

Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church
Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Sunday, November 2, 2017

Present: Martha Arko, Anna DeCrans, Kendall Doom, Carmen Johnson, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Jane Marie Sulzle and Mary Weyandt

“Human Trafficking 101” Presentation/Brittany’s Place

The committee members reviewed the “Human Trafficking 101” presentation given by Meg Royer from Women’s Advocates on October 19, 2017. They felt the speaker did a great job, that it was well-attended and that those in attendance actively participated in the discussion.

It was noted that the only participants that took advantage of the childcare provided were some of the committee members. Chris reported that the parish paid the childcare expense.

Chris mentioned that the parish also paid the speaker a stipend for her time.

Chris distributed a handout from the Minnesota Human Trafficking Taskforce that Meg Royer had provided to her entitled “Human Trafficking & Faith Communities.” Chris said that she posted several of these at church - on the committee’s bulletin board and on the kiosks on the upper and lower levels.

The committee members decided that since parishioners have now been given the opportunity to learn about the topic of human trafficking, they would like to provide them with some action steps they could take in response to this issue. They discussed the possibility of renewing their attempts to partner with Brittany’s Place, a shelter located on the east side of St. Paul that helps teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking. The committee members had begun partnering with this organization several years ago but this process was stalled when Brittany’s Place experienced staffing changes which resulted in a loss of communication with the organization.

During the meeting, Carmen sent an e-mail to Sarah Florman, a senior manager at 180 Degrees, the organization that runs Brittany’s Place, informing her that the parish had made inquiries in the past regarding how it could partner with Brittany’s Place to provide any needed assistance.

Carmen received a reply from Sarah during the meeting in which she apologized for the past lack of response and she informed Carmen that Brittany’s Place takes monetary and in-kind donations and that it also has some volunteer opportunities. She provided Carmen with her contact information. Carmen agreed to contact Sarah to discuss this issue further.

Kendall informed the committee members that she knows somebody who works for 180 Degrees that she could contact to obtain information regarding how the parish may be of assistance to Brittany’s Place.

Chris stated that she could contact Meg Royer from Women’s Advocates to find out how the parish could assist this organization - whether via donations or volunteer work.

Ministry Fair

The members remarked that not many parishioners visited the committee's table during the Ministry Fair that was held the weekend of October 14 - 15, 2017, but that two people expressed an interest in possibly joining the committee. Chris informed the members that she told these interested parishioners about the committee and invited them to attend the meetings.

Eastside Community Meal

The committee members commented that they have not heard any further information regarding the upcoming Eastside Community Meal being held at the parish on November 16, 2017. Mary volunteered to send an e-mail to Fr. Mike Byron asking if committee members were needed to assist with hospitality during the event. Mary said she will contact the committee members if she finds out more about this issue. Mary stated that she has a Parish Council meeting next week and may find out more about this event at that point in time.

School Mentoring

Jane Marie reported that, as of now, she has five volunteers for the mentoring program that she is helping to establish in which parish seniors are being given the opportunity to volunteer to work with students at the school for one hour a week. She said that four of the volunteers will serve as tutors and one as a social mentor.

Jane Marie stated that school principal, Laurie Jennrich, has chosen twelve to fourteen students that she thinks may benefit from this program and that the goal is to find a volunteer for each of these students.

Jane Marie reminded the committee members that these volunteers will be required to take VIRTUS training before working with the students - which is a requirement for all clergy, parish/school employees and volunteers who work with children under the age of eighteen. She said that a VIRTUS training session will be held at the parish on November 5, 2017.

Sanctuary Church

The committee members discussed that they have not heard anything regarding the sanctuary church issue of late. They agreed that St. Pascal's is probably not in a position to serve as a sanctuary church but they would still like to see if it could assist a parish that is serving in this capacity.

Carmen reminded the committee members that she has a contact at St. Thomas More in St. Paul which is currently serving as a sanctuary church - Aaron Sinner. She stated when she last contacted Aaron this past June, his parish was trying to raise \$15,000 in order to convert a space on its property into an apartment. Carmen said she will contact Aaron again and ask if the parish still needs funds or if there are other ways it could be helped - such as in-kind donations or volunteer opportunities.

Martha mentioned that her daughter is a member of St. Thomas More and will ask her daughter if she is aware of needs that the parish may have for its sanctuary church ministry.

The committee members discussed the possibility of choosing this parish's sanctuary church ministry as one of the March 2018 "We Care Campaign" options.

We Care Campaign

Chris reminded the committee members that the "We Care Campaign" was held the weekend of October 28th - 29th, 2017, and that the following options were chosen for the campaign:

- **Catholic Charities USA** - the official domestic relief agency of the United States Catholic Church which supports disaster response and recovery efforts - including direct assistance, home repair, home rebuilding, health care services and other programs,
- **International Institute of Minnesota** - an organization that delivers culturally accessible services and resources to assist new Americans as they strive to achieve economic self-sufficiency and full membership in the American life and
- **Women's Advocates** - a shelter located in St. Paul that provides assistance and services to women and children escaping domestic violence (e.g., advocacy, clothing, counseling, crisis hotline, meals, transportation etc.).

Chris stated that she put envelopes on the tables by the church entrances for use by those parishioners who do not receive envelopes from the parish (due to the fact that they donate funds electronically) or for those who do not receive the "We Care Campaign" envelope in their packet.

Chris said that she may need to contact the new Parish Administrator, Theresa Ruttger, to discuss the management of the "We Care Campaign" funds.

Strategic Planning

The committee members discussed some of their past strategic planning efforts. They reminded themselves of their past decision to try and get the parish more involved in social justice-related activities on the eastside of St. Paul - focusing on organizations such the Boys and Girls Club, the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties, the Hmong American Partnership, the Salvation Army, St. Paul Youth Services and 180 Degrees.

As discussed above, the committee members talked about continuing their work on the human trafficking issue by partnering with Brittany's Place.

The committee members discussed developing goals and a plan for the coming year - based on issues in which they are interested - such as things affecting the eastside (crime, human trafficking, poverty), the needs of the school and parish etc.

The committee members talked about ways they could work with the parish school - such as continuing to expand the above-described mentoring program, having Meg Royer speak to the older students about human trafficking-related issues, the possibility of creating an after-school program for neighborhood children when the St. Paul schools move to a 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. schedule in two years etc.

The committee members talked about trying to find ways the parish can help make the biggest impact.

The committee members agreed to continue their strategic planning discussion at their next meeting.

Next Meeting

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