

**Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Minutes, December 1, 2020, via Zoom**

Present: Chris Rehmann, Chuck Glatz, Kathy Trahanovsky, Mary Ellen Wishart, Francis Todey, Fr. John Herzog, Dave Dirks, Tom Budnik, Paula Friederich

Guest: STA Deacon Frank Montabon

Prayer: Chris

Dear Jesus,

**Lay your wounded hand upon my weary head,
and teach me to have courage in the paths that I must tread.
Bless me, and bless see these crosses
bravely borne by us will keep us close to You.
And if at times a shadow falls in unexpected ways,
put Your gentle hand in mine and guide me through the days.
So bless my people , one and all, with Your protecting grace,
and impart to them Your wisdom before they meet You face to face.
(author unattributed)**

Note: The usual structure of the meeting was interrupted in order to accommodate our Deacon, Frank, who had further obligations that evening.

Business:

Welcoming of the LGBTQ Community into STA:

Discussion:

Frank explained that Fr. Kyle has perceived a need and would like to pursue a way of welcoming the Catholic LGBTQ community of people to STA.

As part of this effort Frank reported that STA /ISU is considering whether to sponsor a speaker, Hudson Byblow, to present in Ames. Mr.Byblow is a Catholic lay person, who is Canadian, is an educator and is highly regarded internationally for his presentations on numerous subjects of Catholic life, including homosexuality, as it relates to the church. Frank and Fr. Kyle consulted SJC to gauge our initial reactions and potential support to bring Mr. Byblow.

It was universally agreed that we, at STA, as Christians, should do more in ministering to the LGBTQ community and its individuals. But how?

There were immediate questions about the content and direction of Mr. Byblow's presentation. Chuck did a cursory internet search as the discussion progressed and reported that it "looked-like" Mr. Kudlow's approach is essentially "love the sinner, hate the sin," i.e. "love the person but not the act."

The committee expressed various concerns about this, with various animation. Some were concerned about how this would be perceived by the parish community and recalled how we have been only marginally successful with this in the past. At the same time, we don't know how to gauge who might be offended by what?

Some expressed, additionally, that the message to "be loved and love but not engage sexually," is ineffective and not welcoming; not sufficiently pastoral. (although we didn't have any better ideas)

Without more information, it was assumed by all that Mr. Byblow is faithful and correct in his rendering of the church teaching as it is now.

No conclusions or recommendations were decided. Deacon Frank will convey our discussion to Fr. Kyle for consideration. SJC individuals will research Mr. Byblow individually and provide further input as requested.

Note: Due to the length of the earlier discussion, some of the agenda items were abbreviated or not addressed, and will be discussed later.

COVID- 19 Emergency Fund.

Kathy reports that there is a balance of \$4000 -\$5000 in the fund. There were \$9000 of requests in a single week recently. United Way was able to provide some funding but the need and the need for donations continues.

AMOS: Chris reports that the Ames cluster is trying to determine how best and where to establish housing for those in need.

Bridge Home (ERP): Dave reported that one of the priorities of the capital campaign is to establish a day-care center in the community for current residents and non- residents.

Faith Formation:

We strongly recommend that we move forward with creating a community for small groups.

Next meeting: January 5, at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Friederich

Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Minutes of 11/10/2020, via Zoom

Present: Chris Rehmann, Chuck Glatz, Kathy Trahanovsky, Mary Ellen Wishart, Fr John Herzog, Dave Dirks, Felicity Douglas, Francis Todey, Tom Budnik, Paula Friederich

Prayer: Chris

Minutes of October 6 : Approved with one change of sentence placement.

Worldly Goods Sale: The sale is scheduled for December 5-6, but will not be set up in the church this year. Parishioners are encouraged to shop at the store but online shopping through the store's Facebook page is preferred.

COVID-19 Emergency Fund for Immigrants:

Kathy reports that approximately \$140,000 has been donated to date and the fund has a remaining balance of approximately \$6,000. Fundraising remains a priority as the need for assistance is expected to increase during the coming months.

The LYN website includes an application form for this COVID relief fund.

AMOS: Chris reports that the regional political candidate forum (via Zoom) was well attended and productive. Chris noted that Cindy Axne, who was one of the participants, won her election.

