

**Social Justice and Caring Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, September 2, 2021 (via Zoom)**

Present: Martha Arko, Mary Huettl, Ann Karner, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Fr. John Mitchell, Kim Roering, Mary Root and Mary Weyandt

**Prayer**

The prayer was led by Margaret.

**Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative**

Ann updated the committee on Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, an organization working to end homelessness and advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities. She stated that absent member Julie Moore and she have been making plans to try and get the parish more involved with this organization.

Ann said this weekend's bulletin will contain a teaser notifying parishioners that a Beacon in-reach will be coming soon. She stated that Fr. John will speak about this in-reach during his homily on the weekend of September 11 - 12, 2021, and that he will also discuss it in his "From the Pastor's Desk" column in that weekend's bulletin. She noted that Fr. John will explain what Beacon Interfaith Collaborative is, explain how its work ties in with Catholic social teachings and let parishioners know that it is looking for volunteers.

Ann said there will be a table in the gathering space after each of the masses at which parishioners can ask questions about the organization and give them the opportunity to provide their names and contact information if they are interested in becoming involved in its work.

**Meeting with Progressive Baptist**

Ann reported that Progressive Baptist has partnered with Fairview to build a health and recreation center on its campus. She stated that, once built, the food shelf will be moved to this location.

Ann said that Progressive Baptist is having business cards and flyers made advertising the food shelf and that these will be distributed to inform locals about its existence. It was suggested that the flyer could be posted on the kiosks in the gathering space at the parish as well as in the school.

Ann mentioned that Jeannette Jones from Progressive Baptist organized an event several weeks ago in the parking lot of Hazel Park Middle School that offered free clothes, household items and furniture to people. Ann stated that she dropped off some donations at the event and noted that there seemed to be a lot of items from which people could choose.

Ann reminded the committee members that the food sorting takes place at Progressive Baptist every Friday, starting at 9:30 a.m. and continuing until the work is completed (usually between

11:00 and 11:30 a.m.) and that St. Pascal's helps with the distribution of food on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 9:30 to 12:00 p.m.

### **We Care Campaign**

Christine reported that parish Business Administrator, Theresa Ruttger, informed her that the total raised for the St. Pascal Outreach fund, the only option in the We Care Campaign held the weekend of June 5 - 6, 2021, was \$880.00. Christine said that some of this amount was used to reimburse committee members who spent their own money to purchase items for the National Night Out event held on August 3, 2021, resulting in a current total of \$785.09.

Christine reminded the committee members that the next "We Care Campaign" will be held the weekend of October 30 - 31, 2021, and that they should choose the options for this. They discussed several options:

- aid to assist Afghanistan (via a Catholic organization or UNICEF U.S.A.),
- Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative,
- Hurricane Ida relief (via Catholic Charities U.S.A.) and
- World Central Kitchen - an organization that uses food to empower communities and strengthen economies.

The committee members decided to collect money for aid to Afghanistan, the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative and Hurricane Ida relief. Christine volunteered to submit bulletin announcements regarding the Campaign.

### **Continued Community Outreach**

The committee members discussed ways the parish could continue its community outreach efforts that began with the National Night Out event held on August 3, 2021. Some suggestions included:

- having an Easter egg hunt,
- hosting a "Faith & Blue" event - whose goal is to facilitate law enforcement officers connecting with members of the public in the communities in which they serve in order to build a mutual understanding and
- passing out flyers to the neighbors around the church inviting them to attend the upcoming spaghetti dinner.

The committee members decided to pursue hosting a "Faith & Blue" evening. It was noted that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee had been planning to invite Officer Kurt Hallstrom of the St. Paul Police Department to participate in a listening session that would provide parishioners with an opportunity to ask questions, share their thoughts, feelings and perspectives regarding what troubles them, what gives them hope, what they see as strengths and weaknesses etc. and that Officer Hallstrom had been willing to participate in this. The committee members felt that the neighbors surrounding the parish could be invited to this event as well.

The committee members determined that they should ask the Parish Council if they would be okay with spaghetti dinner flyers being distributed to the neighbors surrounding the church. Ann, a current Council member, agreed to ask about this at the next Council meeting.

The committee members shared a desire to get more young people involved in the committee and/or social justice activities. Mary Weyandt stated that she would like to engage some young parishioners in a conversation about such issues.

The members decided to maintain this topic as a permanent agenda item at future committee meetings.

### **Merrick Community Services**

Mary Root mentioned that she had contacted Merrick Community Services to ask what types of things this organization would like to receive since this organization will be the parish's donation closet option for the month of October. She said that during this conversation, the Merrick Community Services staff member asked her if St. Pascal's would consider serving a meal once a month at the parish. Mary Root stated that she was informed that Merrick would supply the food that would be served at this meal and would advertise it.

The committee members determined they would like to learn more about this ministry. It was decided that Mary Root would invite somebody from Merrick Community Services to attend next month's meeting to discuss this further.

The committee members decided that Fr. John and Theresa Ruttger would need to be consulted about whether it would be possible for the parish to become involved in this.

### **Donation Closet**

Martha said that the August 2021 collection for Brittany's Place, a shelter located on the east side of St. Paul that helps teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking, was very successful. She stated that parishioners donated bedding, clothing, toiletries, toys etc.

Martha informed the committee members that Michelle Hall is the Brittany's Place contact for the parish.

Kim mentioned that she had spoken with Andre Simone, who deals with donations for the Listening House, and informed her about the new donation closet procedure and that Andre was fine with it.

The committee members discussed putting blurbs in the bulletin at the end of each month thanking parishioners for their donations and that perhaps this should be the responsibility of the person who worked on that month's donation collection. Kim volunteered to submit one for Brittany's Place.

The committee members noted that, at times, the donation closet was not open before, during and after mass as it should. Kim said she would follow-up on this with parish staff.

**Next Meeting**

Thursday, October 7, 2021, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Ann agreed to lead the prayer.