

Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church
Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, June 6, 2019

Present: Anna DeCrans, Martha Arko, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Bonnie Steele and Julianne Wojcik

Reflection

The committee members took some time at the beginning of the meeting to reflect on the importance of caring for each other and all in the community.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Margaret announced that the next American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held in Brioschi Hall at the parish on Monday, July 8, 2019, from 1:00 - 7:00 p.m. and that she will be meeting with a representative from this organization to discuss future blood drives.

Margaret stated she was informed that, starting with next school year, the former church area will no longer be able to be used as a back-up venue for the blood drive. She said that, in the past, whenever a blood drive was scheduled in Brioschi Hall and this space was then needed for a funeral lunch, the blood drive was moved to the former church space. Margaret stated that, if this space were no longer available, the blood drive would have to be canceled unless another back-up location could be found or if it were decided that funeral lunches would not be allowed to be held in Brioschi Hall on a day on which a blood drive is scheduled. Bonnie volunteered to discuss with parish staff the possibility that, moving forward, funeral lunches would not be able to be scheduled in Brioschi Hall on days on which the space has already been reserved for a blood drive.

We Care Campaign

Chris reported that she had received the results of the We Care Campaign that was held the weekend of March 2 - 3, 2019, from parish Business Administrator, Theresa Ruttger. She said a total of \$1402.67 was donated and that, individually, the following designated amounts were raised for the three charities in the Campaign:

- **Joseph's Coat** - a free store located in St. Paul that provides goods and services to those in need - \$267.00 and
- **Food for the Poor** - an ecumenical Christian non-profit organization that provides clean water, educational opportunities, emergency relief, food, healthcare and secure housing to the poor in Latin American and the Caribbean - \$207.00 and
- **Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties Reach Out for Warmth Fund** - an emergency fuel fund established to assist local households after energy assistance funds have been exhausted - \$177.00.

Chris stated that \$751.67 of the total came from the loose bills and change from the collection as well as from donations that were undesignated.

Chris mentioned that, when the checks were written for the above-listed options, she noted they were made out for \$467.55, \$467.56 and \$476.56 respectively. Chris said these totals surprised her because they did not reflect each of the options receiving their designated amounts in addition to a third of the total of the loose bills/change and the undesignated amounts. She stated that she asked Theresa about this and Theresa informed her that she divided up the total among the three options equally due to the fact that doing so still resulted in each option receiving the designated amounts donated by parishioners. Chris said that if the parish had followed its normal practice for dividing up the We Care Campaign funds, the totals would have resulted in \$517.56, \$427.56, and \$457.56 respectively - thus honoring how the committee explained the funds would be distributed.

Chris stated that approximately 17 “We Care Campaign” envelopes were used by parishioners who designated their donations but that the envelopes containing unspecified donations were not counted - nor were donations that were made electronically.

Chris said that she submitted bulletin announcements for the We Care Campaign that was held the weekend of June 1 - 2, 2019, for the following charities:

- **Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless** - an organization that provides financial and technical support to homeless shelters, food shelves and domestic violence shelters throughout Minnesota (This organization is assisting those who lived in the Navigation Center in Minneapolis this past winter and need to find new housing.),
- **Police Activities League** - a St. Paul organization that utilizes athletic, educational and recreational activities to create trust and understanding between police officers and youth and gives them a safe place to play, positive role models and good citizenship, and
- **The Sheridan Story** - an organization in the Twin Cities area that fights child hunger by providing a weekend supply of food to children whose only meals may be the breakfasts and lunches given to them at school.

The committee members discussed the possibility of choosing only one option per We Care Campaign instead of the usual three and expanding the advertising efforts for this option (such as posting information on the option in the gathering space). They also discussed choosing the We Care Campaign options for the entire year ahead of time instead of deciding them prior to each Campaign. It was felt that doing this might make it possible to give parishioners the option of contributing to these options electronically. It was decided that these possibilities would be discussed further at a future meeting.

The Sheridan Story/St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund

Chris reported that pastor, Fr. John Mitchell, had informed her that school principal, Inna Collier, requested that the parish sponsor The Sheridan Story at St. Pascal Regional Catholic School next year. Chris stated that Fr. John reported that, at the last Finance Council meeting, it was decided that the parish would support The Sheridan Story - for a total of \$2500 - \$3000 and that it was

proposed that this amount come from the St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund - which has a current total of \$5,934.17. Chris said that she informed Fr. John that the money in this fund is intended to be used to help parishioners/non-parishioners with short-term financial assistance and that she felt that the parish should honor how it stated the money in this fund would be used but that she would ask the committee members their thoughts on this. Chris stated that Fr. John also informed her that the parish will fund The Sheridan Story whether or not the dollars come from the St. Pascal Baylon Emergency Fund or another source and that the recipients of the funds will be the students at St. Pascal Regional Catholic School.

The committee members agreed that, since The Sheridan Story was one of the options in the June We Care Campaign, they would wait to see how much money was donated to this option. They decided that, once they know this amount, they would determine whether to take money from the St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund to make up the difference. They also discussed the possibility of having another collection just for The Sheridan Story, explaining to parishioners that the funds collected would be used for the students at St. Pascal Regional Catholic School.

