



GUM CHURCH

Our vision is to actively live the example of Jesus

GOVERNANCE BOARD MEETING

Saturday, March 20, 2021

PRESENT: Jeri Bigler, Dan DeZwaan, Ashley Forton, John Johnson, Sue Kremkow, Amy Schuiling, Kelly Goward, Shaun Skabinski, Karen Strickland, *Pastor Sherri Swanson, *Carol DeWeerd. (* Non-voting member).

This meeting was held on Zoom. Dan called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.

DEVOTIONS: John shared devotions today with “despair” as the theme – that through despair we should “rise to serve God”.

COMMITTEE/STAFF REPORTS:

Reports from Trustees, Lynette (Choir), Amy (Office Manager), and Sara Zallar/Bailey Williams (Children’s ministries) were sent to the Board members before this meeting. Pastor Sherri added some remarks on some of the other positions not reported.

Finance: we have just received our second PPP loan, but concerns still remain regarding the church finances. We are behind in our ministry shares.

Church and Society: is planning on a new series about “anti-racism”.

Prayer Shawl ministry: the prayer shawl ministry has been meeting outside, but would like to begin meeting in church. They have delivered a couple of shawls and have received a large donation recently.

Java Center (Chris Koch): due to the needs of Allen lately, Chris has asked if a new person can be found to lead this coffee group. Plans are underway.

PASTOR’S REPORT:

- Pastor Sherri reported that concerning the Blessing Boxes, the zoning administrator at the Township requested a letter giving our approval and this was done.
- The Creed study is finishing this week.
- Re: coffee with the pastor – two sessions are scheduled for next month (one in person and one online)
- A new member class is beginning.
- The confirmation class is composed of 12. Sherri meets with them Sunday afternoons online. The confirmation service will be held on May 23, 2021.
- General conference has been postponed until September, 2022. But the Michigan delegation continues to meet. The Michigan delegation met with the Wisconsin delegation. A statement was signed indicating support for the election of one bishop in



GUM CHURCH

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our jurisdiction and continuing to hold in abeyance all complaints on LGBTQ clergy or same-gender weddings.

- Pastor Sherri suggested discussion items for our next meeting:
 1. What about the doors?
 2. Sherri has been asked to perform a same-gender wedding. At this time these weddings will be performed only for persons within our congregation. Does the Board need to give formal approval to hold such ceremonies in the church building? This permission is not to perform the service but to do the service in the church building.

Question was asked if this will affect Sherri's employment in our church – not since the bishop has declared an abeyance during this interim time.

BUILDING USE:

- Military – Amy looked into this. There are no issues with the township. The funeral home handles all the details.
- Groups of 25 concerning funerals – this number is according to the State regulations at this time. Question about whether it would make a difference if the funeral was held in a funeral home rather than a church. Ashley has offered to contact the Ottawa County Health Department to see if they can clarify this.
- Food at a funeral – after some discussion it was decided not to offer in-church food service at this time.
- Food distribution – The next food distribution date is April 16. Mike Lee has asked if we might provide a “bag meal” to the ones coming for food. It was decided that a limit of 3 people could be preparing these to-go meals in the kitchen and others could be working at long tables in the lobby (space outside the gym) to socially distance.

MOTION: proposed by Ashley

We will allow up to 3 volunteers in the kitchen to prepare to-go meals for the food distribution ministry if socially distancing and mask wearing is followed; and, others in the lobby at long tables. No food will be eaten in the church.

Seconded by: Karen. All in favor – approved.

- Boy Scouts – There are approximately 25 boy scouts in the troop using our church. The scout master would like to initiate the boys returning to the church. He is proposing they would divide into 2 groups after 15 minutes together for their opening. One group would be in the lounge and the other in the gym. Previously we have proposed that 15 could be in the gym and 10 in the lounge. Shaun stated that with our charter agreement with the scouts we are responsible for providing them with space to meet. Questions as to how to configure the gym. If they do a circle it would include a maximum of 15; if rows that would allow 25.