Chris also has attended a seminar in which a political scientist was the featured speaker. The book title "New Class Divide" is recommended reading for those interested in community and social justice issues.

Additionally, AMOS is also seeking to engage with the new Ames Police Chief about local issues and concerns.

SJC/STA: Chuck et al discussed ways in which the activities of the Social Justice Committee might become more visible and promoted throughout the STA community.

Kathy asked if we have information from the Time and Talent registration tabulated and what interest was shown in the SJC.

Dave suggests that we inquire whether it is possible to tabulate the "clicks" on the SJC or related activities from the STA website, as a potential tool to gauge what is the level of interest in our congregation.

It was agreed that we need to further engage and coordinate with the Student Social Justice and the Stewardship committees. Chris will make the appropriate contacts to inquire further. **Black Lives Matter:** Chris will ask Bobby about the possibility of placing some sort of signage on STA property promoting this movement.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: December 1 at 6:30 pm.,

Minutes respectfully submitted by Paula Friederich

Minutes of October 6 Social Justice Committee Meeting

Meeting Convened 6:00 pm

Present: John Herzog, Chris Rehmann, Francis Todey, Mary Ellen Wishart, Tom Budnick, Paula Friederich, Kathy Trahanovsky, Chuck Glatz

Minutes of September Meeting were approved.

Bridge Home Interviews Frances participated in Bridge Home interview. He explained as far as he knew that the name change from ERP and goals going forward were from the vision of the new Director (Jodi Stumbo). His interview focused on what he and the community knew about them. They seem to be looking to see if there would be community support for a \$10 million expansion for offices and housing including for families. Taking a broader view of dealing with homelessness and the causes. Kathy reported that Dave Dirks is part of their fundraising planning. Paula was also interviewed. She was told it was a necessary rebranding because they were thinking the ERP had some negative connotations in the community.

Story County Emergency Immigrant Fund. Over \$130,000 has been distributed. Some are working again. Sisters of St. Francis, Dubuque granted \$6000 to the fund after proposal by Chuck. Chris asked about publicizing in bulletin. Tom encourages sending Bobby news of the grant. Chuck will prepare an announcement.

MICA Food Drive. Tom reported on Bob and Bonnie Galena being willing to restart the MICA Food Drive again. But some work needs to be done on how it is to be done. He reported on what St. Cecilia's has been doing.

Season of Creation. 55 in attendance. Music group led by Jackie Comito was great as was the day. Tom was pleased to see the joint effort. Undertaking was supported by Fr. Kyle and Fr. Don and Peter and Paul were invited and at least one attended from there.

AMOS Candidate Meeting. Chris, Kathy, Paula, Mary Ellen, Shirley Riney and Mary Jo Pfeifer Wulf attended. Jodi Stumbo noted that in the next 3 months Iowa could see 70,000 evictions if something is not done.

AMOS Report: Get out the vote effort, Students are being urged by campus Ministry, Joe Weiers is doing his four-part responsible citizenship. Paul Pate will be doing an interview with them and Chris will send out link. Cluster reported on search for new Police Chief. AMOS looking to get meeting with City Manager to discuss this and Chris will mail out what he has. Witness will no longer be source of information as it has shut down after 99 years.

Brainstorm New Actions Mary Ellen noted Romero House is open. Call out for visitation to Hardin County Jail where undocumented have been held. And she listened to a program on the new encyclical "Fratelli Tutti". Kathy suggested we read it and see if it merits a program. Chuck will attach the encyclical document to the minutes. Tom reported that Fr. Kyle and Deacon Frank are interested in doing something with the LGBT group and Frank will seek spot on agenda in future.

Tom noted that the funds for a second truck have been sent to Honduras using an anonymous donation (from Philadelphia). LYN maximum has been raised to \$400 and some procedures have changed.

Next Meeting Nov. 10 at 6 via Zoom (Chuck to set up)

Meeting Adjourned. 7:01

Minutes of the Meeting of the Social Justice Committee—September 1, 2020

Attendees: Mary Ellen Wishart, Chuck Glatz, David Dirks, Francis Todey, Marianne Todey, Kathy Trahanovsky, Chris Rehmann (chair, notes)

1. Prayer

Chris opened with a prayer from John Lewis (thanks to Chuck)

2. The Bridge Home (formerly ERP)

Jodi Stumbo of The Bridge Home asked for someone at STA to meet with a consultant conducting interviews on how the community views TBH's plans to build and expand. Francis agreed to work with Jodi.

3. COVID-19 Emergency Fund for Story County Immigrants

The fund is still collecting and distributing money to families. So far over \$100K has been distributed. The \$2K match was met, and Wheatsfield contributed a month of its roundup to the fund. A GoFundMe provides another way to donate. MICA CARES funds are available to undocumented people; Chuck is the connection between MICA and applicants to the fund. Kathy, Chuck, and Dave applied for funding from the Story County Community Foundation, with support from Fr. Kyle, and Chuck applied to the Sisters of St. Francis in Dubuque.

4. AMOS

Chris reported that AMOS help secure \$5M in CARES Act funding for job training with wrap-around support. Actions for the fall include getting out the vote, raising funds, and preparing for an Oct. 4 accountability sessions with candidates for federal office.

5. Preparing for the election

Chris will ask Fr. Kyle about devoting a sermon in October to voting. Joe Weyers is presenting a four-part series on faithful citizenship.

6. Season of Creation and Outdoor Prayer Service

Fr. Kyle is planning a sermon related to the Season of Creation for Sep. 5. Chuck is working with St. Cecilia to plan an outdoor prayer service (Oct. 4, 1 pm) related to the Season of Creation. It will include prayer, petitions, activities for children, and music.

7. Next meeting: Oct. 6, 6:00 pm

Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee

Minutes of July 7, 2020 meeting (via Zoom)

Present: Chris Rehmann (chair), Tom Budnik (staff), Dave Dirks, Paula Friederich, Chuck Glatz, Fr. John Herzog, Francis Todey, Marianne Todey, Kathy Trahanovsky, Mary Ellen Wishart

Prayer: Chris

Business

Minutes of June 2: Approved

COVID-19 Emergency Fund for Immigrants

Kathy reported that both the demand for funds and donations have been down. The good news is that United Way received a \$10,000 grant which can be added to the fund. She expects that applications for funds will continue through August at least. Though there are other agencies in town providing money for rent and utilities, some do not distribute funds to undocumented persons.

Kathy will wait until the end of July to ask Bobby to place a request for donations in the weekly email to parishioners.

Collection of food for MICA

Chuck and Dave organized this drive. Response to the request was minimal, possibly because this occurred on a weekday. Though 156 pounds of food/supplies was delivered to MICA, they suggested that it might be better to collect the food on a weekend now that some parishioners are attending Saturday/Sunday Mass. Chuck is willing to try this again with modifications.

Tom said that when parishioners call him about making donations, he suggests that they contact MICA directly. If you donate this way, mention that you are from St. Thomas in order for the parish to get credit.

Drive-through sale of El Zapote coffee

The coffee committee will be selling bags of coffee on the ramp this Saturday and next Wednesday in lieu of the regular sale in the church lounge.

Sunday morning seminars

Discussion was held. Conclusion was that we would like to have something similar to Joe Weyers series on responsible citizenship which was held last fall. Tom will talk with Joe about this. The committee suggested that this also include specific promotion/directions for absentee voting.

A second suggestion was for a September or October program on "Laudato Si." Chuck will send copies of a brochure to the committee for our review and comments.

A third idea was on racism.

The seminars will likely be over ZOOM and recorded so that some can attend and others can view the presentation and discussion at their convenience.

Pastoral Council picnic

Francis reported that, in lieu of the annual transition picnic, the Pastoral Council is considering introducing council members and parish staff to the parish via a ZOOM meeting. The program would also be posted on YouTube for viewing at a later time.

AMOS

The "New Deal Listening Campaign" discussed last meeting is now called "Consider-Connect-Create." The purpose of this campaign is similar to house meetings...trying to find out issues important to people and also to discover leaders who would work on these issues.

Discussion was held about how we might implement this in the parish. The goal is to hear stories from at least 25 people by the September 13 AMOS Assembly. It was concluded that Chris and Mary Ellen will organize ZOOM sessions which will be open to all (and advertised in the weekly email) but with specific invitations to a few people each session in order to assure attendance. Hopefully sessions will be held soon to avoid conflict with ISU fall startup. Chris would be the presenter of an abbreviated version of the AMOS script and leader of the discussion. Mary Ellen would work on recruiting participants.

SJC Mission statement

Fr. Herzog suggested that we definitely need to think more about ecumenical activities rather than limiting to St. Thomas agenda. At Tom's suggestion, we will devote the August meeting to our vision for Social Justice Committee.

Next Meeting: August 4 at 6:30 pm, via ZOOM

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Wishart

**Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Minutes of June 2, 2020 meeting (via Zoom)**

Present: Chris Rehmann (chair) Tom Budnik (staff) Mary Ellen Wishart, Dave Dirks, Fr. John Herzog, Kathy Trahanovsky, Francis Todey, Chuck Glatz, Paula Friederich

Prayer: Chris

**Wake me up Lord, so that the evil of racism
Finds no home with me.
Keep watch over my heart Lord,
And remove from me any barriers to your grace,
That may oppress and offend my brothers and sisters.
Fill my spirit, Lord, so that I may give
Services of justice and peace.
Clear my mind, and use it for your glory.
And finally, remind us Lord that you said,
“Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called the children of God.”
(USCCB; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops}**

Business

Minutes of May 5: Approved

Review statement on current social unrest and racism from Fr. Kyle

Fr. Kyle consulted Chris to review the statement, who brought the proposed text to the SJC for comments. After a lengthy discussion, several suggestions were arrived upon. Chris will condense the commentary and send it to Fr. Kyle for his consideration.

Mary Ellen questioned whether there still exists the Ames Ministerial Society. If so, perhaps they could be asked to issue a joint statement to the Ames community in addition to Fr. Kyle's message to STA.

Tom offered a prayer on the subject which was issued by Catholic charities. Both this prayer, and the above prayer will also be submitted to Fr. Kyle for his review.

COVID-19 response fund:

Kathy reported that the fund is very active. Approximately 69K has been donated thus far with 51K having been distributed. Approximately 70 families have been helped in 140 encounters. Families/individuals are allowed to apply for this fund more than once, as many have done in the continuing pandemic.

Kathy has asked Bobby to rerun the request for donations in the parish communications.

It was noted that the Salvation Army is also distributing funds.

AMOS:

Chris reports that there will be a meeting of the AMOS Delegates Assembly (via Zoom) on June 13 at 9:00 am. It is to be moderated by Terry Potter and Courtney Dufford. Agenda items include installing Courtney as the new lead organizer, reviewing the 2020-2021 budget, and discussion of a proposal for a "New Deal Listening Campaign," through which workshops may be held virtually. Participants must pre-register for this assembly meeting. Chris provided the website for registration.

AMOS is in the process of requesting direct funds from the legislature to support mental health services. Additionally, the Ames AMOS cluster is sending letters of request to the city to appropriate a portion of the Community Block Development Grant (CBDG) for housing.

Sunday Seminars:

Possible future topics include AMOS activities, Laudato Si materials discussion, student-led discussions on the subject of racism. It may be possible to conduct these seminars virtually but SJC will wait until there is further notice about re-opening the building.

Food at First/ MICA:

Mary Ellen reported that Food at First recently collected 2000 lbs of food donations and \$5000 in direct funds.

Tom and Chuck discussed with the group the question of how best to support MICA during this time. Chuck suggested that there be a time set up for parishioners to gather food donations collections in the parking lot and put them directly in the trunk of their cars, who could then deliver them to MICA. Others felt it may be more helpful to solicit money donations to go directly to these organizations. Tom will seek advice from the staff.

SJC Mission statement:

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was postponed until the July Meeting.

