

**Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Meeting Notes, February 1, 2022 6:00 p.m. (via Zoom)**

Present: Chris Rehmann, Chuck Glatz, Francis Todey, Marianne Todey, Felicity Douglas, Dave Dirks, Mary Ellen Wishart, Paula Friedrich

Action Items Highlighted

Opening Prayer: Chris

Minutes of January 11: Approved

Business

Stewardship of the Environment Topics:

Follow-up Discussion on Setting a Goal of 83% Emission Reduction by 2030 – At the last meeting, Dave agreed to follow up with Brad Powers and Scott Blum to see if the Finance Council and the Building and Grounds Committee would consider taking the lead on setting an emission reduction goal and developing a long-range plan. While Buildings and Grounds looks for energy efficient replacement equipment, when possible, they are not inclined to take the lead on developing a plan. Possible next steps to move this forward were considered. Chuck shared that he had received an email from John Wilson at St. Cecilia regarding their discussions on emission reduction. Fr. Don expressed interest in this idea and he would like to discuss it with Fr. Kyle. Chuck drafted a note expressing support for collaboration between the two parishes. This committee is supportive of considering a collaborative approach to developing long range plans and goals, and will be willing to offer assistance in this effort.

Celebration of Creation Service – Mary Ellen has not received any response from Mary Jane Button-Harrison regarding interest from other congregations in taking part in this service next Fall. Mary Ellen has sent a follow-up letter to try to find if there is interest from other churches.

Solar Project – Dave passed on information that the Proxy has been approved by the Archdiocese, allowing the purchase of the solar Power Packs from the Ames Solar Farm. The purchase will take place shortly. Chuck is working on a bulletin announcement inviting students to donate to the solar project. A donor has agreed to provide \$2 for every \$1 donated by students, up to \$5000. That announcement will be coming out soon.

Story County Immigrant and Refugee Collaboration:

Chuck noted that information regarding the Story County Immigrant Fund changes has been made available to the public. He reported these changes at last month's meeting.

STA Visioning Recommendations Follow-Up:

Laudato Si' Study Group – Felicity and Francis provided an update on the planning for this study group that will discuss the encyclical. The proposal is to provide a six-week program on

Monday evenings during Lent. Initially, the meetings will be by Zoom. This can be reviewed depending on changes in the pandemic. Francis will prepare bulletin announcements to promote the study group. Chuck suggested that Francis contact Jackie Comito to see if she has any interest in being involved with this study group. It was suggested that any materials needed for the class should be purchased for the participants.

Social Justice Speakers – Chuck verified that selection of Supple Lecture speakers is one of Emily Klaus’ duties. He is waiting to hear from her about the proposed meeting of a group of students and Social Justice Committee members to discuss future speakers. The earliest opportunity to schedule a speaker is likely Fall of 2022. Chuck also mentioned that UCC will have a “Theologian in Residence” April 23-24 addressing a Church response to the climate crisis that may be of interest to some.

Catholic Social Teaching Information – Marianne has talked with Phil Stone about providing information on Catholic Social Teaching in the bulletin. He is supportive of the concept, but does not want to lead the effort. Marianne is working to write a bulletin article to introduce the topic, which will be followed with discussions of the individual principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Bulletin Profiles of “Faith Beyond Our Church Walls” – Response to these profiles has been good; with a nice cross section of individuals being profiled. Mary Ellen plans to complete a few more interviews, then she will take a break. Thanks for your work, Mary Ellen.

Social Justice Grant Planning:

Chris said Fr. Kyle asked him what assistance will be needed from STA staff so the committee can receive and review Social Justice Grants. Along with updating the grant application on the website, staff help is needed to verify applicants are STA members, and to make copies of applications for the reviewers. After reviews are complete, staff will need to handle the administrative effort to send grant checks to applicants. Since this is the first year of not having a staff member directly assigned to the Social Justice Committee, there may be other parts of the process where staff help could be needed. The due date for receiving applications is April 1. Chuck will need to know if he is to update the application material on the web site and create a link to be used in any bulletin announcement of the due date.

Social Justice Budget:

Chris received an email from the Finance Council asking that we review the current budget and make any proposed changes. The current goal is that the overall STA budget will not increase in the next fiscal year. There was a brief discussion of the budget. Chris will follow up with the Finance Council.

Next Meeting:

March 1, 2022, 6 p.m. by Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Francis Todey. Minutes approved 3/1/22.

