

Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church
Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, June 7, 2018

Present: Martha Arko, Anna DeCrans, Kendall Doom, Bill Dorgan, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Mary Tacheny, Mary Weyandt and Julianne Wojcik

Guest: Cheryl Peterson, Executive Director of the Listening House

The Listening House

Cheryl Peterson, the Executive Director of the Listening House, a daytime community center in St. Paul, attended the meeting to discuss this ministry with the committee members. She informed them that the Listening House started in the early 1980s by a Catholic lay woman and some Sisters of Good Shepherd to provide practical assistance and counsel to low-income, homeless and lonely adults.

Cheryl stated the assistance includes providing a place for guests to: escape the elements, get a cup of coffee and some baked goods, meet with their case managers, obtain over-the-counter medicines, receive footcare, use the restroom, charge their phones, have fellowship with others etc.

Cheryl said the Listening House recently lost its lease with Catholic Charities in downtown St. Paul. She stated that while it was looking for a new space, the pastor of the First Lutheran Church on the east side of St. Paul invited the Listening House to re-locate in the basement of its church.

Cheryl said the St. Paul City Council welcomed the Listening House's change of venue to the First Lutheran Church and that those in the neighborhood were informed of the move. She stated that soon after relocating, a small group of neighbors who live near the Listening House made some complaints against some of its guests, claiming they loiter, become intoxicated etc. and that the City tried to strike a compromise between the Listening House and these neighbors by imposing restrictions on the Listening House regarding the number of guests it could have, the hours it could set etc. Cheryl said that the Listening House is currently involved in a lawsuit with the City of St. Paul claiming that these restrictions are unreasonable.

Cheryl informed the committee members that the St. Paul City Council is having a closed-door meeting regarding the Listening House next Wednesday afternoon. She asked for prayers for a good outcome.

Bill stated that he would like the parish to side with the Listening House in its lawsuit against the City. He said that he met with pastor Fr. Mike Byron to discuss this issue and that Fr. was supportive of this idea.

The committee members agreed they would like to have the parish write a letter of support for the Listening House. They decided they would like to present it to the Parish Council at the Council's next meeting. Mary Weyandt, the Parish Council liaison to the committee, volunteered to draft the

letter and send it to Chris and Bill for their review. Mary also agreed to mention this issue at the next Parish Council meeting.

Social Justice Library

Mary Tacheny announced that the committee's social justice library will be introduced to the parish on Sunday, June 17, 2018. She stated that the 85 items in the library will be on display in Brioschi Hall after both of the masses on that day and that parishioners will be invited to browse through the collection before they can be checked out beginning Monday, June 18, 2018. She said that as an incentive for parishioners to browse the collection, a free drawing for two Barnes & Noble gift cards will take place. Mary invited committee members to be present in Brioschi Hall after either of the masses on June 17th to be available to answer any questions parishioners may have about the collection. The committee members also discussed the possibility of displaying the collection in the gathering space after the 4:30 p.m. mass on June 16th.

Mary mentioned that she submitted bulletin and pulpit announcements regarding the opening of the library.

Mary stated that she provided Fr. Mike with a copy of the list of the items in the social justice library for his review and he was fine with the collection.

Mary reminded the committee members that the library will be housed on a cart located outside the Founders' Room.

The committee members discussed that if the library becomes successful, they could ask parishioners for monetary donations to be used for purchasing additional items.

Event to Commemorate Brittany's Birthday

Kendall said she received a call from Brittany's mother, Marquita Clardy. (Brittany's Place, a shelter located on the eastside of St. Paul that helps teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking, was named after Marquita's daughter.) Kendall stated that Marquita invited her to a celebration commemorating Brittany's birthday that will be held at North Dale Recreation Center on Friday, June 29, 2018, from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. Kendall reported that she will attend this event and invited the committee members to go as well. She asked the committee members who decide to attend to let her know so that she could inform Marquita how many additional guests will be attending.

School Work Group

Mary Tacheny informed the committee members that she has been appointed to the work group that has been formed to investigate options for the future of the parish school. She said the parish is looking at two possibilities - the first is to continue using the current "development" model of partnering with those who will contribute resources to enable the school to operate under its current board structure and the second is to pursue having a values-based charter school housed on-site. She stated that she has been assigned to work on curriculum design and community

outreach-related issues. Mary reflected that she believes that the committee could partner with the school to do social justice-related activities.

Next Meeting

Thursday, August 2, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. (The committee does not meet in July.)

Chris said this meeting will take place at the parish if it would be possible to have the lower level doors programmed to be opened to allow the committee members to enter the building. (The parish will be on its summer hours so the parish will be closed in the evening and there will not be a receptionist on-site to let committee members into the building.) She stated that if the door cannot be programmed, the meeting will be held at her house. Chris said she will let the committee members know the venue when she sends out the meeting reminder.