

Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church
Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, April 6, 2017

Present: Martha Arko, Kendall Doom, Bill Dorgan, Carmen Johnson, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Eileen Muetzel, Ray Muetzel, Jane Marie Sulzle and Mary Tacheny

We Care Campaign

Chris reported that Mike Lenz, the parish Administrator, provided her with the results for the “We Care Campaign” held the weekend of March 4 - 5, 2017. A total of \$2,784.35 was donated. Individually, the following amounts were raised for the three options chosen for the campaign:

- 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 - \$931.45,
- 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 - \$856.45 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 - \$996.45.

\$1,177.35 of the total amount came from the loose bills and coins from the collection.

Thirty-one “We Care Campaign” envelopes were used.

Women’s Advocates

Chris mentioned that, as discussed at the last committee meeting, she contacted Meggie Royer, the Macalester College student who works as a Community Engagement and Education Agent for Women’s Advocates, a shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence, who contacted pastor Fr. Mike Byron asking if the parish would be interested in having this organization make a presentation at the parish on the topic of domestic violence. Chris said she informed Meggie that Fr. Mike forwarded her inquiry to the Social Justice and Caring Committee whose members decided that they would be interested in having Women’s Advocates come to the parish to make such a presentation.

Chris stated that Meggie informed her that her organization could conduct any of the following presentations: Dating Violence 101, Domestic Violence 101, Digital Dating Violence, Engaging Boys and Men in Violence Prevention, Healthy Relationships, Human Trafficking 101, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer and Dating Violence, Sexual Violence 101 and

Women's Advocates 101. She said that Meggie informed her that each of these presentations lasts approximately forty-five minutes.

Chris mentioned that she and Meggie discussed possible timeframes for the presentation - on either a Tuesday or Thursday evening in late April - depending on the availability of Brioschi Hall.

The committee members reviewed the presentation options and decided they would like to see the "Domestic Violence 101" one. They determined they would like to host this event in late April (on the 25th or 27th) or perhaps in early May (on the 2nd or 4th) in order to give them some time to advertise for the event. Chris will check with Meggie to see if her organization would be free on any of these dates and will determine if Brioschi Hall is available.

Report to Parish Council

Chris announced that Fr. Mike asked her to attend the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, to give a report on the strategic planning efforts undertaken by the committee. Chris said that she informed the Council that, through these efforts, the committee decided to:

- continue operating as it currently does - working on various projects throughout the year instead of focusing on one issue;
- consider changing its name to Social Justice and Caring Ministry;
- form sub-committees to focus on various social justice-related issues (such as human trafficking and sanctuary churches);
- partner with other groups working on similar social justice-related issues (such as St. Mary of the Lake in White Bear Lake on the sanctuary church issue);
- focus on informing parishioners about various social justice-related issues and providing them with opportunities to take action steps in response to these issues (e.g., through the recent bulletin insets on payday loans and the Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching and an upcoming one on human trafficking);
- consider forming a partnership with the School Board, one of the committee's owners, in order to work on social justice issues together;
- increase communication efforts in order to raise awareness of the committee's work (e.g., by obtaining permission to use the bulletin board outside of Brioschi Hall for the committee's use, through the recent creation of a social justice library, by revising the committee logo, by creating a committee webpage on the parish's website etc.); and
- get the parish more involved in social justice-related activities on the eastside of St. Paul.

Chris stated that the Council members: liked the recent addition of the word "justice" to the committee's name, encouraged forming a connection with the School Board, agreed that it is important to communicate with the parish about the committee's work (such as by putting announcements in the bulletin describing the various ministries supported by the committee), liked the idea of the committee working on its branding but recommended that it discuss this with Thea Munoz, the parish's Communication Specialist, who is working on similar efforts for the parish, encouraged the committee to increase its membership etc.

Jane Marie said that she may be joining the School Board and if she does this, she can serve as the liaison to the committee.

Social Justice Library

The committee members discussed the need to find a location for the newly-formed social justice library. Chris mentioned that Fr. Mike told her one possible location is the room located next to the staff lounge.

It was discussed that this room has some books stored there that may have come from the former parish center that existed prior to the building of the new church. Chris stated she asked Fr. Mike if it would be okay if committee members reviewed these books to determine if any could be added to the social justice library and he said that he was fine with this.

A suggestion was made that parishioners could be asked to donate books to the library. The committee members decided they would be okay with this as long as it was made clear that only social justice-related books would be accepted.

Mary suggested that the committee establish a “Go Fund Me” account to raise money (approximately \$2,500.00) to purchase items for the social justice library. She said that she asked Fr. Mike about this and he said that he was fine with this. Mary stated that she is willing to write something for Fr. Mike and the committee to review.

The committee members also discussed the possibility of obtaining social justice-related children’s books that could be made available for children to use during mass.

The committee members debated whether a social justice library should be developed in an age when many people prefer to read books in a digital format. They discussed whether efforts should be taken to include access to social justice-related documents on the committee webpage after it is created.

