

St. Mary Magdalene Social Justice and Peace Committee Meeting Minutes
Wed., May 12, 3:30 PM via Zoom

Welcome, Introductions, Opening Prayer and Agenda Review

Present: Joyce Rothermel, Lois Campbell, Holly, Mohr, Emily Lippert, Rae O'Hair, Evelyn Christie

Absent due to conflicts: Linda Burns, Virginia Cook, Anne Scheuermann

1. Accomplishments since March 4: Showing of Film, "Just Mercy", Way of the Cross, letter writing for March and April, weekly bulletin and newsletter input, support of our Social Ministry Center – outreach for vaccinations against Covid-19 virus and distributed info about upcoming primary elections, participation in APP Speakers' Series – Barbara Johnson and Panel on Church after Covid-19, participation in Stop Banking the Bomb pickets and PNC shareholders press conference and meeting, participation in Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Advocates, Sanctuary Project, CAT meetings, small Lenten discussion groups on race, and planning of LGBTQ ministry, unemployment compensation rallies in March and May, formation of Walk Team and fundraising outreach; stimulus proceeds initiative and participation.
2. Monthly Collections: June - cookies; July- rice; August – paper towels (Evelyn will check with Veronica to see if they want to participate in these monthly collections.)
3. Letter Writing: May 22-23: Topic – Fair Districting in PA; Writer – Post cards from Fair Districts PA; 4 PM - Evelyn; 9 AM – Mary Jean ?; 11 AM – Sylvia ?
June 26-27: Topic – Police Reform bill (George Floyd bill); Writer - Holly; 4 PM: Evelyn;
9 AM - Lois; 11 AM - Holly
July 24-25: Topic – Situation in Israel/Palestine ; Writer – Michael ?; 4 PM - Evelyn;
9 AM - Lois and 11 AM – Sylvia ?
Fr. Tom would like the posters removed after letter writing weekend. Currently the posters are only at St. Bede and Mother of Good Counsel churches. We would like one at St. James. Joyce will ask Mary Jean.
4. Anti-Racism Education at St. Mary Magdalene Parish: It was brought up that Fr. Matthew's statement on Black Lives Matter should be on our parish website and, if possible, put in the bulletin at some point. It is fairly long so it might not work in bulletin but could be divided and put into more than one bulletin. We discussed whether any groups are planning something for a Juneteenth celebration (June 19, 2021). Sr. Barbara and an ecumenical group are planning an event on that day in the Hill Top neighborhood from 9-1:00. Holly will check with them to see if there is anything we could replicate or that we could join in with. We should talk to CAT to see if anything is planned or if we could plan something together. Joyce will talk to Linda and Jennifer from CAT. Evelyn will contact pastor Janet from the Sanctuary Project to see if anything is being planned in Wilkinsburg. On June 5th at 2:00 there will be a celebration for the closing of Corpus Christi worship site. It will be outdoors and will give people who worshiped there a chance to say "goodbye" which they couldn't do because the church closed during the Covid shutdown.
It would be good to make some long range plans with CAT for yearly events. This will be brought up by any of our group members who attend CAT meetings at the next CAT meeting.
5. Plan for Greater Dissemination of Catholic Social Teaching
Discussed that Fr. Matthew is an excellent source for this topic. Lois will talk to him about his ideas for how to incorporate Catholic Social Teaching into regular masses. Another suggestion was to have an outside speaker such as Jim McCarville.
6. LGBTQ Ministry Update:
This group discussed having a formal statement for the parish which would welcome LGBTQ people. Some people felt that it was premature to make such a statement since not all people in the parish are on the same page and the Church itself is giving mixed messages. A student from Carlow University joined St. Mary Magdalene after the presentation there by Fr. Tom and Vicki. There will be a discussion of the book, God and the Gay Christian, by Matthew Vines at the next CAT meeting on June 7th.
7. Walk for a Healthy Community – Sat., June 26
The walkers have surpassed the goal of raising \$20,000 and the goal was raised to \$25,000. The ministry center pantry spends about \$1500-2000 per month on food from the Greater Pgh. Food Bank every month. The money raised will be divided between our two pantries based on need. The walk will be on June 26th at 9:00 a.m. from St. James Social Ministry building to Holy Rosary food pantry and back (optional for those who can walk that far).
8. Community Outreach Updates:

- A. The Sanctuary Project: There will be some summer internship possibilities (Earn to Learn). Jody Guy will be working on getting two internships. She is a local artist. There is a planning meeting next week. The age group has not been specified yet but it probably be 14-21 years or 18-25 years old. We could look into getting an intern for the Ministry Center. Evelyn will share the information with Anne. The group talked about resuming the first Saturday prayers for peace in Wilksburg. There are chaplains available to go to crisis events in the community and help people cope with the tragedy. The vaccination distribution was very successful with 880 people receiving vaccines. The distribution at St. James was less successful with only about 30 people receiving vaccines. UPMC was very pleased and will send \$3,000 to the Sanctuary Project. Johnson and Johnson vaccines are available every Tuesday from 10-1:00 at Hosanna House.
 - B. Wilksburg Affordable Housing Advocates: Flyers were distributed inviting people to a workshop on home ownership sponsored by Pittsburgh Housing Development Association and Dollar Bank. Steve Helner-Burris is now working for Hosanna House. He is identifying houses for redevelopment and lining up developers. There is now some money available to hire someone to work with perspective buyers.
 - C. Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign: The issue of stopping the funding of nuclear weapons was raised at the shareholders meeting but the resolution did not pass. The group has met some good people interested in the issue such as the religious sisters who brought up the resolution at the shareholders meeting. The attendance at monthly demonstrations is still good. The next one is in Greensburg on Sat., May 22 at 11 AM. There is talk about expanding the effort to include other banks which also loan money to nuclear weapons manufacturers.
 - D. Move the Money Campaign: County Council passed the Move the Money will of council resolution. The city hearing had a very poor turnout.
 - E. Unemployment Compensation in PA: There was an action last week at the governor's office in Pittsburgh and also the one in Philadelphia. There were about 100 people at the Pittsburgh rally including 7 legislators. The demands were: 1) Don't start new computer software system yet as this will add confusion to an already difficult situation, and 2) Pay people an unemployment benefit while they wait for determinations because there are still thousands of people waiting to hear if they qualify and the state will not be able to catch up on the backlog.
 - F. Get Out the Vote: Primary election is on Tuesday, May 18th.
9. SW PA Bread for the World Workshop on Sat., May 15 from 9:30 AM – Noon via zoom (includes racial wealth gap simulation and topic for 2021 Offering of Letters)

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 7th at 3:30 via Zoom