

**Social Justice and Caring Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, February 3, 2022 (via Zoom)**

Present: Martha Arko, Bill Dorgan, Mickie Hageman, Mary Huettl, Julie Ludden, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Fr. John Mitchell, Julie Moore, Kim Roering, Mary Root and Mary Weyandt

**Prayer**

The prayer was led by Christine.

**Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative**

Julie Moore reported on the current activities of Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, an organization working to end homelessness and advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities. She said that Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is encouraging its members to contact their legislators during “Lobby Days” (which take place February 14 - 18, 2022), encouraging them to support the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislation (Minnesota House of Representatives file #40 and Minnesota Senate file #333) - which would provide rent subsidies for the working poor (those who pay more than thirty percent of their annual income on rent).

Julie Moore stated that she and Bill agreed to contact local legislators (such as Representative Steve Sandell, Representative Jay Xiong, Representative Tou Xiong, Senator Kent and Senator Wiger) asking them to support the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislation. She noted that she also sent an e-mail to those parishioners who expressed an interest in becoming involved in this type of work asking them to contact their legislators.

Julie Moore announced that the next “Rent is Due” meeting will take place on Monday, February 14, 2022. She said this date also coincides with the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislative kick-off.

**Parish Road Map**

Mary Weyandt remarked that the Council is currently in the process of reviewing the parish’s *A Road Map for 2024: Strategic Plan for The Church of St. Pascal Baylon, St. Paul, MN* document and making any necessary updates to it that may be needed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. She reminded the committee members that she had sent the “Social Justice and Caring” section of the plan for their review and that they could provide their input to her before the next Council meeting in April. Mary Weyandt stated that she would send this section to the committee members again and that, once the entire plan was completed, it would be shared with the parish.

### **Donation Closet Schedule**

The committee members considered whether, in light of the fact that fewer items were donated to January's donation closet recipient, Brittany's Place, the parish should scale down on the number of times it collects for such organizations throughout the year in order to prevent donor burnout.

The committee members decided to continue with the current monthly donation schedule and to re-evaluate this decision in a few months after seeing whether a trend of receiving fewer donations develops.

### **Progressive Baptist Fishes and Loaves Food Shelf**

Kim mentioned that absent committee member, Ann Karner, informed her that Progressive Baptist's Fishes and Loaves food shelf is in great need of peanut butter and soup and, because of this, announcements have been put in the bulletin and the parish's electronic newsletter, the *Pulse*, asking for donations.

### **JustFaith Program**

Christine noted that Ann Karner informed her that the next JustFaith program will be held virtually on Monday evenings from March 7 - April 18, 2022, from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. and that the topic will be "Faith and Poverty: A Justice Response." Christine said that Ann stated that announcements regarding this opportunity have been placed on the parish's Facebook site as well as in the bulletin and the *Pulse* and that Ann will speak about this at all the masses on the weekend of February 12 - 13, 2022.

### **Merrick Community Services Food Distribution Ministry**

Mary Weyandt updated the committee members on the parish's plan to serve as a food distribution site for Merrick Community Services to assist those living on the eastside who are experiencing food insecurity. She said the following.

- The food distribution will be held on the fourth Monday of the month.
- Four to six volunteers will work per shift.
- Merrick Community Services will deliver the food that will be distributed.
- The food packing will take place in Brioschi Hall between 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.
- Merrick Community Services will donate the bags in which the food will be packed but, eventually, parishioners may be asked to donate paper bags for this purpose.
- The food will be distributed between 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
- The distribution will be curbside.
- Some emergency food bags will be kept on-site in case people come to the parish asking for food outside of the distribution hours.

Mary Weyandt stated that, currently, she is recruiting volunteers by word-of-mouth but she will probably send a notice out to the parish as well. She remarked that some of the Progressive Baptist Loaves and Fishes food shelf volunteers have agreed to assist with this ministry as well.

Kim noted that she is trying to determine whether volunteers will be required to have a background check and/or take VIRTUS training (which educates those who minister to children, youth and vulnerable adults on best practices for ensuring a safe environment).

