

**Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church**  
**Social Justice and Caring Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, June 4, 2020 (via Zoom)**

Present: Martha Arko, Kendall Doom, Carmen Johnson, Ann Karner, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Fr. John Mitchell, Kim Roering, Mary Weyandt and Julianne Wojick

**We Care Campaign**

Chris reported that she had received the results from the “We Care Campaign” that was held the weekend of March 7 - 8, 2020, from parish Business Administrator, Theresa Ruttger. She stated that a total of \$1,370.00 was collected and that, individually, the following amounts were raised for each of the charities that were part of the Campaign:

- **Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative** - an organization working to end homelessness and advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities - \$433.33,
- **Catholic Charities U.S.A. - Puerto Rico Disaster Relief** - assisting those who were in crisis after the recent earthquakes and hurricanes - \$483.34 and
- **Mano a Mano** - an organization that creates partnerships with poor Bolivian communities to improve their health and increase their economic well-being by operating on the principles of accountability, competence, empowerment, frugality, partnership with local communities and volunteerism - \$453.33.

The committee members discussed the following options for the “We Care Campaign” that will be held the weekend of June 27 - 28, 2020. They felt they would like to choose organizations that could be of assistance to those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the recent unrest that has taken place in the Twin Cities.

- **EMERGE Career & Technology Center** - an organization that operates out of multiple locations across the Twin Cities whose mission is to reveal the potential in people and communities through skill building, employment and economic opportunity,
- **Merrick Community Services** - a non-profit agency in Ramsey County that assists individuals and families in transitioning from poverty and in becoming self-sufficient and stable,
- **Progressive Baptist Church Fishes and Loaves Food Shelf** - a food shelf located within Progressive Baptist Church at 1501 Burns Avenue in St. Paul which provides emergency food items to anybody in need,
- **Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce Charitable Foundation** - a charity that is collecting donations to support the community with direct financial support to small businesses and non-profits to help them rebuild their storefronts, reopen their businesses and serve neighborhoods after the recent civil unrest that has taken place and
- **We Love Lake Street** - a fund started by the Lake Street Council charity to help rebuild Lake Street, starting with direct support to small businesses and non-profits to help them rebuild their storefronts, reopen their businesses and serve the neighborhoods.

The committee members chose the Progressive Baptist Church Fishes and Loaves Food Shelf, the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce Charitable Foundation and the We Love Lake Street organization.

Chris will submit bulletin announcements regarding the Campaign.

### **Faithful Citizenship Event**

The committee members renewed their discussion regarding the possibility of offering a faithful citizenship event at the parish with the purpose of encouraging parishioners to think about the upcoming election through the lens of their faith.

Mary mentioned that she had spoken to the Parish Council about this.

The committee members debated whether having such an event would be possible given the current COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing requirements that are in place. Fr. John stated that the small group synod meetings that were going to take place in the fall have been canceled due to the pandemic so there would be time on the parish calendar to host such an event at the end of August or in early September.

The committee members discussed that, even if additional pandemic-related restrictions are lifted by late summer or early fall, parishioners may still be reluctant to attend an event in person. Because of this, they proposed live-streaming the event and posting the video on YouTube.

The committee members remembered that, previously, they had suggested the possibility of bringing in staff from the theology department(s) of St. Catherine's and/or St. Thomas to speak about this issue - perhaps having a panel discussion. - with some giving a theological overview of the subject and others speaking about how to put things into practice.

It was decided that a sub-group of committee members would meet to further discuss this event. Ann, Chris, Mary and Peggy volunteered to meet with Kim (and possible Anne Weyandt) about this. Mary agreed to set up a meeting for this sub-group.

### **One Body**

Ann reminded the members that One Body, an organization whose goal is to teach others how to welcome the stranger and immigrant and how to treat them through the lens of Catholic social teaching, continues to host voter trainings. She suggested that the committee members let this organization know whether they would like to partner with this group on the voter registration training or other issues.

Fr. John mentioned that, next week, he will participate in a One Body priests meeting via Zoom - during which they will discuss the Immigrant Bill of Rights. He stated that ISAIAH, a multi-racial, state-wide, nonpartisan coalition of faith communities fighting for racial and economic justice in Minnesota, will be part of this conversation as well. He said that he will report to the committee the issues that the priests decide they would like to support.

The committee members decided to delay responding to One Body until the results of the priest meeting are known. They decided to remain open to collaborating with this organization depending on the issues on which both parties would like to work.

### **Possible Parish Response to Resent Unrest**

The members debated whether the committee and/or parish should offer some type of response in light of the need for healing after the recent events that have taken place in the Twin Cities following the death of Mr. George Floyd.

Kim remarked that the issue of racism has arisen various times as a suggested topic for a future Adult Faith Formation Team offering and that the time is probably right to host such an event now. The committee members agreed. Some of the ideas discussed included:

- doing some “circle” work - based on a Native American practice which brings people together as equals to have open exchanges about difficult issues or painful experiences in an atmosphere of respect and concern for everyone - in which a talking piece is passed from person to person to ensure each participant gets uninterrupted time to share with the group in order to honor the presence and dignity of all, to value the contribution of every participant and to emphasize the connectedness among people,
- having a prayer service for peace and justice (such as the ones done at the Church of St. Peter Claver in St. Paul or at Pax Christi in Eden Prairie),
- hosting discussions in response to reading an article or book regarding the topic of racism and
- participating in one of the JustFaith Catholic programs dealing with this subject:
  - Faith and Racial Justice: Changing Systems and Structures,
  - Faith and Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice and Restoration and
  - Faith & Racial Equity: Exploring Power & Privilege.

Kim mentioned that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the JustFaith Catholic programs may now be offered remotely.

The committee members decided to pursue having a prayer service. Carmen volunteered to work on this. Fr. John stated he would work with Keri Mader, the parish’s Pastoral Associate for Ministry and Sharon Balcom, the parish’s Pastoral Associate for Music, on this. It was suggested that this service could be held remotely - either live-streamed via the equipment that will soon be installed at the parish and/or through Zoom. Kim volunteered to do the Zoom-related work.

The committee members liked the idea of doing circle work but debated whether this could be accomplished during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kendall said that she has experienced leading circle work but that she usually does this with children. Carmen said that she may have a resource for somebody who may have experience conducting circle work with adults.

The members discussed the possibility of conducting a circle with the committee to see how this might work. They debated whether it would be meaningful to conduct circle work via Zoom or if they should wait until they and/or parishioners are able to meet in person.

### **Resources**

The committee members discussed developing a list of resources related to the issues of racism, white privilege etc. (such as articles, books, movies, podcasts, talks) and posting this list on the committee's webpage. Kim agreed to work on this.

### **Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting date would be Thursday, July 2, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. Should this be switched to another date (such as Thursday, July 9, 2020) due to the fact that July 2<sup>nd</sup> is close to the Independence Day holiday?

Should the meeting be held via Zoom?