds would be spent next week. They used the funding to create 3600 3-day meal boxes. These boxes should be enough to feed the sheltered homeless through April 1.

Those boxes are stuffed, stored, and ready to go. Our Stuff the Truck drive will most likely be in March or April.

Deanna Carpenter, chair of the Coming Together in Faith Committee, said thank you to those that participated in the Election Prayer Night event. Her committee will investigate ways to help the hospitals and encourage/thank caregivers.

Josh Zahn, East Sunshine Church of Christ, closed in prayer.