Next Meeting: July 7 at 6:00 pm, via ZOOM unless otherwise notified.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Friederich

Minutes of the Social Justice Committee Meeting of 5 May2020

Attendees: Fr. Herzog, Chris, Chuck, Dave, Kathy, Mary Ellen

Approval of 7 Apr 2020 meeting minutes: approved

Social Justice Grants - were allocated by the SJ grant subcommittee. The following grants were given:

Ames Ecumenical Housing \$800
AMOS \$3,000
COVID-19 Fund \$2,000
ERP \$5,000
Food at First \$5,000
Martha's House of Hope \$1,000
Attat Our Lady Hospital \$3,000
Engineers Without Borders \$1,500
Excel Inc. \$1,200
Ghana Christian Foundation \$1,000
Lila Mae House \$500

Story Co. Total \$16,800
Out of Story Co. \$7,200
Total \$24,000
Story Co. Fraction 70%

Catholic Charities -- Need for assistance on the rent they pay to STA was discussed via e-mail before this meeting. SJ team was not supportive of using LYN funds in this way. SJ Grant funds were also discussed. However, Fr. Kyle in the end said the staff would take care of this in some other way.

Immigrant Covid-19 Fund STC – LYN committee was supportive of allowing applicants to the immigrant fund to also apply for LYN assistance. Likewise, Good Neighbor is doing something similar. The exact mechanism is still being discussed. Immigrant fund donations have been quite strong in the last month. There have been 50-60 applicants thus far. Concern remains for how long donations will sustain as it seems certain that applicants will need help through multiple months. United Church of Christ has given away \$16K in just the last month as they are also seeing very high need. Action: Chris and Kathy will share to the UCC pastor that people coming to her can also apply to LYN.

Review AMOS activities -

- Follow up regarding responses from small group leaders to challenges parishioners are facing (Mary Ellen)

- Report on meeting with legislators and Iowa Workforce Development regarding unemployment benefits plus follow-up actions (Chris and others) – IWD added 100 new employees as a response to the meeting. AMOS all asking a lot of questions to legislators about where the Covid funding from the federal government will be spent in Iowa. Ames City Council member Amber Corrieri mentioned to AMOS that the city council is not hearing the issues and stories of the people who are struggling. She thought that this could be a place that AMOS could help. Joe and Shari from the parish staff are reaching out to the small group leaders for stories. AMOS is also working on a proposal for how the Ames city council can help citizens with this funding.

STA Discussion on “what we can do as a parish” – Brainstorming meeting was held within STA and many ideas were generated. Tom Brumm is working to generate neighborhood groupings of parishioners to improve community and connectedness.

Potential agenda item for next time – should we resume Sunday Seminars via a Zoom format?

Next meeting: June 2, 6:30 p.m. (most likely by zoom)

Notes from Social Justice Committee Meeting, Tuesday, April 7, 2020, 6 p.m. via ZOOM

Present: Tom Budnik, Dave Dirks, Paula Friederich, Chuck Glatz, Chris Rehmann, Francis Todey, Kathy Trahanovsky, Mary Ellen Wishart

March minutes were approved as corrected and distributed,

Social Justice Grants

April 1 was the deadline. Tom received 11 applications for \$23,500 plus two unspecified amounts. We have \$24,500 to use. Tom anticipates that the fund will increase with this month and next month's tithe and private donations in case we need to think beyond the \$24,500.

There are four that seem to be "time-sensitive," given the COVID-19 situation...Immigrant fund and Lila Mae House, for example. Two others have asked for \$5,000, which is above our normal allocation but is possibly related to COVID-19.

Paula wondered if our policy needed to be amended if we give most of our money to **local** agencies. Chris pointed out that our policy dictates spending **at least 50%** locally but does not limit the %.

Chris asked that a subcommittee form consisting of himself, Paula, Francis, and possibly an ISU student, with Felicity Douglas being chair as last year if she agrees. **Chris will contact Felicity to see if she will chair.** If a student is available, that is a bonus, but not required. Plans are to review applications next week and make recommendations as soon as possible.

AMOS activities

AMOS would be interested in what we are finding out about local needs. Dave reported that there has been overwhelming response to Jean regarding volunteers but **only one request** for help so far. **Mary Ellen** will contact Emily, Shari, and Joe Weyers to see if they have had any responses from small group leaders who were to use the AMOS phone script. She also will email the committee a copy of that script for their interest or use.

The situation at ERP is dire...spending \$2100 per week to house persons in the Ames Motor Lodge. The Ames AMOS cluster will draft a letter to Iowa Finance Authority seeking financial assistance for ERP.