MOTION: proposed by Ashley



GUM CHURCH

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That we allow 25 in the gym with an arrangement of chairs in a grid and that all participants wear masks.

Motion seconded by Jeri. All in favor – approved.

- KinderMusik – Lynette would like to plan ahead for future enrollment in her program. To be discussed further at next month's meeting.
- Recitals – Kelli Gessner would like to have her recital in the church. She is anticipating approx. 140 people. She is proposing to split this number into 4 groups at 4 different times on a Sunday (May 2). Questions were expressed about health screening forms, cleaning between groups, reconfiguring the chairs, and what if others want a recital in the church.

MOTION: proposed by Ashley

Use of the church for musical recitals will be approved on a case by case basis. We will work with the 100 person limit; health department regulations (distancing/masks) will be followed, proper cleaning; and, the person requesting the recital is a member or staff of the church.

Seconded by Karen. All in favor – approved.

*** ADDENDUM:**

The following statements were posted after this Board meeting as follow-up and clarification of the issue of using the church for gatherings other than worship:

1. It was reported by the Ottawa County Health Department/Covid team that attendance of social events inside a building (parties, showers, weddings, and other social gatherings) must be capped at 25 people at this time. Legal consequences could be enforced if this mandate is not followed. We are basically placing all gatherings outside of worship in this category. Ashley confirmed this with funerals.
2. Kelli has been notified we would continue to monitor this in case the limits changed before her recital date. Of note there are two other persons in the church wanting to have a recital.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORSHIP SERVICES: (NOTE: at this time the positivity rate is rising in Michigan)

- Palm Sunday and Easter – 100 people and/or 2 services?
Concern of getting enough volunteers for 2 services. If we are able to do the health screening online this will help with the bottleneck at the door on Sunday. Heather is working on a program to use to do online screening.
Presently our criteria for attendance is 20% - should we increase that number? If more spots open up maybe more people will sign up. If we offer 2 services with a maximum of 60 at each may be safer than 100 at one service. It was suggested that we have 2 services at Easter, but see how many attend Palm Sunday; and, that we increase the capacity to 100.
- MOTION: proposed by Karen



GUM CHURCH

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That we increase the capacity for attendance in the sanctuary to 100 starting on Palm Sunday. That we have 2 services on Easter; and, if 100 is too many we will re-assess.

Seconded by Ashley. All in favor – approved

AMENDED MOTION: proposed by Kelly that we continue to RSVP.

All in favor – approved.

- Singing – still remains a concern. This will be re-visited later.
- Nursery/Sunday School – Pastor Sherri proposed a possible spring/summer class for 3 years – 1st or 2nd grades in person. Sara conducted a survey of parents of the parents and found a split in online vs. in person. Sherri will discuss this with Sara.
It was suggested that Amanda survey her parents also. Sherri will ask Amanda and report back. We are trying to serve families as best as possible.
Children’s Time during worship – Sherri will offer in person Children’s time during worship beginning April 18. Details to be worked out as to how to socially distance the children on the stage.
- Social Distance Language – As per our guidelines please change the wording on point 4 to: “Please observe social distancing while in the building”.
See: <https://www.gumonline.org/inperson-worship>. This correction to be made on the website and on signs around the building.
- Choir – Lynette would like guidance on a timetable for the choir. Our hope is that we will be fully functional by fall and singing in the sanctuary without masks.
- Sherri asked permission to consult with people (such as for a funeral) in the library – approved.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

Wed. April 14 @ 7 pm

Sat. May 8 @ 9 am (one hour meeting!)

Wed. June 9 @ 7 pm

Sat. July 17 @ 9 am

Wed. Aug. 11 @ 7 pm

Ashley closed with a prayer. And the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am

Respectfully submitted by:

Carol DeWeerd



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