The committee members decided that \$1000.00 should be taken from the St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund and used to purchase Cub Foods gift cards (in increments of \$25.00) which could be distributed to people in need (parishioners and non-parishioners). They agreed they liked the idea of distributing gift cards since they could be used to purchase food as well as medicine at the pharmacy.

The committee members determined they felt it would be best not to advertise the St. Pascal Family Emergency Fund.

Donation Closet

The committee members discussed the following Listening House write-up that Chris had drafted combining elements from the description that Bill Dorgan wrote and the one that appears on the Listening House website (which she attached to the e-mail containing the meeting agenda).

The Listening House is a day shelter and community center located at 464 Maria Avenue in St. Paul (in the lower level of the First Lutheran Church). It provides hospitality, practical assistance and counsel to people who are disadvantaged or homeless. This includes offering light food, clothing and help for those looking for employment, housing and veterans' assistance. Staff and volunteers aspire to create a sense of community and connection by promoting respect for all and to help guests make changes to improve their condition. The Listening House is supported by financial contributions, in-kind donations, professional services (for chemical and mental health) and volunteers from metro churches (such as St. Pascal Baylon) and nearby businesses. (For more information, visit www.listeninghouse.org.)

Chris stated that absent committee member, Kendall Doom, had contacted her and suggested revising the sentence which says, "It provides hospitality, practical assistance and counsel to

people who are disadvantaged or homeless” to “It provides hospitality, practical assistance and counsel to those in need.” The committee members agreed with this change and offered no further changes.

Chris said she would send the revised description to absent committee member, Mary Weyandt, for inclusion in the document that is being developed for placement in the donation closet and the flyer that may be used as an insert in a future bulletin.

Domestic Violence Awareness

Bonnie reported that, as discussed at the last meeting, she investigated obtaining the Silent Witness National Initiative exhibit which utilizes life-size silhouettes made out of wood which tell the stories of those who have been victims of domestic violence but that she discovered that only one silhouette exists locally. She stated that it would be possible to obtain silhouettes from other states but that it would be costly to ship them to the parish.

Bonnie said that, in lieu of this, she submitted a “Clothesline Project Request Form and Agreement” application to the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women on May 19, 2019, to reserve a display of a clothesline with t-shirts hanging from it containing names of those who have been victims of domestic violence in Minnesota - from a particular year from 1992 - 2016. She stated that there is no charge for the use of the display but that it is suggested that the parish make a donation to the organization.

Since October is “Domestic Violence Awareness” month, Bonnie said that she asked to reserve the display from October 4 - 15, 2019, but that she is not certain that it would be available during this time. She mentioned that, as of yet, she has not heard back from this organization.

Bonnie stated that she spoke with Sharon Balcom, the parish’s Pastoral Associate for Music, to ask if she would be willing to develop a prayer service to remember those who died as a result of domestic violence and to give people an opportunity to pray for those affected by domestic violence. She said that Sharon is willing to do this.

Stephen Ministry Program

Bonnie noted that she has received the training materials for the Stephen Ministry program - which uses lay people to provide one-on-one care to people experiencing a difficult time in life (such as divorce, grief, illness, job loss, relocation etc.). She stated that Fr. John informed her that he would like to implement this program at the parish and they agreed they would like to begin by finding five volunteers who are interested in this ministry and that she would like some assistance in determining who from the parish would be good candidates.

Bonnie said that Stephen ministers receive 50 hours of training and that this training often takes place out-of-state so it may be expensive to send parishioners there but that this could be offset by having some fundraisers. She stated that the ministers also meet with each other to support each other in their work.

Bonnie reminded the committee members that she sent them a link to a video that a local parish made regarding this ministry and recommended that they watch it to obtain additional information about it. More information regarding the Stephen Ministries can be found on its website at <https://www.stephenministries.org/default.cfm>.

The committee members discussed the possibility of having a presentation about the Stephen Ministry Program during or after each of the masses one weekend and showing the video in Brioschi Hall.

Come Together

Bonnie announced that she had received a request from Fr. Paul Jarvis, a pastor at St. Bridget Northside in Minneapolis, to have St. Pascal's host a "Come Together" gathering at the parish. She said that the July, August and September gatherings have been scheduled but, currently, there is no host for October.

Bonnie stated that "Come Together" is an ecumenical group of people of faith who gather monthly for contemplation, discussion, music and prayer in a variety of churches and faith-based organizations around the Twin Cities to pray for peace and an end to violence in homes, communities and the world.

Bonnie said that the host church usually decides on the music that will be used, the presenter, the discussion questions etc.

JustFaith Catholic Program

Anna informed the committee members that St. Pascal's did receive a grant that would provide reimbursement for the costs associated with offering the JustFaith Catholic program at the parish this year. (This program is a small-group experience involving prayer, study, dialogue and immersion as participants explore contemporary issues through the lens of Christian faith.)

Anna stated that the program would probably begin the first week of October and that she will provide more information at the committee's next meeting.

Center for Mission

Bonnie reported that she had spoken with Adam Fitzpatrick from the Center for Mission of Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and they discussed ways to help the parish with its pastoral ministry and social justice mission.

Next Meeting

Thursday, July 11, 2019, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. in the Staff Lounge at church.