

Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, August 5, 2021 (via Zoom)

Present: Bill Dorgan, Mary Huettl, Julie Ludden, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Fr. John Mitchell, Mary Root and Mary Weyandt

Prayer

The prayer was led by Christine.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative

Christine stated that absent committee member, Ann Karner, informed her that the core group from the parish that is working with Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, an organization working to end homelessness and advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities, is going to reach out to parishioners to make them more aware of the work being done by this organization and to hopefully find more people who would be willing to become involved with this group in the coming year.

Mary Huettl reported that she participated in an educational event offered by Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative that dealt with the history of race and housing. She said that the event was very good but she felt somewhat disappointed due to the fact that it only focused on the city of Minneapolis.

Bill mentioned that he attended a meeting convened by Elizabeth Tannen of Beacon Interfaith Housing with Ramsey County Commissioners to discuss how the dollars raised by the county's property tax levy for its Housing and Redevelopment Authority should be spent. He stated that it is hoped that additional meetings could be held with the mayors of Ramsey County cities in order to get their input on this issue. Bill said that a final decision regarding how to spend the funds needs to be made by December of this year and that the tax levy will begin in 2022.

Donation Closet

Christine noted that she had seen announcements in the bulletin and the parish's electronic newsletter, the *Pulse*, regarding collecting donations in August for Brittany's Place, a shelter located on the east side of St. Paul that helps teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking.

Christine stated that absent committee member/parish Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation, Kim Roering, had informed her and Fr. John that Andre Simone, who deals with donations for the Listening House, had contacted the parish office with questions about the new donation closet procedure. Christine said that Kim was going to contact Andre to discuss this with her.

Meeting with Progressive Baptist

Christine mentioned that absent committee member, Ann Karner, wanted to invite all to volunteer at least once for the food sorting that takes places at Progressive Baptist every Friday

between 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. and for the distribution of food that takes place on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

National Night Out Event

The committee members reviewed the National Night Out event held in the upper parking lot on Tuesday, August 3, 2021. They felt that, overall, the evening was a successful one. They had the following comments on the event.

- The map Fr. John made dividing the neighborhood surrounding the parish into zones was very useful when volunteers passed out flyers for the event so it should be saved and used again in the future.
- The homemade signs made by the children were not very durable so it may be advantageous to purchase a banner if the parish continues to host this event.
- The donations received were wonderful but if this event were to be held again in the future, the parish should solicit these much earlier in order to give the donors more time to respond.
- Approximately 125 - 150 were in attendance - 1/3 of which were from the neighborhood surrounding the parish.
- Since there were some difficulties getting the sound system to work at the beginning of the event, it may be beneficial to purchase a portable system for the parish for use in the future. Having music added a lot to the event.
- The ice cream treats (crunch bars, ice cream sandwiches, vanilla and chocolate drumsticks) and the popsicles (Jolly Rancher flavored) were well-received but it was somewhat difficult keeping them cold - even though they were in coolers with ice. If this event is held again in the future, the ice cream may need to be kept in the freezer longer.
- There were enough goodie bags for all the children and there were even some leftovers - which will be given to Progressive Baptist.
- The donations contributed to the event by The Free Book Buggie were popular with the children and the leftovers will be given away at the upcoming parish picnic.
- It was nice having Sargent Fuzz, the police therapy dog, at the event but unfortunate that he could only stay a short amount of time.
- It was great to have personnel from local fire station 24 came to the event with a hook and ladder truck - especially since it was not expected that they would come.
- It was nice (and unexpected) having state Senator Founq Hawj (who represents District 67 on the eastside of St. Paul) make an appearance at the event.
- No children participated in the Sargent Fuzz coloring contest or used the sidewalk chalk that was provided. There may have been participation if someone had led these activities.
- The children utilized the playground quite a bit.
- The dances (cha cha slide, chicken dance, tooty ta) were really popular with the children.
- It is advantageous to be registered for the National Night Out event since it results in visits from the fire/police department, having The Free Book Buggie bring donations to the parish, possibly qualifying for a deejay, visits from local legislators etc.

Mary Weyandt showed the committee members some of the pictures taken by parishioner Scott Sikorski. She mentioned that, as of yet, she had not yet received any photographs from

parishioner Dennis Behling. The committee members agreed not to publish any pictures that have children in them and they decided to obtain permission from the adults to post their photographs in the *Pulse* and/or on the parish's Facebook page or its website.

Mary Weyandt stated that she would follow-up with AT & T who had informed the parish that it would be present at the event but did not attend.

The committee members decided they would like to host this event again next year. They discussed the possibility of offering food in addition to the ice cream/popsicles and suggested the following ideas: hot dogs, pizza (from The Little Oven or Red's Savoy Pizza), pulled-pork, sloppy joes, a Subway party sandwich or having the parish grill or hire a food truck. It was felt that having food might draw more people to the event. The committee members remarked that they would like the parish to offer a vegetarian option - either in addition to or in lieu of a meat option and that, if meat were offered, they would avoid having pork (in order to be respectful of other cultures).

The committee members decided to send thank you notes (signed by Fr. John) to all the businesses that contributed gift cards and/or prizes to the event (Battle Creek Waterworks, Donatelli's, Dorothy Ann Bakery, Green Mill in Woodbury, Ho Ho Gourmet, the Minnesota Twins and Red's Savoy Pizza) as well as to The Free Book Buggie, the police officers/Sargent Fuzz, Senator Fong Hawj and Station 24. They also decided to post the list of those who contributed donations on the parish's Facebook page and/or to include them in a future bulletin. Mary Weyandt volunteered to send a copy of the poster listing the donors to Kim Roering for posting on the parish's Facebook page.

Initiative for Contemplative Discipleship Kick-off Retreat: The World is on Fire: How Do We Want to Be Church Together?

Christine reported that she received an invitation from parishioner Anne Weyandt (via Mary Weyandt) for the committee members to attend an Initiative for Contemplative Discipleship kick-off retreat entitled "The World is on Fire: How Do We Want to Be Church Together?" that will take place at St. Catherine University on August 14, 2021, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (She said it is hoped that this will take place in person but that it can also be attended via Zoom.)

Christine stated that this gathering is to celebrate the emerging collaboration among St. Catherine University and its first fifteen congregational partners in the initiative (including Guardian Angels and Pax Christi).

Christine said that the keynote speakers will be Tarshia Stanley (the Dean of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences at St. Catherine University) and Don Ottenhoff (the Executive Director of the Collegeville Institute at St. John's) and that the retreat will include prayer and grounding practices, inter-congregational conversations of the keynote addresses on why and how to be church together during this transformational time and reflection on being shared agents of transformational change in our communities.

Christine mentioned that additional information could be obtained by contacting parishioner Anne Weyandt or Bill McDonough (at 651-690-6072 or wcmcdonough@stkate.edu). Mary Weyandt said that committee members who are interested in attending could contact her.

Next Meeting

Thursday, September 2, 2021, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Margaret agreed to lead the prayer.