

**Social Justice and Caring Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, February 2, 2023 (via Zoom)**

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

**Prayer**

The prayer was led by Julie.

**Donation Closet/Possible Merrick Food Drive Collection**

The committee members continued their discussion started at the last meeting regarding the possibility of removing Merrick Community Services as a parish donation closet recipient during the months of March and October due to the fact that this organization provides all the food that gets handed out at the parish's distribution events.

Kim reported that Josh Bao, the Food Services Manager for Merrick Community Services, sent an e-mail to her and Mary Weyandt notifying them that March is Minnesota FoodShare month and he asked them if the parish would be willing to be a food collection site during this month. Kim said that Josh would provide the parish with a letter that could be placed in the bulletin that explains the food drive. The committee members determined that, since the parish partners with Merrick Community Services on its monthly food distribution events, they would like to honor this request and continue to have this organization be the parish donation closet recipient for the month of March. However, they did agree to remove Merrick Community Services as the parish donation closet recipient for the month of October and replace it with another charity.

Since October is Respect for Life month, it was decided that Merrick Community Services would be replaced with Options for Women East, a medical clinic in St. Paul that ministers to/offers free services and resources to women with unexpected pregnancies (such as education and life coaching, pregnancy tests, prenatal care, ultrasounds etc.). Julie volunteered to prepare the advertising for Options for Women East and she and Ann volunteered to deliver the donated items to this organization.

It was proposed that the parish no longer distribute rice bowls due to the fact that fewer of these have been utilized by parishioners over the last several years. It was decided to retain the rice bowls this year but that, next year, parishioners may be encouraged to donate to the April parish donation closet recipient - the Progressive Baptist Church Fishes and Loaves food shelf.

It was noted that, currently, there is no charity chosen as the donation closet recipient for the month of July. The committee members discussed the possibility of collecting items for the parish's National Night Out event that takes place in the month of August - such as the items that get put in to the goodie bags that are distributed to the children who attend (e.g., rubber balls, sidewall chalk etc.) The committee members agreed having this as a donation closet option

would give parishioners another opportunity to get involved in serving the community surrounding the parish via the National Night Out event.

The committee members reviewed the Donation Closet Rotation list and decided upon the following schedule:

- January - Progressive Baptist Church Fishes and Loaves food shelf,
- February - The Listening House,
- March - Merrick Community Services,
- April - Progressive Baptist Church Fishes and Loaves food shelf/Rice Bowls,
- May - Brittany's Place,
- June - The Listening House,
- July - National Night Out outreach,
- August - Brittany's Place,
- September - The Listening House,
- October- Options for Women East,
- November - Progressive Baptist Church Fishes and Loaves food shelf and
- December - Angel Tree Ministry/Catholic Charities Giving Tree.

### **The Listening House**

Christine mentioned that, recently at work, she had attended a virtual meeting with Molly Jalma, the Executive Director of The Listening House. She stated that Molly did a wonderful job discussing the topic of the unsheltered. She recommended inviting Molly to the parish to discuss this issue.

### **Strategic Plan Formation: Rights and Responsibilities**

In response to the decision made by the committee members to take some time at the beginning of each meeting to remind themselves about the Church's seven themes of Catholic social teaching, Ann spoke about the "Rights and Responsibilities" theme. She mentioned that this theme discusses that all humans have the right to:

- life (from conception to natural death),
- clothing,
- education (that allows one to become a productive adult),
- employment (just wages),
- food,
- healthcare,
- shelter,
- social services (to assist those who may not be able to help themselves - such as children, the elderly, immigrants, the mentally/physically ill, orphans, the underemployed, who may be working at a job that does not provide a decent standard of living, the unemployed, widows etc.).

Ann said that the theme reiterates that all are responsible for/have a duty toward:

- family,
- one another and
- society-at-large.

Ann noted Pope John the 23rd's quote, "In human society one man's natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men; the duty, that is, of recognizing and respecting that right. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one's rights and ignore one's duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other."

Ann discussed that there are two sides to the committee - responding to the immediate needs of others (charity) and working for the common good by trying to change unjust systems (social justice). She noted that all are called to respond in some way to assist those in need.

Ann challenged the committee members to think about the below-listed questions.

- Where does one see and hear about rights being violated in the community?
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure that rights are being protected in the community?
- How is God asking that the above-listed duties are being fulfilled?

### **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 reported that:

- several parishioners attended the Rally for Housing that took place at the State Capitol on Wednesday, January 11, 2023,
- the "Bring it Home Minnesota" bill will be heard in the House Housing Committee on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, and that this hearing can be attended in person or on-line,
- there will be a rally in the rotunda of the State Capitol on Monday, March 20, 2023, in support of the "Bring it Home, Minnesota" rent support initiative.

### **We Care Campaign**

Christine reminded the committee members that, for the March 4 - 5, 2023, We Care Campaign, they had agreed to choose the San Lucas Tolimán Mission in Guatemala as the sole option and that, in addition to a bulletin announcement, they had decided to put 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.

Kim stated that, as discussed at the last meeting, Bill drafted both a bulletin announcement and an insert. She said that, with Bill's permission, she is working with Thea Munoz, the parish's Communications & Office Manager, on finalizing the insert. Kim stated that one side of the

insert describes the San Lucas Tolimán Mission and announces that this has been chosen as the sole recipient of the March “We Care Campaign” and that the other side provides a history of the Mission and the parish’s connection to it.

It was agreed that announcements would be placed in the February 19, 2023, and February 26, 2023, bulletins, and that the insert would appear in the March 5, 2023, bulletin.

### **Bulletin Board**

Ann announced that in the February 9, 2023, issue of the parish’s electronic newsletter, the *Pulse*, and the February 12, 2023, bulletin, the “Faith in Action” section will remind parishioners of the committee’s bulletin board and the parish’s library - both located in the gathering space.

It was determined that the table located in front of the bulletin would remain where it is due to the fact that it is so often used.

Mary Huettl said that copies of an anti-racism reading list will be made available on the bulletin board for parishioners to take. It was suggested that some copies of this list also be placed in the kiosk in the gathering space and that it be placed as a bulletin insert as well.

The committee members discussed the possibility of directing parishioners to view the committee’s meeting minutes by putting a link to them in the *Pulse* and/or by putting excerpts from them in the bulletin.

### **Catholic Racial Justice Coalition**

Kim informed the committee members that she had sent them an e-mail a short time prior to the start of the meeting announcing the creation of a Catholic Racial Justice Coalition and that all Catholics are invited to be part of this movement to bring about the end of racism by joining in solidarity with those most impacted by racial injustice. She noted there will be a kick-off event on Saturday, March 18, 2023, from 8:30 - 11:00 a.m. at the Iverson Center for Faith at the University of St. Thomas and that Michael Rios-Keating from Catholic Charities (who was the guest speaker at the parish’s most recent JustFaith program) is the contact for those who may have questions regarding the event.

Kim noted that the JustFaith participants might be interested in this coalition.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, March 2, 2023, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Chris Igielski will lead the prayer.

### **April Meeting**

Kim noted that the committee will not be able to meet on its usual meeting date (the first Thursday of the month) in April due to the fact that it is Holy Thursday. The committee members decided that they will discuss changing the date at the next meeting.