

**Board Minutes  
First Unitarian Church, South Bend  
September 16, 2021**

The special Board meeting is called to order at 5:30 p.m. by president, Anne Mannix

Present: Gail DeSomer, Anne Mannix, Ruth Regan, Rev. Chip Roush, Ken Chambers, Catherine Lundergan, Kay Azar

Absent: Becky Lindstrom

This special meeting is called to discuss having more in-person services outdoors as long as the weather holds out.

Rev. Chip: Difficult time...Desperation to see others is very real for many. Feels it's not safe to gather outdoors even masked. Those at home are not getting a Zoom good service when we are outside. A watch party at the Church is a possibility with 25 people in the sanctuary. How would those 25 be chosen? That's still a question.

Rev. Chip indicates that he is not willing to lead outdoor in-person services, and that the worship committee would be responsible if we were to agree on that.

Quality of service is an issue with technical issues. Not all can come outdoors, so less inclusive. Is there a way to get sound quality better? Alan DeSomer has a sound system.

Ann: ZOOM services are not inclusive either as not all have the capability to use it.

Rev. Chip: Recommendation that Board chooses the best way to be as inclusive as possible in the safest way possible.

The discussion focuses on Zoom and technical issues, personal and spiritual issues, and COVID data.

- How many people is it that don't have Zoom or won't do Zoom services? Is Zoom meeting spiritual needs? A number of people have asked to have outdoor services while the weather is still good. Other churches are meeting both indoors and outdoors. Chuck said, as an individual, he doesn't have concerns about people meeting even unmasked outside. The COVID Task Force hasn't met in several months. Outdoor risks are minimal. It seems though county numbers are increasing and we are in the Orange Zone.
- Could we do 2 services, 1 outdoors and 1 via Zoom? Even if the 2 services were identical, Rev. Chip says that it is the performance aspect that's difficult. As logistics get more complicated, it gets harder to manage expectations. Can we do more lay led services?
- We need to look for other ways to meet peoples' needs now and over the winter. Can we suggest people join small watch parties in or outside at peoples' homes? Can we invite up to 25 people to gather, distanced and masked in the sanctuary? Who would then be responsible for opening and closing? It would be up to Board members. Seems like more of a risk than being outside.

- Possibility of lay led outdoor services and/or another possibility is allowing 25 people in the sanctuary for Zoom services. The 25 would include pulpit host and tech people.
- Should we contact those who have expressed an issue with not meeting together? We should call them and let them know what and why we are doing what we're doing. And would small group discussions meet their needs? A Zoom small group may be more on point or could possibly meet in person if everyone in the group desired.

Gail moves that we allow 25 people to gather in the sanctuary on Sundays for the service via the Zoom services. Kay seconds.

Amendment: WAC committee, pulpit host and tech people will be necessary.

We haven't yet consulted with WAC and tech people.

Motion fails.

Can we make a motion that says when the risk is lower, we could move to allow 25 people to meet in the sanctuary?

Ruth moves that until the county moves to a blue or yellow level of infection we stay on Zoom for the time being. Gail seconds. Motion passes.

Catherine moves to offer the opportunity for 2 of the scheduled lay led services to be held outdoors if WAC and speakers amenable. Kay seconds. We would offer the opportunity have these services to move lay led services around. Alan has a speaker system that would allow us to broadcast better. And we would continue to use Zoom for those who can't/won't come. Motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Azar  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees