

Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, April 7, 2022 (via Zoom)

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

Prayer

The prayer was led by Kim.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative

Julie Moore reported that during the weekend of March 12 - 13, 2022, approximately ninety parishioners filled out postcards in support of the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislation that would provide rent subsidies for the working poor.

Julie also stated that from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. on April 19, 2022, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative will be hosting a rally on the steps of the state capitol to show support for the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislation. (Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is an organization working to end homelessness and advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities.) She said that some people from the parish who are in support of this legislation will meet at 11:00 a.m. in the church parking lot on this day in order to carpool to the rally. Julie asked anyone interested in attending the rally to register for it.

Experiences

The committee members discussed some upcoming parish experiences:

- **Feed My Starving Children:** Mary Weyandt announced that the parish has agreed to participate in a food packing event at the Feed My Starving Children location in Eagan, Minnesota on Saturday, July 9, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. She said sixty-five volunteer slots will need to be filled.
- **National Night Out:** The committee members agreed they would like to host another National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 2, 2022, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
 - The committee members discussed expanding the food being provided - perhaps having a food truck. Martha volunteered to speak to her neighbor who owns a mini-doughnut food truck.
 - Kim volunteered to submit the form for this event.
 - The committee members agreed to solicit donations for the event earlier than they started to do this last year.
 - Kim informed the committee members that the parish has a new audio system on wheels that could be used for this event.
 - It was decided that this event would be discussed further at the May meeting.

JustFaith Program

Ann remarked that the JustFaith program (whose theme is “Faith and Poverty: A Justice Response”) is going well and that there is good participation by the members. She noted that the participants are in the process of determining steps that could be taken to put what they have learned into action.

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 that she met with staff from Merrick Community Services (Josh Bao, the Food Services Manager, and Dan Rodriguez, the Executive Director), they walked through the space in Brioschi Hall and they finalized the following:

- Merrick Community Services will deliver the food that will be distributed at 1:30 p.m.
- Food packing will take place between 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
- The food will be distributed curbside between 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
- The goal will be to serve twenty families.
- Josh Bao will be present at the first distribution event.

Mary also stated that she and Kim will advertise the food distribution on social media and will ask Grace Lutheran, Hazel Park Congregational and Progressive Baptist to publicize it as well.

Mary said that several people have volunteered for this and that she would be sending them an e-mail regarding this ministry.

It was mentioned that Fr. John will speak about this ministry at each of the masses this weekend.

Paper Bags

It was noted that paper bags are needed for both the Progressive Baptist food shelf and the parish’s Merrick Community Services food distribution ministry. It was decided that an announcement will be put in the bulletin asking for bags and that any donations received will be distributed to both of these efforts.

Donation Closet

The committee members reviewed the donation closet schedule since August 2021:

Month	Organization	Contacting Organization/Submitting Announcements	Delivery
August 2021	Brittany's Place	Martha	Julie L. and Martha
September 2021	Listening House	Kim	Andre Simone
October 2021	Merrick Community Services	Mary R.	Ann and John Roche
November 2021	Freedom House	Christine	Eileen and Ray
December 2021	Angel Tree/Catholic Charities Giving Tree	Mary W./Fr. John	Martha, Mary H. and Mary W./Ann
January 2022	Brittany's Place	Martha	Julie L. and Martha
February 2022	Listening House	Kim	Andre Simone
March 2022	Merrick Community Services	Mary R.	Ann and John Roche
April 2022	Operation Rice Bowl	parish staff	parish staff
May 2022	Brittany's Place	Martha	Julie L. and Martha
June 2022	Listening House	Kim	Andre Simone

In light of the fact that Freedom House will not be operating once its lease is up in May, it was decided that the parish would collect donations for Progressive Baptist during the months it previously did so for Freedom House. The committee members agreed to re-visit this decision if Freedom House were to re-open at some time in the future.

Possible Event on Homelessness

The committee members discussed hosting a discussion on the unsheltered - possibly partnering with Beacon Interfaith Housing on this and/or in response to the JustFaith program. They expressed the importance of putting a face on this issue.

Ann stated that she would discuss having such an event with the JustFaith program participants and then report back to the committee.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Margaret announced that the next American Red Cross blood drive will be held at the parish on Monday, 2, 2022, from 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. in Brioschi Hall. She said that the blood drive following this one would take place at the parish on Monday, June 27, 2022.

Next Meeting

Thursday, May 5, 2022, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Mary Huettl agreed to lead the prayer.