

**Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Meeting Notes, June 7, 2022 6:00 p.m. (via Zoom)**

Present: Chris Rehmann, Chuck Glatz, Francis Todey, Marianne Todey, Felicity Douglas, Mary Ellen Wishart, Paula Friedrich, Dave Dirks, Fr. John Herzog, Ann Gansemer-Topf

Action Items Highlighted

Opening Prayer: Chris, read “A Prayer for Peace After Gun Violence” by Dianna Ortiz

Minutes of May 3: Approved

Business

Update on Environmental Stewardship Activities:

Chuck discussed the activities of the Joint Care for Creation Committee with St. Cecilia Parish. He has specifically been working with the STA Finance Council, Building and Grounds Committee, and Bobby LeBlanc to develop a list of capital improvements previously completed, along with proposed improvements. This will provide background on how improvements may have reduced the STA carbon footprint, and allow us to estimate how much impact future improvements could have. Currently, the proposed future improvements would include a new boiler for the church, replacement of inefficient windows, and additional solar credit purchases. This information could be highlighted in Care for Creation Celebration this Autumn. **Brad Powers, Finance Council Chair, will be invited to a future meeting to discuss the proposed improvements, how they may be funded, and development of a policy document to guide selection of future capital improvements for energy efficiency.**

The weekend of September 17 & 18 will be the official kickoff of the Joint Care for Creation Committee. The homilies at both parishes will highlight Pope Francis’ call to action in Laudato Si’, and parishioners will be invited to get involved with the committee. Chuck noted that we need to recruit individuals now to help develop a plan of action for the Care for Creation Committee, so please pass along names of individuals who may be interested. **Chuck will prepare a bulletin announcement to invite parish members to become involved.** He also discussed that he had passed on care for the environment education materials to religious education staff at both parishes and St. Cecilia School. The school principal indicated interest in using the materials.

Social Justice Speakers and Discussion Groups:

Further discussion on social justice speakers will take place this Fall. The group discussed the possibility of developing a discussion of racism, but there is uncertainty on how to present the topic. Presentation options include small group discussions, bulletin articles, a Wisdom and Wine event, or an “all parish reads” opportunity. The fact that students from other countries are members of STA could present a challenge and also an opportunity to discuss racism in other

cultures. Chuck, Mary Ellen, and Francis offered to read the document on racism from the USCCB. They will report back to the committee at the July meeting.

Social Justice Grants:

Chris discussed the Social Justice Grant review process and the final numbers. A total of \$22,500 in grants was approved. A spreadsheet showing the final numbers is attached. Some improvements to the form will be needed before the application process starts next year.

Because the amount available for the grants is lower this year, there was discussion on allowing direct contributions to this fund, similar to Love Your Neighbor. Chris will talk with Bobby LeBlanc to see if this is a possibility.

AMOS Activity at St. Thomas:

Mary Ellen reported on a meeting with Fr. Kyle to discuss how AMOS might help with parish organization and improving contact with parish members. Courtney Dufford from AMOS has provided a draft plan as a follow-up to the meeting. Chris suggested that Sunday Morning Seminars should be started again. One subject would be having Courtney provide a presentation on AMOS.

Other Topics:

Paula discussed lack of available space in the Columbarium, and asked the group to consider supporting construction of additional spaces. This is an ongoing discussion with parish leadership.

Chuck noted that Kim Greder is now the STA representative to the Story County Immigrant and Refugee Collaboration.

Next Meeting:

July 5, 2022, 6 p.m. by Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Francis Today.

Minutes Approved July 5, 2022