

**Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church**  
**Social Justice and Caring Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, March 2, 2017**

Present: Martha Arko, Sr. Judy Chiodo, Anna DeCrans (and her daughter Adia), Kendall Doom, Bill Dorgan, Carmen Johnson, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Eileen Muetzel, Ray Muetzel, Jane Marie Sulzle, Mary Tacheny and Julianne Wojcik

Guest: Dan Evans, member of the Social Justice Committee of St. Mary of the Lake and ISALAH representative (and his daughter Lyla)

**ISALAH/St. Mary of the Lake Updates**

Dan Evans gave updates regarding some efforts being undertaken by his parish, St. Mary of the Lake, and ISALAH. He spoke on the following subjects.

- **Minnesota House of Representatives Bill #600:** ISALAH recently went to the Minnesota state legislature to express concerns about proposed bill # 600 in the Minnesota House of Representatives which contains a preemption prohibiting local governments (such as a cities or towns) from requiring employers to pay employees rates higher than the minimum wage or to provide them paid or unpaid leave time (such as safe leave or sick leave).

Dan said he has a form letter objecting to the passage of this bill that can be sent to legislators. He will e-mail it to Chris who will forward it to the rest of the committee.

- **Sanctuary Churches:** Dan stated that his parish and ISALAH are continuing to work on the sanctuary church issue. He said that he sent Fr. Mike Byron a list of parishes that are serving as sanctuary churches in Minnesota. Dan stated that the list is now outdated so he agreed to send the committee members a revised list.

Dan reported that some people have offered their houses as sanctuary homes. He said that this is a riskier option due to the fact that immigration enforcement is probably more willing to remove immigrants from homes as opposed to churches.

Chris mentioned that she had spoken to Fr. Mike about how St. Pascal's could get involved in this issue. She stated that he was open to hearing some suggestions regarding how St. Pascal's could assist other parishes who are serving as sanctuary churches since he felt that St. Pascal's probably could not serve as one. Dan suggested that St. Pascal's could provide financial support to parishes who are serving as sanctuary churches. He also said that St. Pascal's could provide logistical support to the churches that have to do some construction to prepare their buildings to serve as sanctuary churches. Dan said the parish could also provide fellowship to those housed at the sanctuary churches - by spending time with them, playing games, talking etc.

- **Day on the Hill:** St. Mary of the Lake has scheduled its own Day on the Hill from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Monday, March 6, 2017. Parishioners will meet with state legislators to express their concerns regarding various social justice-related topics. Dan recommended that St. Pascal's have its own Day on the Hill. He stated such events are a good way to develop relationships with local legislators. He said these events are easy to schedule and that he would be willing to assist the parish with organizing such an event.

The committee members stated that they will review the list of sanctuary churches that he is going to send to determine if St. Pascal's could partner with any that may be located close to the east side.

- **Human Trafficking:** Dan related that his parish is working on the issue of human trafficking. He said that the next meeting of the Super Bowl Safety project (with Civil Society, the Partners in Justice Fund and First Christian Church) will be held at First Christian Church in Minneapolis on Friday, March 3, 2017, at 12:00 p.m. in the Garden Sanctuary. He stated that this group is working to provide safety to those who may find themselves in a vulnerable situation around the time of the Super Bowl being held in Minneapolis in 2018. Dan said this group is establishing a Super Bowl Safety Drop-in Center and an Open House, conducting research and analysis on why young people become victims of human trafficking, making presentations to raise awareness of this issue and planning outreach.

The committee members expressed a desire to be informed about such issues on a regular basis. Dan agreed to forward information to those who provided him with their e-mail addresses.

### Women's Advocates

Chris reported that Fr. Mike had forwarded an e-mail to her that he had received from Maggie Royer, a student at Macalester College in St. Paul who is working as a Community Engagement and Education Agency for Women's Advocates, a shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence. She asked if St. Pascal's would be interested in having Women's Advocates come to the parish to make a presentation on the topic of domestic violence or whether the parish would be willing to post a Crisis Line flyer from this organization.

Chris stated that she had spoken to Fr. Mike about this and he seemed interested in having a presentation. Chris asked the committee members if they would be interested in having such an event. The members thought it would be a good idea to have such a presentation. Chris said that she would contact Maggie Royer and discuss setting up such a presentation.

