

St. Mary Magdalene Social Justice and Peace Committee Meeting
Wed., July 7, 3:30 PM via Zoom

Welcome, Opening Prayer by Joyce and Agenda Review – item about Amazon protest added by Rae
Present: Jim Ruck, Rae O’Hare, Emily Lippert, Evelyn Christie, Kristie Stagno, Fr. Matthew Hawkins, and Joyce Rothermel
Excused: Lois Campbell, Anne Scheuermann, Virginia Cook, Michael Drohan, and Holly Mohr

1. Accomplishments since May 12: publishing of info about Juneteenth and reprint of article by Fr. Matthew, participation in the Bread for the World Advocacy Workshop/Racial Wealth Gap Simulation; participation in CCOC Masses and panel discussions, weekly bulletin and newsletter input, support of our Social Ministry Center, participation in Stop Banking the Bomb pickets, participation in Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Advocates, Sanctuary Project, CAT meetings, planning of LGBTQ ministry, participation in *God and the Gay* Christian book study; walking and helping to raise \$26,000 for parish pantries, letter writing on PA fair districts and in support of George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021, attendance in talk for Phyllis Zagano, participation and support for Discerning Deacons project, participation in voting rights rally, and Amazon protest
2. Monthly Collections: August – paper towels, Sept. – canned sweet potatoes and pumpkin; and Oct. – fruit and vegetable juices (54 oz.). Holy Rosary Pantry declined distribution of these items at its pantry.
3. Letter Writing: July 24-25: Topic – Situation in Israel/Palestine *; Writer – Michael; 4 PM - Evelyn; 9 AM - _____ and 11 AM – Sylvia? Aug. 28-29; Topic – Senate Inaction (SB 1 – voting rights, Family Bill, Infrastructure, etc.), writer – Linda Burns; 4 PM – Evelyn; 9 AM - _____ and 11 AM - _____; Sept. 25-26: Topic – Child Tax Credit Permanent and Global Nutrition; writers – Kristie and Joyce; 4 PM – Evelyn, 9 AM - _____ and 11 AM - _____.
4. Anti-Racism Education at St. Mary Magdalene Parish: Consideration/Planning for Racial Wealth Gap Simulation (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 Aug. CAT meeting.) Group members who have participated in this in the past spoke about the impact. Most felt that it would be better if done in person but could be done over Zoom. Rev. Liddy Barlow of Christian Associates of Southwest PA has offered to run the simulation for any groups that are interested. Joyce will contact her to see if there are dates in September that would work. The group felt an evening time was better than a weekend time.
5. Plan for Greater Dissemination of Catholic Social Teaching: Fr. Matthew led the discussion on this topic. We discussed that many Catholics are unfamiliar with Catholic Social Teaching or have been turned off by it as it relates to politics. The homily is specifically related to the readings that day so may or may not fit with a theme related to social teaching. We discussed using the bulletin, newsletter, and website to provide information related to social teaching. One way would be to have people who utilize our social ministry center to share their stories. In this way, individual problems could be put into the context of broader social problems. We also discussed having another series of discussions on Zoom about Pope Francis’ book, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* possibly during Respect Life month.
6. LGBTQ Ministry Update: The LGBTQ ministry group continues to meet to discern its direction. Fr. Tom approved having the group become an official ministry of the parish. A statement explaining what the group has been doing and what it intends to do next was drafted and will be sent to the Parish Council so members are aware of what is happening with this new parish ministry. The Parish Council will not meet again until September. The group plans to have a Zoom call with members of a similar ministry that has been operating for a long time in the diocese of Memphis. That meeting will be on Tuesday, July 13th at 7:00 p.m.
7. Community Outreach Updates:
 - A. The Sanctuary Project: Will not be meeting over the summer.
 - B. Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Advocates: Is working on identifying low-income people in Wilkinsburg who might be interested in buying a home. There are several groups in the community that provide support such as workshops for potential home buyers. Section 8 Housing funds can be used to buy a home as well as to rent. Many people are not aware of this. There has recently been a move by some people in the community to merge with the city of Pittsburgh. There is a petition for people to sign that was initiated by the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC). This does not have the support of the Borough Council.
 - C. Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign: Next event will be on Sat., July 17th at 11:00 a.m. at the PNC in Oakland (4031 Fifth Ave.)
 - D. Update on Unemployment Compensation in PA: The new computer system was put into effect and there have been a lot of problems with it. The requirement that people show they have been looking for work is going back into effect. This was suspended during the pandemic.

- E. Amazon Protest: Churchill residents are organizing in protest to the planned Amazon distribution facility on the old Westinghouse site in Churchill. There are several issues: environmental impact - loss of trees, etc., increased traffic, health of local residents, infrastructure damage.
7. New Business: Possible Labor Day Speaker – If approved, will ask Lois to speak relating Catholic Social Teaching to current labor issues.

Announcements: Aug. 3 is Critical Needs Giving Day hosted by the Pittsburgh Foundation. Please donate to St. Mary Magdalene Social Ministries and encourage others. Watch for more details.

Association of Pittsburgh Priests (APP) Speaker Series

- On Sept. 8th Bishop Stowe will speak on synodality, 7 PM, register at www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com
- Oct. 7 Marie Dennis on Peace Begets Peace at 7 PM
- In November 3, Fr. Matthew will speak about being black and Catholic at 7 PM

Next Meeting: Wed., Sept. 1 at 3:30 PM

*The letter writing topic for July was changed to requesting the Biden administration to provide support for the people of Haiti following the assassination of the president.