

Minutes

St. Mary Magdalene Social Justice and Peace Committee Meeting

Thurs., Nov. 12, 7 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Lois Campbell, Joyce Rothermel, Jim Ruck, Anne Scheuermann, Evelyn Christie, Linda Burns, Rae O'Hair, Michael Drohan, Josie Bryant, Emily Lippert

Excused: Holly Mohr

Welcome, Introductions, Opening Prayer and Agenda Review

1. Accomplishments since Sept. 16: Letter writing, weekly bulletin input, distribution of mail-in ballot applications at parish pantries, participation in APP Speakers' Series with Deborah Rose-Milavec, participation in Stop Banking the Bomb picket, participation in Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Advocates group, Respect Life month activities – prayers, socks collection, weekly posters at all the churches, Fred Just speaking at all the Masses, showing of the Fr. Martin Talk with discussion about a new ministry for LGBTQ and families, and continued participation in course and conversations on race offered by St. Mary of the Mount parish, support for CAT cultural event on the lawn, attendance at Fr. Matthew's talk, participation in discussion of newest encyclical, Fratelli Tutti. Jim offered to contact Cathy Raffaele about updating the committee's page on the parish website.
2. Monthly Collections: Dec. – laundry detergent; Jan. - cookies; Feb. – toilet paper
3. Letter Writing:

Joyce asked if anyone got a response from the letters we sent to the Bishop. No one received a response.
Nov. 28-29: Topic: Covid relief bill to U.S. Senators; writer: Joyce; 4 PM: Evelyn; 9 AM: Rae and 11 AM: Joyce will ask Sylvia or Mary Jean.
Dec. 19-20: Topic: Moratorium on evictions will be ending – letter to PA Legislators; writer: Linda
Jan. 30-31: Topic – new president and Legislators on expectations for new administration and session; writer: Michael.
4. Anti-Racism Education at St. Mary Magdalene Parish and Its Relationship to the Cultural Action Team
 - A. Website – it was suggested that we identify some additional resources on the Pax Christi website. Holly will identify some entries for the bulletin
 - B. Holly and Vicki Sheridan are working on setting up small discipleship groups on race (studying the Brian Massingale book) during Lent. Lois offered to be a group facilitator. Anyone else?
 - C. The CAT is looking for ideas for outreach to the African American communities in our parish. After Covid restrictions are lifted perhaps we could be involved in some kind of community outreach event. Joyce suggested an interfaith, community event like the Poor Peoples Campaign in conjunction with the Sanctuary Project.
5. Evaluate Respect Month Life Activities and Advent Action
 - All were in agreement that Fred Just's talk on Catholic Social Teaching was helpful.
 - Socks collection results were not known but did not seem as robust as last year's effort for Mary's Child in non-pandemic times!
 - We discussed a possible speaker at the masses on the new encyclical. Since the meeting Joyce discussed this with Fr. Tom and he didn't want to bring in another outside speaker so soon. He was in agreement that we could ask our priests to address it in their homilies during Advent. Joyce will follow up with the other priests.
 - We were planning to host Pgh. Area Pax Christi's annual prayer service to commemorate the murder of the 4 churchwomen in El Salvador on Sun., Dec. 6 at 5 PM at St. James Church with livestreaming on Facebook. This is the 40th anniversary of the event. However, a family member of one of the women has expressed interest in participating if the event would be virtual. See the bulletin for the latest on these plans. It will be a zoom event!
 - The Angel Trees were put up at St. Bede, Mother of Good Counsel and St. James churches. If you are not attending church in person, you can make a donation via Faith Direct or your envelope. You can also purchase gift cards and leave them at the rectory or in the baskets in the churches.
6. Community Outreach Updates
 - A. The Sanctuary Project: The gun buy-back program will be on Sat., Dec. 5th at the Borough Building/Police Station from 10-1:00. People will receive \$50 for a handgun and \$25 for a rifle. The police chief is trying to get some money from the county as well. The MLK celebration will be on Jan. 18th at 1:00. It will be a motorcade this year with stops at several locations in the borough for prayers and comments. The annual art and talent show for youth will be in March. It will be pre-recorded. Several churches in Wilkinsburg pray for the people of Wilkinsburg outside the church on the first Saturday of the month at 3:00. Evelyn will check with our priests to see if SMM would like to be involved. The next date is Dec. 5th. (Ours could be at 3:30 PM preceding the 4 PM Mass.)
 - B. Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Advocates: Lois reported that the group is moving in two directions. First, to prevent evictions. Flyers have been distributed to the magistrate's office and a few other locations. More flyers will be distributed locally and an article will be submitted to the Wilkinsburg Sun paper. A meeting was set up with the

magistrate but it had to be postponed. Secondly, to promote home ownership by moderate income residents, a planning group is being put together consisting of people representing different groups in the borough and non-profits that promote home ownership. The goal would be to come up with a plan. The borough has recently employed a consultant to work on identifying houses that should be brought to sheriff's sale while they are still in good enough condition to be renovated. She will also work with potential buyers of low or moderate income.

7. Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign Petition: If you have not signed the petition asking PNC to stop making loans to corporations that make nuclear weapons please go to the website www.abetterpncbnk.org to read and consider signing it. Please ask others to as well.

Upcoming pickets: Sat., Nov. 21 at PNC in Sewickley

Sat., Dec. 5 at 11 AM, PNC on 5136 Rt., 30 in Greensburg

Sat., Dec. 19 at 11 AM at the PNC on Forbes Avenue in Squirrel Hill

Sat., Jan. 2, 11 AM at PNC in Mt. Lebanon

Sat., Jan. 16, 11 AM at PNC, Southside, 18th and E. Carson Streets

A resolution has been filed for the 2021 PNC shareholders meeting to bring the issue to the attention of all the shareholders.

8. Move the Money Campaign: This is a national campaign to reduce the military budget by 50%. Bills that reduced the budget by 10% were supported by Doyle and Casey but did not pass. A local chapter has been formed. Some people are approaching elected officials on Pittsburgh City Council to discuss supporting this. Anyone interested in going to talk to his/her council person should talk to Joyce. Anne and Linda live in the city.

9. Report on Guidelines for the parish related to reducing single use plastics: Anne reported that the ministry center reduced plastic bag use by half last month. She is hoping that people will bring the bags back this month. Jim suggested offering an incentive such as being entered into a raffle for a gift card. Joyce offered to help with this at this month's distributions. Work on reduction of plastic use at parish events was put on hold during the virus. Anne and Lois are still interested in cutting out all Styrofoam, and exploring getting a dishwasher so that real plates and silverware could be used.

10. Announcements: Global Solidarity Committee support, participation in Fair Trade Sale; help with pickups on Dec. 12-13, attend Nov. 22 Zoom at 5 PM for educational event on Global Solidarity Partners; continue participation in Zoom study group of the new encyclical on Tuesday evenings from 7 – 8 PM until the end of the year. If interested in helping with Fair Trade pickup on Dec. 12 and 13 contact at elippert2015@gmail.com.

Linda reported that Carlow's Social Justice Institute has a number of interesting programs online including one coming up on criminal justice reform.

Josie reported that there has been a significant increase in drug overdoses in the Homewood area.

Rae reported that the Thomas Merton Center's New Person award event will be virtual on Nov. 29, 2020. See details on their website: www.thomasmertoncenter.org

Next Meeting: Thursday, Jan. 14th, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via zoom