### Movie Day

Mary reported that the movie entitled "Two Suitcases: The Story of St. Josephine Bakhita" which centers on the life of this patron saint of human trafficking was shown after the 8:45 a.m. mass on Sunday, February 19, 2017. She stated this was followed by a short presentation on the pillars of human trafficking (debt bondage, forced labor, involuntary servitude, the removal of organs and sexual exploitation) and some discussion. Mary said that only two parishioners

showed up for the movie viewing after the 10:30 a.m. mass and they agreed they could borrow the movie and view it at home instead of seeing it at church.

Mary mentioned that, although only a small number of parishioners were in attendance, good discussion was held on the topic of human trafficking after both of the masses.

Mary stated that several of those in attendance expressed an interest in having the committee hold other presentations in the future.

### **Social Justice Library**

Mary mentioned that the committee has been given permission to start a “social justice” library. She said that to get the library started, she will donate the above-mentioned “Two Suitcases: The Story of St. Josephine Bakhita” movie. She also agreed to donate a book entitled Bakhita: From Slave to Saint by Roberto Italo Zanini and another movie on the saint with the same name.

### **Social Justice Bulletin Board**

Mary announced that she asked Thea Munoz, the parish’s Communications Specialist, if the committee could be given a bulletin board for its use. Mary stated that she was told the committee could use the bulletin board located outside Brioschi Hall. The members liked the idea of having a committee bulletin board and discussed using it to post social justice-related articles, notices of upcoming social justice-related events, copies of the immigration-related materials used for the fish fry table tents etc. They agreed that nothing should get posted on the bulletin board without the permission of the committee and/or Fr. Mike. Chris said that she would contact Thea and let her know that the committee would like to use the bulletin board.

### **We Care Campaign**

Chris reminded the committee members that the “We Care Campaign” will be held the weekend of March 4 - 5, 2017. The options for the campaign are:

- the **Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota** - a non-profit organization located in St. Paul that provides legal assistance to low-income immigrants and refugees in Minnesota, works to educate Minnesota communities and professionals about immigration matters and advocates for state and federal policies which respect to the universal rights of immigrants,
- the **KNOM Radio Mission** - the oldest Catholic radio station in the United States which broadcasts from Nome, Alaska, located 100 miles south of the Arctic Circle and transmits news, weather and Catholic programming (such as mass and family prayer) to dozens of isolated communities in the Alaskan bush that rarely have access to a priest and
- the **Progressive Baptist Church Fishes and Loaves Food Shelf** - located within Progressive Baptist Church at 1501 Burns Avenue in St. Paul which provides emergency food items to anybody in need.

Chris stated that she will bring some of the We Care Campaign envelopes that were left over from the time when these were placed in the pews instead of being included in the packet of envelopes that get mailed to parishioners and place them on the tables outside the entrances to the church. These will be available for the use of parishioners who donate to the parish electronically and may not receive We Care Campaign envelopes in their packets.

### **Bulletin Insert**

The committee members briefly discussed the human trafficking insert that will be put in the bulletin in the future. Bill said that the draft insert has been revised many times in response to suggestions from committee members. He said that Fr. Mike has approved of it. Some additional suggestions were made - such as adding bullet points to help break up the text. The members agreed to resume the discussion of this insert at the next committee meeting.

### **Fish Fry**

The committee members assembled the tri-fold table tents that Jane Marie, Julianne, Kendall and Mary prepared containing information on the topic of immigration. (Please note, the topic of these table tents was erroneously listed as “human trafficking” in the minutes for the meeting held on February 2, 2017.) The table tents contain facts about immigration, quotes from Pope Francis on the topic and some action steps that people can take. After assembling these, the committee members placed them on the tables in Brioschi Hall where they will stay for the Lenten season.

The committee members discussed making a “Faith in Action” handout that Mary provided available at the table where desserts are sold at the fish fry. The handout contains some practical ways that people can help welcome refugees within the community. Martha volunteered to ask those in charge of the table where desserts are sold if they would be okay with having these handouts available at this table.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, April 6, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the Founders’ Room at church