

St. Mary Magdalene Social Justice and Peace Committee Meeting Minutes

Thurs., Jan. 14, 7 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Lois Campbell, Virginia Cook, Joyce Rothermel, Jack O'Malley, Anne Scheuermann, Michael Drohan, Linda Burns, Denise Charron-Prochownik, Emily Lippert

Excused: Evelyn Christie (couldn't get into the meeting) Holly Mohr, Jim Ruck, Virginia Sheridan

Welcome, Introductions, Opening Prayer and Agenda Review

1. Accomplishments since Nov. 12: Letter writing, weekly bulletin input, support of our Social Ministry Center, participation in APP Speakers' Series with Massimo Faggioli, participation in Stop Banking the Bomb picket, participation in Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Advocates group, discussion of Fratelli Tutti and distribution of 40 copies, participation in CAT meetings, update of our committee page on parish website (thanks, Cathy and Jim), participation in Pax Christi's commemoration of the martyrdom of the 4 church women in El Salvador, support of Fair-Trade effort in Advent, support for the Angel Tree project and the Global Solidarity Partners Fair Trade Fair.
2. Monthly Collections: Jan. - cookies; Feb. - cereal; March - toilet paper, and April - ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise.
3. Letter Writing:
Dec. 19-20: Topic: Moratorium on evictions will be ending - letter to PA Legislators. Responses received from Sen. Jay Costa
Jan. 30-31: Topic - new president regarding expectations for new administration; writer: Michael. 4 PM Mass - Evelyn; 9 AM Mass - Virginia; 11 AM Mass - possibly Mary Jean
Feb. 27-28: Topic - increase in minimum wage; Writer - Lois; 4 PM Mass - _____;
9 AM Mass - _____; and 11 AM Mass - _____
March 27-28: Topic - _____; Writer - _____; 4 PM - _____;
9 AM: _____; 11 AM - _____
Another possible topic is mortgage foreclosures.
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. Discussed Lenten book study schedule for Fr. Bryan Massingale's book, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*. Possible dates would be 6 Tuesday evenings (7 - 8:30 PM from 2/23 to 3/30/21. Vicki has offered to organize this and Lois offered to help. (Wednesdays, 7 - 8:30 am is being offered as another alternative.) Watch the bulletin for details on how to register.
 - C. The CAT is having a discussion on Fr. James Martin's book, "Building a Bridge-How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity" (revised and expanded), on Monday, Feb. 1. All are welcome. Vicki is setting up a meeting with someone from the Lexington diocese to discuss how they have moved forward on this issue in the diocese.
5. Update on Justice and Peace Committee at St. Jude's - How Can We Work Together? Jack O'Malley, from Sacred Heart church (now St. Jude parish) attended the meeting to talk about the new Social Justice and Peace committee in his parish. The committee meets every other week and is planning to have an event every month that ties in with the liturgical calendar. They will have a virtual prayer service on MLK day at 7:00 PM. Jack's contact information is jsomalley@gmail.com. We discussed how the two groups could share letter-writing each month. Jack will share the calendar of events with our group. We could publicize each other's events in the respective bulletins.
6. Lenten Planning: (Feb. 17-April 3). As discussed above, there will be a discussion of Fr. Bryan Massingale's book. The Global Solidarity committee will plan for almsgiving. The Worship committee usually plans the weekly stations of the cross, asking each committee to lead one week. We would be willing to participate. The theme of racism was suggested for our week. Another suggestion was the theme of Just Mercy. We could show the movie by that name one week and have a discussion the next week. We might do it in conjunction with St. Jude parish. The week of March 15th was suggested as a possible week to show the movie.
7. Community Outreach:
 - A. The Sanctuary Project: 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. Is this continuing? Joyce requested that we participate with others from the

Sanctuary project to plan a Poor People's Campaign – town hall for Wilkinsburg. The Gun Buy Back was completed again this year.

- B. Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Advocates Update: The group continues to meet. It has distributed information on help available for those who can't pay the rent due to Covid. The group is also pursuing ways to help renters in Wilkinsburg buy property. The Borough now has a part-time person working on moving abandoned properties to sheriff's sale and identifying people who might wish to buy them. There is a new Borough manager. This represents progress for Wilkinsburg in dealing with vacant properties. Another avenue being explored is using Section 8 money to buy a house and not just for rent. Not many people know that Section 8 money can be spent this way. Anne reported that there has been an uptick in calls to the ministry center for rent assistance. We have sufficient funds to help people until the middle of the year thanks to a grant we received. One member of the group is moving to a position at Hosanna House dealing with affordable housing.
 - C. Petitions for City and County Referendums: Lois reported that she has petitions to sign on a city referendum on banning no-knock warrants and a county referendum on restricting the use of solitary confinement at the county jail. She will send out the petitions to the group via email. These are needed by the end of the month.
 - D. Food distribution at the ministry center is still way up. The center got some help from the Food Bank—money to purchase food (\$10,000) and two new refrigeration units.
8. Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign and Upcoming Events
- A. Fri., Jan. 22 at 11:30 AM – Rally at PNC, Fifth and Wood downtown celebrating the International Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons calling on the US to sign it. That evening from 7 – 9 PM, 54-minute video to learn about the treaty and discuss it. It is sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom)
 - B. Shareholders Meeting resolution update: Two religious groups have submitted a resolution for consideration at this year's PNC Shareholders meeting in April requiring PNC to provide a report to the shareholders about the human rights impacts and risks to PNC of their current investments in companies that make nuclear weapons.
 - C. Consider signing petition at www.abetterpncbnk.org and making a comment regarding nuclear weapons abolition.
9. Move the Money Campaign Update: Joyce reported that there is a move to get Pittsburgh City Council to request a decrease in spending for the military and an increase in spending on cities of our Congressional delegation. Any parish members who live in the city can participate once a hearing is scheduled and/or meetings with city council members.
10. APP Spring Speakers Series: Sun., Feb. 21 at 1 PM on Fratelli Tutti (Bill Huebsch); Thurs., March 18 at 7 PM on Racism with Barbara Johnson; Thurs., April 22 at 7 PM on the Church after COVID-19 (panel); Wed., May 19 on How Can We Be Church? With Phyllis Zagano. Register at www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com
11. Other and Announcements: Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit will be on Jan. 22 and 23 online. Rae announced that there is a series on Netflix called Rectify which came out in 2013 and is about the Innocence Project. There is a film about the psychology of Donald Trump called Unfit on Amazon Prime.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 4th

Minutes submitted by Emily Lippert