COVID-19 Emergency Funds for Immigrants

Kathy reported that the fund is up and running, thanks to the cooperation and leadership of United Way and members of the STA/STC Immigrant and Refugee group and others. The fund is housed at St. Cecilia's and is available for donation and for application. In this short time the fund has about \$4000 and applications are coming in.

A small group, including Kathy, will review applications weekly, probably capping requests at \$300 for the time being.

Love Your Neighbor

A question was raised about whether we continue to require documentation as we have in the past. **Tom** will clarify with Don Alexander what is being required.

Cancellations

Mary Ellen will cancel the Sunday Morning Seminar scheduled for April 26 (Courtney Dufford) and the Wine & Wisdom (Immigrants and Refugees) scheduled for May 1. We should look at ways to offer these adult education programs if social distancing continues. A suggestion for future Wisdom and Wine was Self-help International with Jess Crawford and Norah Tobin.

Next meeting is Tuesday, May 5, 6:00 p.m.

Notes by Mary Ellen Wishart (At the bottom of these notes is the AMOS call script and guidelines for getting in touch with needs of the community. Use as you wish.)

Sample script & ideas to build community and act on needs

FRAME: While we may be in a time of “physical distancing” it should not become a time of social isolation. If we stay in relationship with people, we can respond to one another and especially the people most impacted. We need the power built through relationships to support one another at all times - and especially at times like these.

PROPOSAL: We propose to use the next few weeks, through relational phone calls, Zoom or FaceTime video calls, to:

- “Show up” with people at a difficult time
- Hear how people are being impacted, especially the most vulnerable
- Listen for ways to act
- Learn ideas people have
- Get all current, up to date contact information from our members and, if possible that of a loved one. If people are hospitalized and scattered due to an overburdened health care system, we need to know how to reach our people and/or their loved ones.

WHO TO CALL:

- Members in your congregations, school, workplace, sports teams, health care clinic etc.
- Anyone who has ever attended your institution. Anyone not strongly connected to a larger community could be at risk.

- If you have access to the people who rent space in your institution.
- Those who come to you for outreach services such as food pantries.
- Allies in organizing, ministry, community, service, etc.
- People in your life -work your own phone contacts first. Co-workers, teachers, coaches, neighbors, health care providers, babysitter, your taxi/ uber driver etc.

If you wish - jot down now 5-20 names of people you will call this week.

SEE SCRIPT BELOW Adapt it and make it your own.

REPORT BACK WHAT YOU ARE LEARNING

AMOS leaders have scheduled a weekly Zoom call to report what we are learning:

Time: Wednesdays, 05:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/773734536>

Meeting ID: 773 734 536

Call-in by phone: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

The weekly Zoom call will be a place for AMOS leaders to compare notes and come up with proposals for next steps. Those could include; meeting immediate needs, meeting with local & state officials and/or corporate leaders and/or finding gaps in services that we could identify. If you need to reach out to AMOS right away, you can contact organizer Courtney Dufford (crdufford@gmail.com, 815-541-8957)

SAMPLE SCRIPT

Hi my name is I am (your neighbor, a member of ___ congregation, a parent from your kid's school etc.)
I am reaching out to people to check in with people to see how they are doing in light of the Coronavirus crisis. I am part of _____ and we are listening to see how we might support one another.

How are you? (*This is a real question not just a pleasantry*) **What is it like to be YOU right now?**
(What is it like to be a small business owner? A pastor? A parent who has to work, parent & homeschool? Without work? Etc.)

What are you and the people you care about concerned about right now in regard to Covid-19? Are there other people experiencing the same challenges?

Remember-- It is important that you also share how you are doing (briefly) if you want others to share how they are doing.

What ideas do you have for how we can support one another right now? What actions have you taken already to address it?

Are there things that we should be alerting government or corporate leaders to act on? Is this something you have witnessed or has impacted you directly? Why is this important to you?

Invite people to join you! Members from _____ (congregation) & AMOS, like myself, are making thousands of these calls because like I said before we want to make sure you are ok. We will also be sharing what we are learning about the current need.

Get contact info We're concerned if any of our members become ill, we won't be able to reach them. Is this number the best number to reach you at? Do you have an email address we could add to your contact card? Is there someone in your family that you would like to also include on your contact information?