Holy Thursday Collection

Chris reported that Sharon Balcom, the parish’s Liturgy and Music staff member, sent her an e-mail asking which charity should be the recipient of the Holy Thursday collection. Chris stated that she informed Sharon that the committee has not decided the recipient of this collection for years but that she would ask the members for a suggestion. Chris said that she also told Sharon that if the recipient of the collection had to be chosen before the next committee meeting, Sharon could make the selection.

The committee members chose Catholic Charities Dorothy Day Emergency Food pantry as the recipient of the collection. Chris stated that she would let Sharon know this but notified the committee members that it is possible that Sharon may make this decision herself.

Committee Logo

Chris asked Carmen for an update on the status of the committee logo that she is revising. Carmen requested a copy of the formerly-used logo that she could reference when revising the logo. Chris said that she did not have an electronic copy of the logo but that she would provide Carmen with a paper copy of it.

Chris reminded the committee members of the Parish Council's suggestion that the committee speak to Thea Munoz about its branding efforts.

Sanctuary Church

Several of the committee members reported on the things that were discussed during the sanctuary sub-committee meeting held with Dan Evans from St. Mary of the Lake.

Dan announced that St. Mary of the Lake will host a presentation on sanctuary churches on May 3, 2017, featuring Fr. Dan Griffith, the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Minneapolis and a faculty member of the University of St. Thomas School of Law. Dan stated the meeting will discuss what it means to be a sanctuary church and that he hopes to have a representative from a sanctuary church present.

The sub-committee members told Dan they have a lot of questions regarding the sanctuary church issue - such as how those given sanctuary are chosen, whether some type of vetting process is used, and, if so, what this is... Dan mentioned that he has a "Frequently Asked Questions" document regarding sanctuary churches that he will send to those present at the meeting.

Dan said that one of the ways that parishes could help is to issue a press release demonstrating their support for the sanctuary church movement. He stated that he will provide the sub-committee members with a sample press release.

The sub-committee members informed Dan that they would like some information regarding the ways that parishes could assist those serving as sanctuary churches. Dan mentioned that he could create a list sanctuary church needs and provide it the sub-committee members. He said that some ideas include collecting toiletries, providing fellowship to those being housed in the sanctuary churches, providing cash donations...

The sub-committee members notified Dan that, although St. Pascal's is open to learning how it could assist other parishes serving as sanctuary churches, it is currently not prepared to make a commitment regarding the sanctuary issue. They told Dan they need more time to discuss this issue with Fr. Mike and to determine whether the parish would be comfortable working on this issue. They stated that they may invite Fr. Mike to a future Social Justice and Caring Committee meeting to discuss this issue with him.

Minnesota Catholic Conference

Mary mentioned that she submitted a request to the Minnesota Catholic Conference asking for information on the framework for social justice in the archdiocese. She will let the committee members know what she finds out when she receives a reply.

Human Trafficking

- **Kelly Distinguished Scholar Lecture:** Bill and Mary gave a report on the Kelly Distinguished Scholar Lecture series event that they attended at St. Catherine University on April 5, 2017, featuring Rachel Lloyd, the founder of Girls Education and Mentoring Services, an organization that helps victims of human trafficking. They mentioned that postcards addressed to local legislators requesting that funding be increased for the implementation of the Safe Harbor law were made available to the event participants. Bill and Mary felt that, in the future, the committee could make similar postcards available to parishioners regarding various social justice-related legislation.
- **Senator Amy Klobuchar:** Mary and Bill said that the above-referenced Kelly Distinguished Lecture series talk featured a videotaped message from Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar that included statistics about human trafficking in the state of Minnesota and some discussion on what the state is doing to combat this crime. They suggested trying to obtain this message to show at the committee's upcoming presentation on human trafficking in the fall or inviting Senator Klobuchar to speak at the presentation. Mary volunteered to write to Senator Klobuchar's office asking if she would be willing to speak at the parish on this topic. The committee members decided that if Senator Klobuchar were to agree to be part of the human trafficking presentation, they would invite neighboring churches to attend as well.
- **Bulletin Insert:** The committee members discussed when to have the insert regarding human trafficking appear in the bulletin - soon or in the fall. They decided to have the insert appear in the bulletin sometime during the month of May. Bill will show the latest version to Fr. Mike to get his final approval. If Fr. Mike approves of it, Bill will talk to Thea Munoz in the parish office and ask her if the insert could appear in one of the bulletins during the month of May. The committee members also decided they may prepare another insert for inclusion in a bulletin sometime in the fall - closer to the time when the human trafficking presentation takes place.
- **Women's Advocates Presentation:** As referenced above, Chris reminded the committee members that one of the presentation options provided by Women's Advocates is "Human Trafficking 101." She suggested that, if the committee members like the upcoming "Domestic Violence 101" presentation being made by this organization, it could be invited back to give its "Human Trafficking 101" presentation in the fall. Chris stated that she will ask Meggie Royer from Women's Advocates about this possibility.

Next Meeting

Thursday, May 4, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the Founders' Room at church