

**Task Force Topic:** Investigate new venues to hold Area 9 Assemblies and AWSC Meetings

**Task Force Members:** Suza G. (Chair), Ellie B., Kimberly S., Robin P., Diane M., and Toni J.

**Background/Historical Info:** All Area meetings for any number of panels historically have been held in hotels. It has become necessary from a financial consideration to look at the possibility of different venues, i.e.: convention centers, mega churches, district hosting, etc. considering fellowship needs, housing recommendations, and spiritual impact on the meetings.

**Thought Force references (if any):**

From 2017 study:

	Typical Assembly Expense:	Typical AWSC Expense:
Hotel Rooms	\$3,000	\$4,000
Food & Beverage	\$6,500	\$5,000
A/V	\$2,500	\$1,000

**Charge:** Develop a recommendation as to what other venues could be utilized for Assemblies and AWSC meetings

**Task Force Summary / Findings:**

Assumption: Assemblies have ~250 attendees. AWSC have ~75 attendees.

**1. Online Meetings:**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has forced everyone into learning methods to allow large groups to meet online. The recent July 18, 2020 Assembly meeting proved that it could be done at minimal expense for software licensing for a platform to accommodate several hundred people at an all-day event. The convenience of attending from one’s home saved on travel time and added expense for overnight hotel stays and meal costs. Voting was very efficient and expeditious. The meeting lasted from 10 am to 5 pm with optional AI-Anon meeting 8:45 to 9:45 am and then additionally from 5-6 pm for a spiritual meeting. Spanish translation was provided along with technical assistants. The session was open for free chat during the lunch and other breaks to help build camaraderie.

**2. Tampa Convention Center in Hillsborough County:**

Assembly event for approximately 200 people.  
 Assembly Rooms (Room 14 and/or 15 available) \$1,200 per room, per day  
 Breakout Rooms (Rooms 5, 11, 12, 13 – approx. 4 needed) \$1,175 per room, per day  
 If it would be a multi-day event, there are several hotels in the area.

**3. Franciscan Center in Hillsborough County:**

Based on 150 guests, 23 rooms available (double occupancy)  
 Facility Fee \$238.00 per day  
 Conference Room accommodates theatre style 150 guests.  
 Rooms (single) \$102.00/night includes 3 meals  
 Rooms (double) \$96.00/person/night w/3 meals

**4. Mega-churches:** Churches can only accommodate meetings during the week as they need the weekends for church services.

**5. RP Funding Center Lakeland:** Total fees excluding sales tax \$8,500.00 (Still need a hotel to sleep.)

Event Friday noon thru Sunday 1 pm (includes set up and breakdown time)

Sikes Hall "H" (General Meeting): Theater 300 guests, 1 podium, 1 handheld wireless microphone house sound, 2 basic mics and 2 tables for registration

Sikes Hall "F&G" (Breakout): 40 people

Lake Parker "C&D" (Breakout): 40 people

Lake Morton (Breakout): 40 people

Set-up and tear down labor included, 1 Event Supervisor, Tech labor based on included items, parking included, food and beverage additional and provided by Spectra.

Accommodations: Hotels nearby

**6. Lake Placid Conference Center:** The conference center areas are costed by the overnight stay.

Bunk beds w/ 3 meals/day: each guest brings own pillow, sheets, blanket, and towels. \$75/pers/night

Motel style double occupancy with 3 meals/day: bed linens & towels provided. \$95/pers/night

**Lakeside Conference Room** seats 150 people with sink, microwave and mini-frig.

You can bring your own projection/sound system or rent from them.

**Grace Place Conference Room** seats 250 people with sink, microwave and refrigerator.

There are 2-70" mounted TV monitors for presentation viewing.

Alpha Conference Room seats 150 people and is located in between 2 dorm areas (bunks).

Omega Conference Room seats 150 people and is located in between 2 dorm areas (bunks).

Total dining capacity is 275 guests at a single seating with several other options available.

Fun activities: swimming in lake and water toys, game areas and water slide. Lakeside bonfires.

**7. Bethany Center Retreat and Conference Center, St. Petersburg:**

Up to 6000 sq. ft. available in one room.

2000 sq. ft. conference rooms with built in audio and video systems

Breakout space also available

Total of 53 overnight rooms.

Catering service for groups from 18 to multiple hundreds. Buffet, plated, table service options.

**8. Dayspring, Tampa:**

Maximum capacity 300

22 private rooms / 44 double occupancy

The Hall offers inside and outside dining on a screened-in porch. Meals served buffet style and include salad bar, fresh fruit bar and dessert table

## **Task Force Recommendation:**

The pandemic will most likely force us to continue meeting online for several more months. The technology is growing to meet the demand and it is getting easier to use as well. The cost and convenience factors far outweigh in person meetings.

Once we can meet face-to-face, it is nice to know there are other options available. A lot depends on whether it is a one-day session or multi-day event that would then require over-night accommodations. For the bigger Assembly events, the hotel venue is probably still the best bet for convenience and services. For the smaller AWSC meeting, it might be nice to try a retreat center. There may be a hybrid where the larger meeting is held online and the smaller meeting can be held in person to be able to more easily abide by social distancing guidelines.