Please listen carefully to people's responses to discern what question(s) below are most appropriate to ask--

- Do you want to join our team in making calls -like I checked in with you? If so, here is a copy of a sample script and some suggestions on who you might call.
- Do you want us to keep you in the loop on that? Join our weekly Zoom call. We can email you the details.

Notes from Social Justice Committee Meeting, Tuesday, March 2, 2020, 6 p.m.

Present: Dave Dirks, Paula Friederich, Chuck Glatz, Jean Prestemon, Chris Rehmann, Francis Todey, Kathy Trahanovsky, Mary Ellen Wishart

February minutes were approved.

Sunday morning seminars

1. The presentation on Catholic Worker House was attended by about 20 people. Questions can be directed to Eric Evans regarding progress and requests for support.
2. March seminar was canceled due to spring break.
3. Courtney Dufford (AMOS) could present on April 19. Since that is the same day as all-parish meeting, **Chris will check** to see if other dates are available. Otherwise we will keep it on the schedule.

Wisdom and Wine on Immigrants and Refugees?

The committee will plan an April 24 for wisdom and wine event to educate about immigrants and refugees. *(Note: I found out that W & W must have staff approval. Also that Carpenter Shop was not on the calendar, but is scheduled for April 24. So Tom Budnik is taking the idea to staff for approval March 10 and we have put W & W on the calendar for Friday, May 1, 6-8:30 (with setup/cleanup 4-9). Kathy T, Jean P, and Mary Ellen will coordinate.*

Language difficulty is a major problem for immigrants/refugees navigating in the U.S. Jean mentioned that there are weekly practice sessions available through the Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance. See Jean for more information.

Religious article drive and international meals were discussed. Action was put on hold for these two items.

Mary Jo Pfeifer-Wulf is collecting pledges to assist Monica (our custodian) to help members of her family to join other family now in Uganda where they will be safe and able to attend school. See Mary Jo for more information.

Should we plan any way to celebrate the anniversary of "Laudato Si"? Chuck emailed information for ideas to the SJC. Committee members asked what St. Thomas had done to make efforts to reduce climate change...buying shares in the solar farm or??? **Francis will check with Pastoral Council and Building and Grounds** about what has been done or what could be done.

Immersion trip

Chuck reported that this is planned for second half of spring break. Six students, Chuck and Kathy Glatz, Diane Lyon will be going. Besides projects at the house for survivors of trafficking, the group may have a chance to visit an immigration house and attend citizenship classes. Fr. Kyle will provide a formal parish sendoff/blessing on the day they leave.

Parish spotlight on LYN

The spotlight was successful...generated one volunteer for sure and one possible volunteer to be interviewers.

Next meeting is Tuesday, April 7, 6:00 p.m.

Notes by Mary Ellen Wishart

**Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Minutes: February 4, 2020**

Present: Chris Rehmann (Chair,) Fr. John Herzog, Kathy Trahanovsky, Jean Prestemon, Felicity Douglas, Tom Budnik, Francis Todey, Paula Friederich

Prayer: Chris

My Lord God, I have no idea where I'm going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen. (T. Merton)

Business

Minutes of January 4: Approved

Sunday Morning Seminars:

The January 19 seminar was attended by 15-18 people. Joe Weyers presented part of his series on "Voting Responsibly/Faithful Citizenship," which was well received. Joe will be repeating this discussion series for the STA community in the fall, prior to the general election.

The next Seminar date is Sunday, February 16 in Prophets and Martyrs. Shannon and Eric Evans will present information about a potential Catholic Worker program in Ames.

Jean, Paula and Chuck will help set up the room. Chuck has put announcements in the bulletin and the parish email. It will also be submitted for the mass announcements.

The March Seminar Date was moved from March 15 to March 29, tentatively. Chris will ask Courtney Dufford, AMOS organizer, to see if she is available to present that day.

Potential April date is Sunday, April 19.

Immersion Trip: Chris reported that Chuck has arranged a trip to the Lila Mae in Sioux City House for 3/19-3/22.

AMOS

Courtney Dufford will be in Ames on 2/10, 2/20 and 2/27 and would like to meet individually with persons interested. Chris can arrange times for people who can meet with her.

Mental Health and Housing: AMOS, ERP, and Anawim (DSM) will coordinate a pilot project to address the potential of Permanent Supportive Housing in Ames.

