

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

Present: Bill Dorgan, Mary Huettl, Ann Karner, Julie Ludden, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Fr. John Mitchell, Kim Roering, Mary Root and Mary Weyandt

Prayer

The prayer was led by Ann.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Margaret reported that forty-one pints of blood were donated at the American Red Cross blood drive held at the parish on Monday, June 27, 2022, and that this number was two units past the goal.

Margaret noted that, due to the American Red Cross being understaffed, some donor appointments had to be canceled.

Margaret said that the next blood drive will take place at Grace Lutheran on Monday, August 29, 2022, and that she is still waiting for a date for the November blood drive that will take place at the parish.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative

Ann mentioned that the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative meeting regarding the Gladstone Crossing housing project that will be built at 1375 Frost Avenue in Maplewood was very well-attended - both in person and on-line. (The Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is an organization working to end homelessness and to advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities.)

Anne stated that Gladstone Crossing will consist of approximately forty apartments, that it will cost approximately 19 million dollars to construct and that \$600,000 must be raised (\$15,000 per apartment) in order for Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative to begin building. She said that Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative hopes to raise this amount through congregations, foundations, the government, private donors etc.

Ann informed the committee that Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative has a virtual session every Wednesday called "Beacon Now" that touches on the work done by this organization.

JustFaith Program Suggestion: Possible Candidates Night

The committee members resumed their discussion on the possibility of hosting a candidates night in the fall - an idea that came from the participants of the most recent JustFaith program (Faith and Poverty: A Justice Response).

The committee members agreed they liked the idea of hosting such an event but were uncertain how to plan it. They debated whether it would be possible to partner with the St. Paul chapter of the League of Women Voters to organize such an event. Mary Huettl noted that she knows somebody who is involved with the Minneapolis chapter of this organization. She agreed to contact this person and ask about a contact in the St. Paul chapter. Ann volunteered to contact the St. Paul chapter and to send any information she receives to Christine who will forward it to the committee members.

The committee members discussed the possibility of asking the JustFaith participants if they would be interested in helping with this event.

The committee members agreed that, if possible, they would like to invite eastside legislators to the event to have a discussion on various social justice-related topics.

Fr. John stated that he would contact the Archdiocese to see if it has any recommendations for hosting such an event.

Kim checked the parish calendar during the meeting and reported that Brioschi Hall is available on most of the Tuesdays during September and October as well as some Thursdays.

Ann reminded the committee members that she has been putting weekly “Faith in Action” blurbs in the parish bulletin and electronic newsletter, the *Pulse*, listing things such as opportunities for involvement in faith-related activities, faith-related book/movie suggestions etc. and she invited them to let her know if they would be interested in submitting one of their own (with a 150-word limit).

Merrick Community Services Food Distribution Ministry

Mary Weyandt reported that the parish doubled the number of families it served at the Merrick Community Services food distribution event that took place at the parish on Tuesday, June 28, 2022, - serving fifty households instead of twenty-five.

Mary Weyandt said that parishioner Brianna Flanagan (and food distribution volunteer) made some signs that were used to advertise the event.

Mary Weyandt stated that she and Kim will discuss the possibility of obtaining a permanent banner.

The committee members resumed their discussion of having the parish collect items that could be distributed to the families being served in addition to the food provided by Merrick Community Services. Kim reminded the committee members that Merrick Community Services is the donation closet recipient for the month of July and that this organization is also on the donation schedule for October 2022 and March 2023. Because of this, it was decided that, for the time being, there would be no additional collections. Kim informed the committee members that Josh Bao, the Food Services Manager for Merrick Community Services, is fine with the

parish keeping the donated items and giving them to the families served at the parish's food distribution events.

Mary Weyandt reported that future food distribution events have been added to the parish calendar through the end of this fiscal year (June 2023) - on the fourth Monday of the month. She stated that the only exception to this is the food distribution date for December 2022 - which will take place on December 19th instead of December 26th.

National Night Out

Mary Weyandt updated the committee members on the parish's National Night Out event that will take place at the parish on Tuesday, August 2, 2022. Regarding the donation letters she said that:

- several committee members hand-delivered many of the letters soliciting donations that the parish is sending to local business,
- letters to the following businesses have yet to be delivered and will be available for pick-up in the sacristy this weekend if any committee members would like to deliver them:
 - Anytime Fitness (1700 Suburban Avenue, St. Paul),
 - Carbone's (680 E. 7th Street, St. Paul),
 - Holiday (1770 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul),
 - Leo's Chow Mein (1059 Hudson Road, St. Paul),
 - McDonalds (1841 Suburban Avenue, St. Paul),
 - Planet Fitness (2167 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul),
 - Popeyes (1722 Suburban Avenue, St. Paul),
 - Sonic (1960 Suburban Avenue, St. Paul),
 - Speedway (1771 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul),
 - SunRay Laundromat (373 A Ruth Street North, St. Paul),
 - Taco Bell (1940 Suburban Avenue, St. Paul),
 - Walgreens (1788 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul) and
 - The Wokery (1753 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul) and
- any letters that are not hand-delivered may be mailed to the businesses.

Christine and Margaret reported that they had spoken to Mark Weber from the Men's Club and asked him if this group would be available to make hotdogs for the event. They stated that Mark informed them that the Men's Club would not be able to help with this event due to a lack of volunteers.

The committee members discussed other food options. A remark was made that, at some other past National Night Out events, the police department may have provided ice cream floats to participants. The committee members discussed contacting the police department to see if this might be an option. A suggestion was made to order pizza from the Little Oven - as the parish did for its Kickoff to Summer event.

The committee members talked about the event flyer created by Kim. It was decided that Fr. John would make an announcement at each of the masses on the weekend of July 16 - 17, 2022, inviting parishioners to assist with the distribution of flyers in the neighborhoods surrounding the

parish - using the maps that Fr. John created for last year's event which divide the neighborhoods around the church into different zones. Kim noted that the flyer would be placed as an insert in the July 24, 2022, bulletin. It was noted that more flyers will need to be printed for these purposes.

Mary Weyandt informed the committee members that it was decided not to pursue having t-shirts made for them to wear at the event.

It was decided that if the Free Book Buggie were to donate books to the parish to distribute at the event (as it did last year), any leftovers would be given to the Children's Room at this year's Fall Festival.

Mary Weyandt said that she would send an e-mail to the committee members containing a list of tasks for which they could sign-up to perform at the event.

Possible Produce Giveaway

Julie asked about the possibility of setting up a table in the gathering space at which parishioners could give away their excess produce from their gardens to those who may not have the opportunity to grow their own. The committee members liked the idea but had concerns about having to store the untaken produce that might require refrigeration. It was decided that parishioners would be asked to only donate produce that would not require refrigeration.

The committee members decided to do a trial run of this idea by having a produce table at the National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 2, 2022. It was decided that, parishioners would be invited to donate their excess produce not requiring refrigeration on the weekend of July 30 - 31, 2022.

Kim stated that she could advertise the produce giveaway on the parish's Facebooks page.

Parish Leadership Meeting

Fr. John informed the committee members that there would be a leadership meeting on Tuesday, August 16, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in Brioschi Hall at which members of various parish groups (such as the Council, the Men's Club, the Social Justice and Caring Committee, the Women's Club etc.) would be invited to discuss the newly-revised strategic plan and how these groups could implement it. He stated that he would send additional information about this meeting to Christine who agreed to forward it to the rest of the committee members.

Next Meeting

Thursday, August 4, 2022, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Kim agreed to lead the prayer.