

**Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church
Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Monday, November 18, 2019**

Present: Martha Arko, Bill Dorgan, Ann Karner, Christine Malec (minute writer), Bonnie Steele, Mary Weyandt and Julianne Wojick (with her daughter Kendall)

Committee Work

The members discussed the work of the committee.

- They spoke about the need to do justice-related work in addition to charity-related activities.
- They talked about limiting the number of projects being worked on at one time to ensure that all get completed - especially since the committee has a limited number of people. The committee members decided that, at this time, they would work on the Angel Tree Ministry program, the compassion kits for the unsheltered and One Body.
- They discussed the need for committee members to take ownership of projects and that any projects that do not have owners should be tabled for the time being (for example, the little free pantry project or the Motel 6 issue).
- They expressed hope that the JustFaith Catholic program (with its social justice emphasis) would result in having its participants join the committee.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Chris announced that the parish will hold an American Red Cross blood drive on Friday, November 22, 2019, from 1:00 - 7:00 p.m. in Brioschi Hall. She said that, to date, forty-two people have signed-up to donate.

Angel Tree Ministry

Mary reported that she received information regarding the Angel Tree ministry children assigned to the parish - including their names and addresses. (Angel Tree is a program that provides the children of incarcerated parents with Christmas gifts.) She stated that there are five children - from two different families from the eastside of St. Paul (four children from one family and one from another). Mary informed the committee members that she would contact their caregivers to find out what the children would like for gifts.

Mary said that the families also have the option of having their children receive an Adventure Bible for Young Readers.

Mary reminded the committee members that the gifts will be given to the children on behalf of their parents.

The committee members decided that, once it is determined what the children would like as gifts, they would put these gift ideas on tags on a Christmas tree and place the tree in the gathering space. Parishioners would then be invited to choose a gift idea from the tree.

The committee members decided to use an artificial tree. Martha stated that she may have one at home that could be used. Bonnie agreed to ask the staff if the parish has any decorations that could be used for the tree. The committee members decided to put the tree up on Saturday, November 30, 2019.

The committee members decided they would ask parishioners to bring their donated gifts to the parish on the weekends of December 7 - 8, 2019, and December 14 - 15, 2019. Bonnie said that she would bring in some containers that could house the donated gifts. The committee members determined that they would ask parishioners to bring in their donated gifts unwrapped. It was decided that if there are any leftover gifts, they would be donated to Merrick Community Services.

Julianne volunteered to organize a wrapping event on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, starting at 6:30 p.m. at the parish. She invited any interested committee members to attend.

The committee members debated whether to deliver the gifts to the children's homes or to have a party at the parish at which they would be presented. They thought that the families might be hesitant to attend a party so they decided to deliver the gifts. Bill and Martha agreed to deliver the gifts - on December 18th or 21st - depending on the preference of the families.

The committee members decided they would also purchase gifts for the children of a parish family who recently experienced a house fire. Bonnie stated that she would contact this family and ask what types of gifts the children would like to receive. They also determined they would not purchase gifts for some seniors as previously discussed. They also decided not to purchase gifts for school children in need since they are supported through other resources.

Bonnie agreed to put something in the bulletin about this, to ask parishioner Toni Baker if she would be willing to send a message to her parish distribution list regarding this ministry and to ask Fr. John if he would speak about this at mass.

Compassion Kits for the Unsheltered

Bonnie informed the committee members that she put together the compassion kits for the unsheltered with the items donated by parishioners, that she placed the completed kits in bins and that these are located in the coat rack area near the gathering space. Bonnie noted that some of the kits have been taken.

The committee members discussed the need to notify parishioners that the kits are available for pick-up - perhaps through bulletin announcements and having pastor Fr. John Mitchell speak about them from the pulpit. Bonnie agreed to ask Fr. John if he would be willing to do this.

One Body

The committee members discussed the One Body meeting held at the parish on Saturday, November 9, 2019.

Bonnie said that approximately one hundred and seventy people were present and that she has heard a lot of positive feedback regarding the event.

Bonnie stated that she received twenty commitment forms filled out by parishioners during the event - two of whom committed to invite at least ten people to attend the February 25, 2020, caucus with them, three of whom committed to host a house meeting, four of whom would be interested in having a church forum at the parish to learn about One Body, five of whom are interested in attending the monthly One Body meetings, ten of whom would like to serve as a faith delegate at the caucus on February 25, 2020, and eighteen of whom agreed to attend an archdiocesan synod meeting.

Bonnie volunteered to contact those who expressed interested in attending the monthly One Body meetings to ask if they would like to car pool with other parishioners who already attend. Ann told Bonnie she would contact the ones who participate in the Just Faith Catholic since she sees them at this program.

The committee members who attended felt the discussions held at the table were valuable but that it may have encouraged more community building if these discussions had been held earlier in the event.

The committee members debated hosting a house meeting - either at the parish or in parishioners' homes. They felt that parishioners might feel more comfortable attending a meeting held at the parish. Bonnie said that she spoke to Fr. John about this and he indicated that he would prefer that a meeting be held at the parish instead of at the homes of parishioners.

The committee members noted the desire to move parishioners to take action by serving as faith delegates and the importance of having them work together collectively to speak as one voice.

The committee members discussed the possibility of having One Voice staff members provide training at the house meeting to prepare participants for the caucusing process. They decided to have the training in January 2020 (since the caucuses take place in February) and to invite those from other parishes to attend.

We Care Campaign

Chris reported that she received the results for the "We Care Campaign" held the weekend of June 1 - 2, 2019, from parish Business Administrator, Theresa Ruttger. She stated that a total of \$1,1099.00 was raised - from contributions from the loose bills and change from that weekend's collection plate (\$343.00) and from envelopes submitted by parishioners (\$766.00). Individually, the following amounts were raised for the three options in the Campaign:

- **The Sheridan Story** - an organization in the Twin Cities area that fights child hunger by providing a weekend supply of food to hungry children whose only meals may be the breakfasts and lunches given to them at school - \$438.33,
- **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 - \$328.33 and
- **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.) - \$343.33.

It is unknown how many “We Care Campaign” envelopes were used.

Committee Survey

Bonnie mentioned that she sent a survey to approximately forty committee members (current and former) containing questions about their satisfaction with their service, how much impact they felt their committee work had, whether they felt appreciated, what the priorities of the committee should be etc. She said that nine people responded and that three themes emerged from these responses:

- that the committee has not done anything of value,
- that the committee has not been appreciated and
- that the committee is moving in the right direction.

Bonnie decided that, due to the low response, she will send out the survey again, but if this is not possible, she may put an announcement in the bulletin asking former and current committee members if they would like another opportunity to complete the survey.

Next Meeting

Thursday, December 5, 2019, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in the Staff Lounge (Please note earlier start time.)

Bill Dorgan volunteered to lead the prayer.