

**St. James Social Justice and Peace Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2017, 7 PM in the Chapel**

In attendance: Emily Lippert, Jean Burns, Rae O’Hair, Michael Drohan, Tabetha Mwita, Evelyn Christie, and Joyce Rothermel    Excused: Cathy Raffaele and Lois Campbell

**Welcome, Introductions and Opening Prayer**

1. **Accomplishments since our last meeting:** food/paper product collections; volunteering at the Food Bank in Duquesne; monthly letter writing; sacred conversation on race; March Against the War; volunteer weekend; speaker at Mosque; Ramadan participation; Speaker Tina Whitehead on Summer Crisis in Jerusalem, Labor Day participation; 2017-18 Social Ministries Budget
2. **Pantry Collection:** Sept. – soup (boxed, cans); Oct. – crackers for soup; Nov. – canned sweet potatoes; Dec. – laundry detergent
3. **Monthly Letter Writing:** Sept. 23-24; Topic: Dignity for Incarcerated Women; Writer - Tabetha; 5:30 PM - Evelyn; 10 AM - Emily, Oct. 28-29; Topic: Local – Restorative Justice; Writer - Joyce; 5:30 PM - Evelyn; 10 AM - Emily; Nov. 18-19; Topic: Gentrification; Writer – Lois (?) 5:30 PM - Evelyn; 10 AM - Joyce  
(Lois had suggested the state budget for Sept., but we are hoping it will be settled by letter writing weekend.)
4. **Film Series on Tuesdays in October:** We have 4 films for the series and believe they will go well with Respect Life month. We are looking for a copy of the film, 13<sup>th</sup>. Jim will prepare the flyer and we will advertise to all three parishes.
5. **Respect Life Month:** Oct. 21-22 Theme – Restorative Justice; Speaker – Jim; Prayers - Joyce; Oct. Letter Writing: see above; Other: bulletin stuffer on PA provided by Karen Clifton.
6. **Social Ministry 3 Parish Meeting on Wed., Sept. 27 at 7 PM:** Eugenia Moore (St. Charles), Perry Blatz (St. Bede), Lois, Josie and Joyce will meet next Wed. to prepare the agenda for the end of the month meeting. We hope all St. James social ministries will be represented.
7. **Volunteer Responses to Date – Follow-Up:** Evelyn is following up on ministry center responses. Joyce will follow up on letter writing and peace and social justice.
8. **Sanctuary Project and Weekly Vigil Updates:** Evelyn reported on the Sanctuary Project meeting on Sept. 12. Two women from Mary’s Child have successfully participated in their programs relating to getting GED’s and getting employment. Block Watch meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. They will be having a program on Human Trafficking. Wilksburg officials often attend the Block Watch meetings.
9. **Ministry Center and Stone Soup Garden:** Over the summer the pantry was understaffed. Evelyn hopes there will be enough volunteers this Sat. She is looking for someone who can make calls ahead to ensure a sufficiently staffed pantry distribution. The Pittsburgh Food Bank is hoping to start a Produce to People program in Wilksburg and are looking for a site and community partners. Michael reported that he had 8 volunteers who cultivated 17 beds at Stone Soup this season. They are joining Grow Pittsburgh. GP has been a big help this season. GP tested the soil and it is good. Josie encourages Michael to get in touch with the organization, Community Forge that is just down the street from the garden in the old Johnson School.
10. **PIIN Update:** Rae, Lois, Jean and Josie attended a meeting on gentrification in Wilksburg earlier in the day (Sept. 13). Rae shared a grid chart that was used that identifies officials, churches, consultants, organizations, developers, etc. Another meeting is planned. Emily expressed interest in participating. She will contact Lois.
11. **Advent** – A speaker on DACA. This would also be our letter writing topic. Weekend of Dec. 16-17.

## 12. Old Business

A. Peace Pole – Joyce contacted April Perry, principal of Sister Thea Bowman Catholic Academy. She was very receptive and will recruit teachers and students. She is asking Bob to bring over the old pole to the school. Joyce is also passing on info to her about becoming a peace site as Christine had suggested. Maybe the two ideas can be combined.

B. Parish Updates: Joyce will write a piece telling about the meaning and purpose of the monthly Haiti envelope. Joyce will ask David to write a piece about volunteering on the St. James Team at the Gr. Pgh. Community Food Bank. Tabetha will write one about the corporal works of mercy.

## 14. New Business

A. Hosting an Immigrant or Immigrant Family – Ad-Hoc Committee to be formed. Some folks from St. James went to the Catholic Charities training. We had a request to host a legal immigrant family over the summer but were not ready. This committee will learn all that is involved for the parish to consider. This maybe an activity that all three of our merging parishes can participate in, in the future.

B. Just Harvest Dinner: Oct. 25. Dinner Participation; We like to have a table. Contact Kristie Stagno at 412-431-8960 x 113.

C. Merton Award Dinner: Nov. 20. Ad and Dinner Participation; We agreed to do a business card size ad for \$100. Joyce will ask Cathy to prepare it. This year's awardee is the Center for Constitutional Rights.

D. Partners in Progress: Fundraiser at Harp and Fiddle – Nov. 4; Silent Auction Items are needed. Can anyone help?

E. The next speaker in the APP Speakers' Series is John Haught. It is on Faith and Evolution, 7 PM at Kearns Spirituality Center on Monday, Oct. 2.

## Announcements:

- The Battle of Homestead Foundation is putting on a play entitled, "The Homestead Strike of 1892". It is sold out for the coming weekend but there are still seats available for Sept. 22 and 23.
- Rae has brochures of upcoming trips to Vietnam and Cuba. Contact her for details.

Fr. Taylor requested that we consider moving our meeting date since Stewardship and Worship are meeting on the same night as our committee. We moved our next meeting to the first Wed. of November. Since it is a Holy Day, we will meet at 5:30 PM so people may attend 7 PM Mass that evening.

Next Meeting: Wed., Nov. 1, 5:30 PM in the School Library (so people may attend 7 PM Mass for the Holy Day