

Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church
Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, September 6, 2018

Present: Martha Arko, Anna DeCrans, Kendall Doom (and her son Oskar), Bill Dorgan, Carmen Johnson, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Bonnie Steele and Mary Weyandt

Guest: Parish Administrator, Theresa Ruttger

Parish Representative

The members welcomed the parish's new Pastoral Care Minister, Bonnie Steele, to the committee. They responded to her questions regarding the parish's donation closet, Brittany's Place, the Listening House, Merrick Community Services, the Ramsey County family Service Center etc.

We Care Campaign

Chris reminded the committee members that the next We Care Campaign will be held the weekend of October 27 - 28, 2018. They decided on the following options for the campaign:

- **St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund** - a fund used to assist people from the parish and neighborhood who find themselves faced with a short-term financial crisis,
- **Brittany's Place** - a shelter located on the east side of St. Paul that helps teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking and
- **Salvation Army HeatShare Program** - a voluntary, non-governmental program that helps low and moderate-income families pay their energy bills by providing cash grants and emergency assistance with utility and heating bills on a year-round basis.

Chris stated that she will submit bulletin announcements regarding the campaign.

St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund

Choosing the St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund as one of the options for the next We Care Campaign lead to a discussion on how the money in this fund should be used. Bonnie said that she and pastor Fr. John Mitchell have begun talking about establishing guidelines for determining when and how the parish should respond to requests for funds and goods. She stated that the parish office is starting to keep track of how often such requests are received, what type of requests are being made and how the parish responds. Bonnie said she is hoping this information will help her and Fr. John discover what need there is in the parish and neighborhood community and that it will assist them in deciding how to move forward with such requests in the future.

Bonnie stated that one of the suggestions that she and Fr. John discussed was purchasing Cub gift cards that could be distributed to requesters. She noted that requesters could use such gift cards to pay for needed food or prescriptions. Bonnie said a previous parish at which she worked utilized Cub gift cards and they seemed to work really well. The committee members informed her they would be okay with the parish purchasing Cub gift cards with the money raised for the St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund and that they would also be fine with having the parish staff members use their discretion in determining when and how to distribute St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund dollars.

A suggestion was made that the parish could also purchase some of the more highly requested items with the fund money and have them on hand to distribute when requested - such as diapers, food etc.

The committee members discussed that they were unaware of the total amount of money currently in the fund and did not know if the parish contributed to it. Parish Administrator, Theresa Ruttger, was in the office so the committee members invited her to come to the meeting to discuss these issues. Theresa revealed that, currently, \$3,107.50 is in the fund. She also stated that the parish does not contribute to the fund. The committee members expressed surprise that the amount in the fund was so high, given that the money in it came only from past We Care Campaigns collections - which usually result in several hundred dollars being raised each time the fund is chosen as a campaign option. Theresa said that the parish has not used the fund while Fr. Mike Byron was the parish's pastor.

The committee members discussed the possibility of conducting an economic survey as a means of gathering information regarding the needs of parishioners.

Domestic Violence Presentation

Chris reminded the members that the Domestic Violence presentation sponsored by the committee and being presented by the Minnesota League of Women Voters and Women's Advocates was on Saturday, September 8, 2018, from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. in Brioschi Hall.

Bonnie announced that a peace officer will be on-site during the event and that the chapel will be made available for use as a healing room.

Bonnie reminded the committee members that October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. She stated that if they were still interested in working on this issue, she has experience offering a prayer vigil for victims of domestic violence which can be a very powerful event.

School Supply Drive

The committee members resumed their discussion regarding collecting school supplies for the parish school and Brittany's Place. They noted that announcements have been placed in recent bulletins regarding collecting school supplies but they were unsure as to who or what group was asking for them. Bonnie volunteered to inquire about this in the parish office. Since requests are

currently being made for school supplies, the committee members decided to collect for the parish school and Brittany's House at a later date.

Charity/Justice

Bonnie encouraged the committee members to think about the topics of charity and justice and how these are rooted in relationship, that one should be face-to-face with those being served, that the things parishioners do can bring about transformation in the people they serve as well as in themselves, that those with whom resources are shared also have something to share, that the people served need to know how valuable they are, that the parish has an opportunity to be an example of Church to others, that a good place for the parish to start is in its own community/neighborhood etc.

The Listening House

Bonnie reported that she visited the Listening House and spoke to its Executive Director, Cheryl Peterson. She said that they discussed the parish's involvement with this ministry - which has included donations of money and supplies.

Next Meeting

Thursday, October 4, 2018, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. in the Founders' Room at church