

**Social Justice and Caring Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, October 6, 2022 (via Zoom)**

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

**Prayer**

The prayer was led by Mary Huettl (Peace Prayer for the Privileged).

**Strategic Plan Work Group Ideas**

Christine reported that the strategic planning sub-team (consisting of Ann, Mary Huettl, Mary Weyandt and herself) has met to discuss how the committee can implement the below-listed Social Justice and Caring-related elements from the parish's strategic plan: *A Road Map for 2024: Strategic Plan for The Church of St. Pascal Baylon St. Paul, MN.*

**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

She reminded the committee members that she had attached the below “Strategic Review #1” document to the meeting agenda for their consideration:

## **STRATEGIC REVIEW #1**

### **ONGOING FORMATION**

- Faith in Action
- Bible Study
- JustFaith - poverty, racial justice, and environmental justice
- Inserts in the Bulletin on various topics
- Bulletin Board
- Social Justice Library
- Joint presentations with Adult Faith Formation

### **RESPONDING TO MATERIAL NEEDS – CARING PROJECTS**

- Merrick Food Distribution
- Progressive Baptist food packing and distribution
- Donation Closet collection and distribution
- We Care collections and Ecumenical collections
- Blood drives
- Feed My Starving Children
- Serving meals at Ramsey County Family Shelter
- Giving Tree and Angel Tree
- Produce Table

### **SUPPORTING LAWS AND REGULATION – WORKING TO CHANGE SYSTEMS**

- Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative
  - Bring It Home Minnesota
  - Gladstone Crossing

### **COOPERATING WITH NEIGHBORING ORGANIZATION AND ECUMENICAL EFFORTS**

- National Night Out
- Partnership with Progressive Baptist Church (previously with Grace Lutheran)

### **IDEAS FROM THE PAST AND FUTURE IDEAS**

- Project Home
- Service opportunity board
- Review web-site re social justice and caring
- Create update of what has been done and determine how to publicize
- Legislative Network (does it still exist?)
- Any connections possible with Isaiah, One Body, Catholic Charities, Archdiocese
- Discipleship Grant from St. Kates

- Presentation on accompaniment
- Faithful Citizenship presentation

Christine stated that the sub-team members determined that, before the committee could position itself to where it would like to be in the future, it would first need to reflect on where it has been. She explained that, in light of this, the sub-team discussed the items on the “Strategic Review #1” document - which lists many of the activities in which the committee has been involved in the past and/or the present.

Mary Weyandt reiterated the desire to have the committee’s work tie in with the Church’s seven themes of Catholic social teaching.

Ann remarked that, at times, doing social justice work can be difficult and requires a lot of effort and that it would be beneficial to expand the committee and/or get more parishioners involved in these efforts so that the parish can live out its Gospel call.

Mary Weyandt noted that the sub-team members discussed the following three ways to expand the number of people involved in the committee and/or social justice work:

1. have each member personally invite somebody to be part of the committee and/or to become involved in any of its work,
2. take the contact information used by various work groups that currently exist (such as volunteers for the American Red Cross blood drive, the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, the Merrick Community Services food distribution ministry, the Progressive Baptist Fishes and Loaves food shelf etc.) to create a social justice-related distribution list that could be used to inform these volunteers about social justice-related opportunities and
3. educate the committee members and/or the parish on the Church’s seven themes of Catholic social teaching with the hope that they will see the connection between these, the Gospels and social justice-related work.

It was suggested that, if the committee were to grow very large as a result of such efforts, it could be divided up into sub-groups based on the activities in which the various members are interested/involved.

It was recommended that the committee resume adding educational inserts in the bulletin on various social justice-related topics - as it has done in the past. It was suggested that the word “educate” be added to the above “Strategic Review #1” document.

The committee members discussed the possibility of partnering with the Adult Faith Formation team to sponsor some social justice-related educational events for the parish - which could be held in person and/or via Zoom - whether in the evening, in-between the masses on Sunday, after the second mass on Sunday etc.

Christine said that, in an effort to remind the members about the Church's seven themes of Catholic social teaching, it was felt that some time could be taken at the beginning of future committee meetings discussing and learning about each of these themes.

### **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 stated that this organization is continuing to conduct informational interviews with city council members and county commissioners regarding housing-related issues.

Ann said that, currently, efforts are being made to get the Metropolitan Council to grant project-based vouchers to units whose landlords contract with public housing agencies to rent to families and individuals with low incomes.