Immigration: Jon Wolseth, Karen Stein and Chris are planning a house meeting to include 5-7 attendees of the Spanish Mass at STC, at a date to be determined. The purpose is to learn what problems and concerns they face in Ames.

Community ID: Next Community ID drive will be Saturday, April 18 at St. Cecilia.

STA/STC Immigration and Refugee Committee

Paula reported on the January meeting. There was much discussion about the problem of bullying in the Ames schools. Karen Stein said she thinks it is worsening. Awein Majak reported similar difficulties that the South Sudanese encounter in Ames.

Paula will begin forwarding the meeting notes of this sub-committee to the entire STA/SJC committee for those who are interested in the activities of this group. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 27 at 1pm.

Love Your Neighbor Ministry Spotlight: February 22/23 all masses.

Dave will write the spotlight script to be read after mass.

Next SJC meeting: Tuesday, March 3, 6pm

Respectfully submitted by Paula Friederich

**Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Minutes: January 14, 2020**

Present: Chris Rehmann (Chair), Tom Budnik, Francis Todey, Felicity Douglas, Fr. John Herzog, Chuck Glatz, Mary Ellen Wishart, Jean Prestemon, Paula Friederich

Prayer: Chris

**O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others
Open my ears that I may hear their cries;
Open my heart so that they need not be without succor;
Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong;
Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,
And use me to bring them to those places.
And so, open my eyes and my ears
That I may, this coming day, be able to do some work of peace for you.
Amen.**

Business

Minutes of December 3, 2019: Approved

Sunday Morning Seminars:

The December 15 seminar was attended by 16 people and presented by Jodi Stumbo; the director of the Emergency Residence Project (ERP) in Ames. Mary Ellen has requested a specific list from Jodi of what STA parishioners may supply in support of their clients.

Felicity noted that STA's obligation to provide meals on Friday's at ERP is continuing to struggle for volunteers.

The next seminar is this coming Sunday, January 19, 2020. Mary Ellen spoke with Joe Weyers who agreed to repeat the first of his lecture series on the subject of "Voting Responsibly/ Faithful Citizenship."

The February seminar is scheduled for Sunday, February 16. It was suggested that Eric and Shannon Evans be invited to present their interest in beginning a "Catholic Worker Program" at STA. Shari has identified at least one student who is interested in the project.

Report to Pastoral Council

December 10, 2019, Chris and Kathy presented the annual update to the Pastoral Council with other SJC members in attendance. Also presented was an appeal to the PC for a line item to be added to the general budget, which will cover the annual membership dues for STA participation in AMOS. The information was well received by the council. The decision on SJC's budget proposal is pending.

Meet the new AMOS coordinator: Courtney is scheduled to be in Ames on January 21 and 28. Chris has asked for volunteers to meet with her in order to learn more about organizing

AMOS groups and activities. Mary Ellen will meet with Courtney on January 21, and Chris will meet with her on January 28. Fr. Kyle will also meet with her. Chris invites all SJC members and other interested parishioners to schedule a time with her.

Immigration and refugee efforts:

Chris reported that the recent Community ID drives in Ames and Marshalltown both had lower than expected turnout. The reason for this is unclear. AMOS is considering ways in which it might encourage more of the community to get the ID's so that they may become more used and recognized throughout local businesses and providers.

Collegiate United Methodist Immigration Epiphany/ Fiesta potluck, January 5:

Chris and Mary Ellen reported that 95 people attended; approximately 60 of whom were members of the host congregation. Congregants discussed difficulties encountered in the Ames community and possible actions to aid our immigrant and refugee population.

Immigrant and Refugee Committee:

A sub-committee of SJC, recently formed by members of STA and STC social justice committee members. The goal is to explore ways that our two congregations may help efforts to assist and support the immigrant population in Ames, in addition to and in coordination with other local churches and organizations.

Immersion Trips:

Chuck and Shari have discussed a site of the Lila Mae House in Sioux City Iowa, March 19-22. This facility houses victims of human trafficking. Work on the grounds of the facility is needed and requested. It is hoped that at least 6 students and two "leaders" will volunteer for this mission.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 4, 6pm.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Friederich