Mary Weyandt remarked that the next food distribution ministry meeting will take place on Friday, February 25, 2022.

### **Martin Luther King Jr. Event at Pax Christi/Meeting on March 7, 2022**

Mary Root informed the committee members about a Martin Luther King Jr. event hosted by Pax Christi church that she attended on Monday, January 17, 2022. She said the event included a reading of Martin Luther King Jr's *Letter from Birmingham Jail* followed by small group discussions regarding questions about this work.

Mary Root stated that that Pax Christi hopes to build a network of congregations from across the Twin Cities that will conduct educational events, share information with each other, work on justice-related issues etc. She said that the next meeting will be held on March 7, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. Mary Root invited the committee members to attend. She stated that if anybody were interested in attending, to let her know and she would have them added to the meeting distribution list.

It was decided that Mary Root would serve as the committee's representative for this group.

### **We Care Campaign**

Christine informed the committee members that Theresa Ruttger, the parish's Business Administrator, had provided her with the totals for the "We Care Campaign" held the weekend of October 30 - 31, 2021. Chris said that a total of \$1,516.00 was raised - \$839.01 of which was undesignated by the donors. Individually, the following amounts were raised for each option:

- **Option 1: Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative** - an organization working to end homelessness and advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities - \$455.00 (\$175.33 of which was designated by the donors),
- **Option 2: Catholic Charities U.S.A. Hurricane Ida Relief** - to assist those impacted by Hurricane Ida - \$688.00 (\$408.33 of which was designated by the donors) and
- **Option 3: UNICEF U.S.A. Aid to Afghanistan** - to assist those affected by the recent strife in Afghanistan - \$373.00 (\$93.33 of which was designated by the donors).

Christine stated that the next We Care Campaign will be held the weekend of March 5 - 6, 2022, so the committee members should determine the three options for this Campaign. The committee members discussed choosing the following options:

- **Christian Cupboard** - an emergency food shelf located on the grounds of Guardian Angels in Oakdale,
- **Feed My Starving Children** - an organization that provides nutritious food to children worldwide,

- **Merrick Community Services** - a nonprofit agency in Ramsey County that assists individuals and families in transitioning from poverty to becoming self-sufficient and stable,
- **Options for Women East** - a medical clinic that offers free services and resources to women with unexpected pregnancies,
- **Progressive Baptist Fishes and Loaves** - a food shelf run by Progressive Baptist,
- **San Lucas** - a mission in Guatemala,
- **St. Pascal's Merrick Community Services Food Distribution Ministry;**
- **Women's Advocates** - a shelter located in St. Paul that provides assistance and services to women and children escaping domestic violence (e.g., advocacy, clothing, counseling, crisis hotline, meals, transportation etc.) and
- **You Matter Outreach** - a ministry run by Jeanette Jones, a member of Progressive Baptist, to minister to the unsheltered in the Twin Cities by providing them with needed items such as hot food, sanitizing wipes, tarps and tents.

The committee members chose Christian Cupboard, Feed My Starving Children and Options for Women's East. They also decided they might choose to support Merrick Community Services in a future We Care Campaign (perhaps in June 2022).

Christine agreed to submit the bulletin announcements for the Campaign.

### **Experiences**

The committee members discussed providing parishioners with hands-on ministry experiences. Fr. John and Mary Weyandt noted that parishioners may be invited to participate in a food packing event at Feed My Starving Children. Other opportunities may include volunteering at the Christian Cupboard food shelf at Guardian Angels church or at East Side Elders - an organization that assists senior citizens, enabling them to continue living in their homes.

### **Justice Speaker Series**

Mary Root announced that Pax Christi's next "Justice Speaker Series" will take place on February 9, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. (This event will feature Jim Bear Jacobs, the creator of "Healing Minnesota Stories" - a program dedicated to ensure that the Native American voice is heard in areas where it has long been ignored.)

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, March 3, 2022, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Mary Huettl agreed to lead the prayer.