

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

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

Prayer

The prayer was led by Mary Huettl.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative

Ann reported that Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, an organization working to end homelessness and advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities, recently had its “Lobby Days” on the Hill in which members were encouraged to speak to legislators about supporting the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislation which would provide rent subsidies for the working poor (those who pay more than thirty percent of their annual income on rent). She said that members from the parish contacted two state representatives and two senators regarding this legislation and received positive feedback from them.

Ann stated that the next step would be a postcard campaign. She said that, on the weekend of March 12 - 13, 2022, Fr. John would make an announcement at each of the masses informing parishioners that there would be a table in the gathering space at which they could sign a postcard in support of the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislation. Ann stated that either she or absent committee member, Julie Moore, would be available after each of the masses to answer any questions that parishioners might have but she was looking for additional assistance with this effort so she would send an e-mail to the committee members who work on Beacon-related issues asking for volunteers.

Ann noted that announcements regarding the postcard campaign would be put on the parish website, in the bulletin and the parish’s electronic newsletter, the *Pulse*.

Parish Road Map

Mary Weyandt remarked that she had not received any additional input from committee members on the “Social Justice and Caring Committee” section of the parish’s *A Road Map for 2024: Strategic Plan for The Church of St. Pascal Baylon, St. Paul, MN* document. She said the next step for the parish Council would be to look at the action planning and work plan. Mary informed the committee members that if they had any questions, they could contact her, Ann or Fr. John - all of whom are members of the working group for this process.

Experiences

Mary Weyandt updated the committee members on the possibility of providing parishioners with hands-on ministry experiences. She stated that, regarding the possibility of planning a food packing event at Feed My Starving Children, it has been difficult finding an evening or weekend shift for which parishioners could volunteer due to the fact that all such shifts are full. Mary said that some day shifts are available but it may be harder to find enough volunteers to fill an entire shift. (Fifteen to twenty people are needed.)

Mary Weyandt noted that such experiences may be a good opportunity to partner with Progressive Baptist.

Mary Weyandt remarked that she would speak to parishioner Brianna Flanagan for ideas regarding how to connect with the youth in the parish.

Mary Weyandt asked the committee members to let her know if they have ideas for other volunteer opportunities.

JustFaith Program

Ann reported that the JustFaith program whose theme is “Faith and Poverty: A Justice Response,” will begin on Monday, March 7, 2022. She stated that thirteen people have signed up to participate - some of whom had taken previous JustFaith programs offered by the parish and some who were new participants.

Ann said that items related to the program will be placed in the bulletin and the *Pulse* so that parishioners will be able to follow along with what the participants are learning and will be able to pray for them.

Merrick Community Services Food Distribution Ministry

Mary Weyandt mentioned that she and Kim are still planning to re-connect with Josh Bao, the Food Services Manager for Merrick Community Services, to continue discussions regarding 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 reminded the committee members of the below-listed items.

- The food distribution will be held on the fourth Monday of the month and that the following dates have been scheduled: April 25, 2022, May 23, 2022, June 20, 2022, and July 25, 2022.
- Merrick Community Services will deliver the food that will be distributed between 1:00 and 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. Ann

remarked that a parishioner donated a large number of paper bags currently housed in the donation closet that could be used for this ministry.

- The food will be distributed between 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. or 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
- The distribution will be curbside.
- It is uncertain whether emergency food bags would be kept on-site in case people come to the parish asking for food outside of the distribution hours due to the fact that storing the food might be problematic.

Mary Weyandt remarked that she has recruited volunteers for this ministry on an informal basis but that she will soon begin doing this in a more formal way - such as through a pulpit announcement.

Mary Weyandt stated that Josh may provide a run-through/training prior to the April 25, 2022, food distribution event.

We Care Campaign

Christine reminded the committee members that the next We Care Campaign will be held the weekend of March 5 - 6, 2022, and that the options chosen for this Campaign were:

- **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 and
- **Options for Women East** - a medical clinic that offers free services and resources to women with unexpected pregnancies.

Christine asked if the parish still donated the loose change and bills from the collection at all of the masses on the We Care Campaign weekend. She said that the amount is not reported on the statistics that she receives from Parish Administrator, Theresa Ruttger, regarding the campaign. It was stated that this amount is included in the total that is divided up among the three options. Christine stated that she would ask Theresa about this.

Pax Christi Meeting on March 7, 2022

Mary Weyandt informed the committee members that she would attend the March 7, 2022, meeting at Pax Christi parish instead of Mary Root who would not be able to attend due to the fact that she had another commitment on this night. Mary said that she has a link to the meeting. (Such meetings are part of Pax Christi church's plan 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.)

Next Meeting

Thursday, April 7, 2022, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Kim agreed to lead the prayer.