

Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, May 5, 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, Kim Roering, Mary Root and Mary Weyandt

Prayer

The prayer was led by Mary Huettl.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Margaret announced that thirty-three units of blood were donated during the American Red Cross blood drive held at the parish on Monday, May 2, 2022, from 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. in Brioschi Hall - two fewer units than the goal of thirty-five.

She said that the next blood drive would take place at the parish on Monday, June 27, 2022, from 1:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the parish.

Margaret stated that, after the June blood drive, future ones will not be scheduled on the fourth Monday of the month so that there will be no conflict with upcoming Merrick food distribution events at the parish.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative

Several committee members spoke about Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative-related events/plans. (Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is an organization working to end homelessness and to advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities.)

- Julie Moore mentioned that eleven parishioners attended the rally that took place on the steps of the state capitol on Tuesday, April 19, 2022, to show support for the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislation that would provide rent subsidies for the working poor. She said that approximately one hundred people were in attendance at the event and that twenty-five legislators were also present - who seemed pleased with the legislation. Julie remarked that the “Bring It Home, Minnesota” legislation is not likely to not pass this legislative session but that it may be brought back in future sessions.
- Julie Moore reported that, even though this year’s legislative session is not yet completed, it is hoped that \$400 million in housing infrastructure bonds will be provided - which is two times the amount usually designated for this purpose. She noted that an action alert was sent regarding this issue asking people to contact various senators on the finance committee to support it.
- Julie Moore stated that on Thursday, May 12, 2022, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative will discuss possible plans for a housing development on Frost in Maplewood.

- Mary Root said that at the Leadership Assembly on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, members will discuss the need to meet with legislators and how to do this effectively.
- Mary Root informed the committee members that on Thursday, June 23, 2022, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative will present a preview of its plans to meet the affordable housing needs of those living in the eastern Twin Cities metro area.

Merrick Community Services Food Distribution Ministry

Mary Weyandt reported that the parish's first Merrick Community Services food distribution event that took place on Monday, April 25, 2022, to assist those living on the eastside who are experiencing food insecurity was a very successful event. She stated that:

- approximately twenty volunteers worked at the event,
- twenty-six families were served,
- Reverend Paul Johnson and Cynthia Morrison from Progressive Baptist were in attendance and suggested holding up signs advertising the food distribution on the corners near the church and that this was helpful in drawing people to the event,
- it would probably be helpful to obtain some permanent signage for use at future distribution events (Kim reported that Mike Kelleher, the parish's Director of Facilities and Maintenance, will speak to a contact of his about this.) and
- it was decided that the work would be divided into two shifts - with the food packing taking place from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. and the distribution from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Kim noted that she had spoken to Thea Munoz, the parish's Communications & Office Manager, and had her place the food distribution event on the parish calendar for the fourth Monday of each month for the next fiscal year. She said that the only exception will take place in June 2022 for which the food distribution will take place on the third Monday of the month since the next American Red Cross blood drive has already been scheduled on the fourth Monday.

Kim mentioned that she gave some of the flyers advertising this food ministry to the school for distribution with the school notes. Mary Weyandt asked the committee members to let her know if they have suggestions regarding other places to distribute the flyers.

Mary Weyandt reminded the committee members that the next food distribution event will take place on Monday, May 23, 2022. She stated that she would send an e-mail to the volunteers about this.

It was hoped that, now that the parish has completed its first food distribution event, those who were served and still in need of assistance would return for future events.

Future Meeting Location

Christine said that she had received an e-mail from Thea Munoz asking her to let Thea know where the Social Justice and Caring committee meetings would like to meet during the next fiscal year of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.

The committee members decided to continue meeting via Zoom. Christine will follow-up with Thea on this issue.

National Night Out

The committee members discussed the below-listed plans for the National Night Out event that will take place on Tuesday, August 2, 2022.

- Kim informed the committee members that she had registered the parish with the city of St. Paul for this event.
- Mary Weyandt mentioned that parishioner Ben Larson has volunteered to serve as the deejay. Kim stated that, if for some reason, Ben were unable to serve as the deejay, the playlist that will be used for the “Kickoff to Summer” event on Saturday, May 28, 2022, could be used for the National Night Out event as well.
- The committee members discussed having a food truck at the event - possibly providing those in attendance with a coupon for a certain dollar amount off their order. Mary Weyandt said that she had a possible food truck contact to whom she would send an e-mail.
- The committee members agreed to solicit donations for door prizes for the event earlier than they started to do this last year. Fr. John stated that he still has the solicitation letter that was used last summer that could be revised for this year. He agreed to send it to Mary Weyandt.
- Fr. John noted that he still had the maps he developed last year for distributing flyers regarding the event to the neighborhoods surrounding the church.
- Mary Weyandt said that she still has the documentation from last year that she could share with those who work on this year’s event.
- Julie Ludden volunteered to organize the goody bags that will be distributed to the children.
- Martha, Mary Huettl, Ann, Julie Ludden, Christine, Margaret and Julie Moore agreed to form a sub-committee to work on this event.
- Mary Weyandt mentioned that there is a newly-formed “Parish Life and Activities Committee” that is striving to reach out to the younger people in the parish by planning quarterly activities - such as the skating event held this past winter, the sweatshirt sale that is currently being held, the upcoming Kickoff to Summer and Feed My Starving Children events etc. She stated that it may be helpful for both committees to work on this even together.

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 March 5 - 6, 2022. She said that a total of \$3,137.94 was raised, that \$591.95 of this amount came from the plate and that \$2,525.95 of it was undesignated by the donors. Individually, the following amounts were raised for each option:

- **Christian Cupboard** - an emergency food shelf located on the grounds of Guardian Angels in Oakdale - \$1025.98,

- **Feed My Starving Children** - an organization that provides nutritious food to children worldwide - \$1025.98 and
- **Options for Women East** - a medical clinic that offers free services and resources to women with unexpected pregnancies - \$1085.98.

Christine reported that thirty-five envelopes were used - twenty-seven of which did not contain designated contributions and eight that did.

Christine stated that the next We Care Campaign will be held the weekend of June 4 -5, 2022, and that the committee members should determine the three options for this Campaign. The committee members discussed choosing the following options:

- **Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative** - an organization working to end homelessness and advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities,
- **Campaign for Human Development** - the domestic anti-poverty program of the United States Catholic Bishops,
- **Merrick Community Services** - a non-profit agency in Ramsey County that assists individuals and families in transition from poverty to become self-sufficient,
- **Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge** - an organization that provides in/out-patient treatment services for adults and teens seeking recovery from chemical addictions and other life-controlling problems by addressing their physical, emotional and spiritual needs and
- **Ukraine relief** - via Catholic Charities or an organization for whom the principal of St. Pascal Regional Catholic School has a connection. (The principal is from the Ukraine.)

The committee members chose Merrick Community Services, Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge and aid to Ukraine.

Kim agreed to speak with the principal of St. Pascal Regional Catholic School to obtain information regarding the Ukrainian aid organization with whom she has a connection. Christine will submit the bulleting announcements regarding this Campaign.

Feed My Starving Children Event

Mary Weyandt reminded the committee members of the food packing event that will take place 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.

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 2, 2022, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Margaret agreed to lead the prayer.