

Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, September 3, 2020 (via Zoom)

Present: Martha Arko, Bill Dorgan, Ann Karner, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Fr. John Mitchell and Kim Roering

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Margaret reported on the American Red Cross blood drive that was held at the parish on Monday, August 31, 2020, from 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. in Brioschi Hall. She said that forty-seven pints were donated.

Margaret announced that the next blood drive will be held at the parish on Monday, November 23, 2020, from 1:00 - 7:00 p.m. She noted that the blood drive following the November one is supposed to be held at Grace Lutheran in January 2021. She stated that she thinks it is possible that the venue might be changed to St. Pascal's since Grace Lutheran still has not re-opened due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prayer Service for These Times

Fr. John mentioned that he had spoken to Keri Mader, the parish's Pastoral Associate for Ministry, and Sharon Balcom, the parish's Pastoral Associate for Music, to ask if they would be willing to plan a prayer service to give parishioners the opportunity to prayerfully discern about the upcoming election - through the lens of their Catholic faith. He said they both agreed to this and that it will take place at the parish (and via livestream) on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, at 6:30 p.m., that it will be called "Prayer Service for These Times" (echoing the "We Were Made for These Times: How Do We Respond?" event that will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, September 15, 2020) and that it will be similar in form to the prayer service for racial justice that was held at the parish (and via livestream) on Tuesday, August 4, 2020.

Fr. John stated that Deacon Rich Moore will preach at this service. He said he would contact Deacon Rich to confirm this.

We Care Campaign

Chris reported that she had received the results for the "We Care Campaign" that was held the weekend of June 27 - 28, 2020, from parish Business Administrator, Theresa Ruttger. She stated that a total of \$1,145.00 was collected (including the \$270.00 designated donations and the \$875.00 undesignated donations plus the loose bills and change from the collection) and that, individually, the following designated amounts were raised for each of the charities that were part of the Campaign:

- **Progressive Baptist Church Fishes and Loaves Food Shelf** - located within Progressive Baptist Church at 1501 Burns Avenue in St. Paul and it provides emergency food items to anybody in need - \$65.00,

- **Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce Charitable Fund** - 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 - \$140.00 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 after the recent civil unrest that has taken place - \$65.00.

The committee members discussed the dispersment of Campaign funds. Chris noted that, in the past, each option in the Campaign received the donations that were specifically designated for it by parishioners as well as one third of the undesignated funds donated to the Campaign and one third of the bills and change from the collection for the three masses of the We Care Campaign weekend. She said that, of late, the Campaign funds have been dispersed differently - with each option in the Campaign receiving one third of the combined total of the designated funds, the undesignated funds and the bills and change from the collection for the three masses of the We Care Campaign weekend - with the idea being that as long as each option received no less than its designated amount, it would be easier to divide the grand total three ways.

The committee members determined that they would prefer that the funds be dispersed the way they had been in the past - with each option in the Campaign receiving the donations that were specifically designated for it by parishioners as well as one third of the undesignated funds donated to the Campaign and one third of the bills and change from the collection for the three masses of the We Care Campaign weekend. Fr. John stated that he would speak to Theresa about this.

Chris reminded the committee members that the next We Care Campaign will take place the weekend of October 24 - 25, 2020, and said that they should choose the options for this. The committee members discussed the following options:

- **Catholic Charities Disaster Relief for Louisiana** - to assist those affected by Hurricane Laura,
- **Catholic Relief Services Collection for Lebanon** - in response to the recent explosion that occurred at the Beirut sea port on August 4, 2020,
- **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 and
- **St. Mary's Health Clinics** - established in 1992 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet to provide free health care services to the uninsured and medically underserved people in the Twin Cities and surrounding metro area - including: assistance in applying for governmental subsidy programs and other community resources, clinic visits, diagnostic tests, prescriptions etc.

The committee members chose Catholic Charities Disaster Relief for Louisiana, the Salvation Army Heatshare Program and St. Mary's Health Clinics.

“We Were Made for These Times: Where Do We Go from Here?” Event

Chris reviewed the “We Were Made for These Times: How Do We Respond?” event that will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, that will include:

- Fr. John starting with an opening prayer,
- absent committee member, Mary Weyandt, welcoming the participants and making introductions,
- Chris providing an overview of the event,
- parishioner Anne Weyandt (Associate Professor of Education at St. Catherine’s University) and Sr. Sharon Howell, CSJ (the Director of the Center for Spirituality and Social Justice at St. Catherine’s University) having a discussion regarding Catholic identity, discipleship and social justice,
- a question/initial reaction session led by Kim,
- small group reflection and conversation - with the participants dividing up into two break out rooms - one lead by Anne and the other by Sr. Sharon,
- returning to a large group discussion to review what was learned and to discuss possible next steps and
- acknowledgements and a closing prayer.

Chris stated that the sub-committee members planning this event had a trial run during which they practiced using the Zoom technology (such as using break out rooms) and that all went well.

Chris said, that as of now, nineteen people have signed-up for the event. Ann stated that the JustFaith Catholic program participants will sign-up as well (if they have not already done this).

Women’s Club Donation

The committee members spoke about the \$750.00 donation received from the parish’s Women’s Club to be used for social justice and/or racism-related issues. It was felt that some ideas regarding how the parish might want to get involved in social justice-related issues might be generated at the above-described “We Were Made for These Times: How Do We Respond?” event. Ann noted that the JustFaith Program participants are developing a list of ideas for how parishioners and/or the parish might become involved in social justice-related projects as well. The committee members felt that some of the donation money could be used towards paying for whatever is decided.

Social Justice Library

Fr. John announced that he would purchase the below titles for the parish’s social justice library with the \$100.00 Amazon gift card that Margaret donated to the parish when \$100.00 was given to her by the American Red Cross as a thanks for the parish hosting the July 6, 2020, blood drive. (She donated it to the parish to be used to purchase books for the social justice library or to download titles on the parish’s e-books.)

- Everyone Belongs by the United States Conference of Bishops (children's book);
- The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas (young adult book);
- How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi (adult book);
- Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story about Racial Injustice by Marianne Celano (children's book);
- Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America by Michael Eric Dyson (adult book) and
- White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism by Robin DiAngelo (adult book).

Fr. John said that, in most cases, the hardcover editions of the above-listed books are cheaper than the paperbacks so he would purchase the hardcover. The committee members agreed that purchasing the hardcover versions was a good idea since they felt these would hold up better over time.

Chris stated that she had a copy of White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism by Robin DiAngelo that she would donate to the library so that Fr. John could purchase another book instead of this one.

The committee members discussed ways to increase the use of the social justice library. They decided it might be helpful to advertise some of the books that are available on a regular basis in the bulletin and/or the *Pulse*, the parish's electronic newsletter - perhaps in a section entitled "Our Library." Ann volunteered to help with this.

Due to the fact that fewer parishioners are attending mass on-site during the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee members discussed whether parish staff members would be willing to check-out books for them and have the books available for pick-up at the parish. Fr. John agreed to ask the staff members if they would be willing to do this.

Next Meeting

Thursday, October 1, 2020, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim volunteered to schedule the Zoom meeting.

Margaret agreed to lead the prayer.