

**Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church  
Social Justice and Caring Committee  
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, December 7, 2017**

Present: Martha Arko, Anna DeCrans, Kendall Doom, Bill Dorgan, Carmen Johnson, Christine Malec (minute writer), Jane Marie Sulzle and Julianne Wojcik

**We Care Campaign**

Chris informed the committee members that she had contacted Parish Administrator, Theresa Ruttger, and asked her for the totals for the “We Care Campaign” held the weekend of October 28 - 29, 2017. She stated that Theresa asked her to make this request via e-mail. Chris said she sent the e-mail request but has not heard back from Theresa yet.

The campaign raised funds for the following charities:

- **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.).

The committee members briefly discussed some options for the next “We Care Campaign” that will be held in March 2018, - California wild fire relief, St. Mary’s Mission in Red Lake and St. Thomas More’s sanctuary church ministry. They decided to continue this discussion at a future meeting.

**Eastside Community Meal**

Chris noted that the parish had been informed that the Eastside Community Meal that was scheduled to take place at the parish on Thursday, November 16, 2017, has been postponed (at the request of Ward 7 St. Paul city council member, Jane Prince) until after the Christmas and New Year holidays.

**Sanctuary Church**

Carmen mentioned that she had sent an e-mail to her contact at St. Thomas More, Aaron Sinner, asking if the parish still needs funds, in-kind donations or volunteers for its sanctuary church ministry. She stated Aaron informed her that his parish would benefit from monetary and in-kind donations - such as flip phones with pre-paid minutes, socks, shoes, underwear, gift cards etc. Carmen said that Aaron told her that his parish is looking for lawyers who are willing to volunteer their time to assist those in sanctuary with immigrant support-related work.

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

### **Merrick Community Services Toy Drive**

Chris announced that the parish had received a request from Merrick Community Services to serve as a drop-off site for its annual holiday toy drive. Chris stated that she asked pastor Fr. Mike Byron if the parish could serve in this capacity and he informed her that he would be fine with this as long as the toy drive did not conflict with any similar activity that the school might be doing.

Chris stated that she contacted the school principle, Laurie Jennrich, and was told that the toy drive would not conflict with any school activity.

Chris said that a collection box has been placed in the gathering space and she submitted bulletin announcements regarding the toy drive. She stated that the toy drive will run through December 11, 2017.

### **School Mentoring Program**

Jane Marie updated the committee members on the mentoring program that she helped establish in which parish seniors volunteer to work with students at the school for one hour a week in academic or social mentoring (before/after school or during the lunch hour). She said that she reached out to the Council of Catholic Women and the Men's Club and the program now has eight volunteers, some of which are working with more than one student. Jane Marie stated that seventy students are still in need of volunteers.

### **American Red Cross Blood Drive**

Chris reported that 49 units of blood were donated at the American Red Cross blood drive held at the parish on Monday, November 6, 2017.

### **Brittany's Place**

Carmen mentioned that she had reconnected with Sarah Florman, the Senior Manager of Shelter Services at 180 Degrees, the organization that runs Brittany's Place, a shelter located on the east side of St. Paul that helps teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking. She said she asked Sarah whether Brittany's Place was currently in a position to accept monetary and in-kind donations or if it had volunteer opportunities. Carmen stated that Sarah told her that Brittany's Place is ready to accept monetary and in-kind donations and volunteers. Carmen noted that Sarah had said in an e-mail that she had attached a list of desired items but that this attachment was not included in the message. Carmen stated she will ask Sarah to send the attachment to her again.

Carmen mentioned that St. Mary of the Lake parish in White Bear Lake makes in-kind donations to Brittany's Place three times a year so if it gets decided that St. Pascal's will collect items for

Brittany's Place, these should be timed so as not to overlap when donations are being received from St. Mary's.

The committee members decided to collect in-kind donations for Brittany's Place as long as Fr. Mike would be okay with this. They discussed the possibility of collecting items for Christmas. Carmen volunteered to ask if Brittany's Place is accepting donations for Christmas, and if so, what items are needed.

### **Strategic Planning**

The committee members discussed the following strategic planning-related issues:

- reviewing the committee's mission statement to determine if it needs to be revised and
- working on one or two projects at a time - starting with partnering with Brittany's Place and possibly doing some follow-up work on human trafficking (for example, determining ways to provide after-care support to help victims of human trafficking - such as having the parish serve as a venue for a victim support group and connecting with parishioner Mike Ernster, a police officer who does human trafficking-related work).

### **Fish Fry Table Tents**

Bill asked if the committee members would again be placing table tents on the tables in Brioschi Hall during this Lent's fish fry. The committee members discussed whether to re-use the ones made last year on the topic of immigration or to come up with a different theme. The committee members decided to discuss this issue further at a future meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, January 4, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. in the Founders' Room at church