

**Social Justice and Caring Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, September 1, 2022 (via Zoom)**

Present: Martha Arko, Mary Huettl, Ann Karner, Julie Ludden, Christine Malec (minute writer), Julie Moore, Kim Roering and Mary Weyandt

**Prayer**

The prayer was led by Julie Ludden (Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace).

**Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative**

Ann updated the committee members on the activities of Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, an organization working to end homelessness and to advance equitable housing in the Twin Cities. She said that on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, a Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative event will take place at Wayzata Community Church (and via Zoom) from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. to urge Minnesota candidates to champion housing as a priority. Ann stated that, originally, it was thought that the gubernatorial candidates would be present at this event, but at this point in time, they are not planning to attend.

**Possible Candidates' Night**

Ann announced that the possible candidates' night that was going to be held at the parish in the fall will no longer take place for several reasons - including candidates not wanting to participate, one race having a candidate who is running unopposed and the fact that the League of Women Voters has determined that Brioschi Hall will not be large enough to hold the number of people who may attend the event. She said that the League of Women Voters anticipates that the race for County Commissioner will draw a lot of interest so it was decided that a bigger venue would be needed. Because of this, it was decided that the event would be held at Harding High School.

Ann remarked that the League of Women Voters will provide details regarding this event with the hope that the parish will advertise it.

**JustFaith Catholic Program: Faith and Poverty: A Biblical Response**

Ann announced that the parish will be offering a JustFaith Catholic program on the topic of "Faith and Poverty: A Biblical Response" - which lays the biblical and theological foundation for responding to poverty in the community.

Ann stated that the program will take place on Monday evenings from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. - starting in the second week of October and running through the first week of December (not meeting on October 31<sup>st</sup>). She noted that the program will discuss such topics as compassion verses tolerance, equity verses equality, ministry "to" verses ministry "with," the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program etc.

Ann said that notices will be put in the bulletin and the *Pulse* (the parish's electronic newsletter) inviting parishioners to participate and that she would speak about the program at the masses on September 18. She asked the committee members to let her know if they were interested in participating in the program.

### **Produce Giveaway**

Julie Ludden reported that the produce giveaway held the weekend of August 20 - 21, 2022, was a success. She stated that, even though not many parishioners brought produce, the ones that did were really happy to have an opportunity to give their excess away and the ones that took some were grateful to receive it.

Julie Ludden said that she hopes to continue the produce giveaway through the month of September and/or the beginning of October. She stated that she is willing to ensure that any leftover produce gets picked up after the 10:30 mass on the remaining giveaway weekends.

Kim volunteered to see if continuing the produce table would interfere with other activities that might be taking place in the gathering space (such as those related to the Fall Festival).

The committee members decided to ask Fr. John Mitchell if he would be okay with continuing the produce giveaway.

### **We Care Campaign**

Christine reminded the committee members that the next "We Care Campaign" will be held the weekend of October 29 - 30, 2021, and that they should choose the options for this. They discussed several options:

- **Bethany House** - a long-term shelter in Toledo, Ohio (sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis) for victims of domestic abuse and their families that provides clothing, counseling, food, job skills, social work assistance etc.,
- **Community Ambassadors Initiative** - a program through the St. Paul Police Department that aims to reach out to youth by building relationships with them and helping them connect with services, find jobs, stay safe etc.,
- **Feed My Starving Children** - a Christian non-profit organization that provides nutritious food to children worldwide,
- **Harriet Tubman Center East** - an organization that assists women, children and families struggling with mental health, relationship violence and substance abuse
- **Jerimiah Program** - an organization with a mission to disrupt the cycle of poverty for single mothers and their children,
- **Meals on Wheels** - a program that delivers meals to individuals at home who are unable to purchase or prepare their own,
- **Progressive Baptist Fishes and Loaves Food Shelf** - which provides emergency food items to anybody in need,
- **Second Harvest Heartland** - a food bank that distributes to community food shelves, emergency grocery pop-ups and meal distribution sites,

- **Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Consociates** - a group that works to advocate, educate and take action to promote social justice in such areas as anti-racism, care for creation, the death penalty, human trafficking, immigration, respect for life etc. and
- **Women's Advocates** - a shelter located in St. Paul that provides assistance and services (e.g., advocacy, clothing, counseling, crisis hotline, meals, transportation etc.) to women and children escaping domestic violence.

The committee members discussed wanting to give parishioners the opportunity to put their faith into action. It was felt that choosing local options for the We Care Campaign might result in parishioners learning about these organizations and then perhaps wanting to volunteer for them. With this in mind, the committee members chose the following local options for the upcoming We Care Campaign: Community Ambassadors Initiative, the Harriet Tubman Center East and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Consociates.

Christine volunteered to submit bulletin announcements regarding the Campaign.

Christine read a thank-you note that Fr. John received from Merrick Community Services regarding the money that the parish sent this organization from the We Care Campaign held the weekend of June 4 - 5, 2022.

### **Strategic Planning**

The committee members renewed their discussion on the parish's strategic plan: *A Road Map for 2024: Strategic Plan for The Church of St. Pascal Baylon St. Paul, MN.*

Mary Weyandt explained that the Parish Council had been working on the strategic plan but that this work was suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said that work resumed on the plan this past year.

The members discussed the following committee excerpt from the plan:

#### **6. Social Justice and Caring**

... to cultivate and support a spirit of Christian discipleship among parishioners so that we fully support the Church's seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching. These are:

- Protecting the life and dignity of the human person
- Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Supporting the Poor and Vulnerable
- Ensuring the Rights of Workers and the Dignity of Work
- Solidarity with our Neighbors
- Care for God's Creation

We carry out this mission by:

- Providing ongoing formation about the Church's themes of Catholic Social Teaching and how these can be applied in our communities
- Engaging with our communities to support our Catholic Social Teachings by helping to respond to the material needs of our communities, working to support laws and regulations that equitably support us all, and providing education and training.
- Communicating and evaluating the caring projects to which the parish to which we have committed and to which we may commit.
- Exploring opportunities to cooperate with neighboring organizations and ecumenical efforts within the East Side of St. Paul.

**Leadership:** Pastor; Pastoral Care Minister; Social Justice and Caring

The members agreed that the committee has already been implementing several of the above-listed items but that they would like to:

- reflect on what the committee has done, what it is doing now and what it should do in the future,
- continue working on the seven themes of Catholic social teaching,
- provide parishioners with opportunities to become involved in doing acts of caring as well as social justice work,
- invite more parishioners to become involved in the work of the committee,
- connect the work of the committee with other areas of the strategic plan (such as hospitality, liturgy etc.) as well as with other parish groups (such as the Adult Faith Formation Team, bible study members, JustFaith program participants etc.) and
- determine whether the work of the committee could tie in with the work of the recent synod process.

Ann, Christine and Mary Huettl volunteered to form a sub-team to work with Mary Weyandt to determine how the committee can implement the above-listed elements from the strategic plan. Mary Weyandt volunteered to arrange a meeting with these volunteers.

It was suggested that time should be added on each month's agenda for the committee members to discuss the implementation of the strategic plan.

Kim mentioned that she had attended a conference this past summer at which she received some materials regarding connecting Catholic social teachings with faith formation that may be a good resource for the committee to use.

### **Next Meeting**

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

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Mary Huettl agreed to lead the prayer.