Ann mentioned the importance of relationship-building and noted that some committee members worked toward this by meeting with other members of Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative while visiting the Philippine Center of Minnesota in Maplewood.

### **Donation Closet Recipients**

Kim asked the committee members to confirm that the donation closet recipient for the month of November is Progressive Baptist. They agreed that this was the case. Kim asked Ann if she could let her know Progressive Baptist's needs. Ann agreed to do this.

Kim also asked if the committee would support the Angel Tree ministry (which provides the children of incarcerated parents with Christmas gifts) and Catholic Charities Giving Tree (a program which collects unwrapped gifts for those in need) during the month of December. Fr. John confirmed that the parish would support the Catholic Charities Giving Tree program.

Mary Weyandt agreed to look into the Angel Tree ministry.

### **Produce Giveaway**

Julie reported 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. She stated that she would like to continue this project next summer - perhaps starting to advertise the giveaway in April - inviting parishioners to plant extra produce to give away at the parish during the summer.

### **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, at the last meeting, they had decided on the following options:

- **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.,
- **Harriet Tubman Center East** - an organization that assists women, children and families struggling with mental health, relationship violence and substance abuse and
- **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.

Christine and Fr. John stated that the parish had recently received notice that the San Lucas Tolimán Mission in Guatemala is commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic 3,087 mile/3-month walk that Fr. Greg Schafer, the founder of the mission, (and two others) made from St. Paul to San Lucas in 1972 to raise funds. They said that the San Lucas Tolimán Mission is trying to raise awareness of this ministry and that, although it is not actually re-creating the walk, it hopes to raise \$1,000,000 to continue funding its work by inviting people to sponsor a mile (for \$300.00).

Christine and Fr. John asked if the committee would consider replacing one of the previously chosen options for the October We Care Campaign with the San Lucas Tolimán Mission or if the mission could be chosen as a future We Care Campaign recipient.

The committee members discussed how the parish has various connections to the San Lucas Tolimán Mission - that Fr. Greg Schafer attended the parish school, that, in the past, parishioners used to take trips to serve at the mission and that the parish used to support it regularly via past We Care Campaigns. They felt that, due to these reasons, parishioners might respond well to having this option again in a future We Care Campaign. They decided to choose this as the sole option for the March 2023 We Care Campaign.

The committee members talked about putting an insert in the bulletin about the San Lucas Tolimán Mission that would appeal to parishioners who are already aware of this ministry as well as also to those who may not be familiar with it.

### **Parish Life and Activities Committee**

Mary Weyandt reminded the committee members that the Parish Life and Activities Committee is planning a “Pumpkin Bingo” event on Friday, October 21, 2022, from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. in Brioschi Hall and that parishioners can make reservations to attend via Sign-up Genius.

Kim stated there will be an insert in this weekend’s bulleting about this event.

### **Lilly Grant**

Fr. John announced that parishioner Anne Weyandt reached out to him to inform him that St. Catherine University has received money from the Lilly Endowment to provide \$4,000 grants to

congregations to help them gain clarity about their values/missions and to better understand and serve the communities around them.

He said that he, Kim and Barb Uschold Anderson, the parish's Pastoral Associate for Pastoral Care, discussed three possible ways such grant money could be used and that they shared these with the parish staff and the Parish Council. These ideas are:

1. hosting a dinner on February 18, 2023, after which those in attendance would make cards for the grieving, homebound, sick etc. of the parish,
2. having a banner made advertising the Merrick Community Services food distribution that ministers to those in the neighborhood experiencing food insecurity and
3. improving the recycling efforts in Brioschi Hall. (It was noted that this was a suggestion that was also made by the last JustFaith participants.)

Fr. John remarked that the grant money could also be used to provide training to the parish's pastoral ministry volunteers.

It was also suggested that the money could pay for the events that would have taken place at the parish while Fr. John is on his sabbatical had he received the grant from the Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program to pay for these activities - such as the book club meeting on 7 Keys to Spiritual Wellness: Enriching Your faith by Strengthening the Health of Your Soul by Joe Paprocki, the paint-and-sip event sponsored by Cheers Pablo and the talk on healthy eating and the Mediterranean diet.

Fr. John noted that parishes such as Guardian Angels, Pax Christi and St. Timothy (in Blaine) have benefited from such grants.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, November 3, 2022, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Margaret agreed to lead the prayer.