

OLOL Social Justice Minutes March 14, 2024

Present: Karen Streich, Patti Sereno, Terry Falk, Steve Szymanski, Mary Botsford, Pat McKay, Eileen O'Connor **Guest:** Margaret Kelley

Opening Prayer: 6:30 pm *Love and Peace*

Review of All Saints Gospel Choir Event: Attendance was excellent and many positive comments were passed on. One woman left a note of thanks along with a \$15 contribution signing only her first name to the card.

Notes for next time: Don't bother with name tags; people came in too quickly. Be sure to include a clean-up crew.

Plans for OLOL participation in All Saints' spaghetti dinner: On behalf of OLOL, SJ members have created two baskets for the All Saints' silent auction. In addition, parish members have reserved two tables for attendance at the dinner and auction on April 14. The check covering the two tables has been sent to All Saints.

Fleece Blanket Activity: The event went very well. Steve Szymanski brought a prayer, based on non-violence, which provided a sense of reverence to the entire event. Approximately forty people, including several children, participated. Committee members asked Steve to use the same prayer format to begin every event sponsored by the Social Justice Committee.

Budget Information: Money paid to All Saints for the Gospel Choir event came from our regular budget. In addition, the \$400 donated on the night of the concert was evenly divided between All Saints and Courage MKE.

Earth Day Event: On Saturday, April 20, we are participating with Milwaukee Riverkeeper to clean up Jackson Park. The cleanup will begin at 9:00 am and end at 11:00 am. Following the cleanup, lunch will be provided at OLOL. Participants in the event will register both on the OLOL Social Justice website and on the Milwaukee Riverkeeper website. Registration with Riverkeeper is not yet open. As soon as it is, Pat will inform committee members. Patti Sereno and Karen Streich volunteered to take care of the lunch; Steve will provide a prayer; Pat and Eileen will develop a flyer for the event.

Juneteenth Event: The former Social Justice group from St. Mary's in Hales Corners has asked our committee to show the film *Juneteenth* which explains the origins of that recently added American holiday. Pat spoke with Deb about our offering to show the film, and Deb approved it. We decided to show it on Monday, June 17th, two days prior to the holiday.

Meeting with Shanedra Johnson, Archdiocesan Urban Ministry: Pat will meet with Ms. Johnson next week asking that some of the events regarding Black history be presented in various parts of the city rather than exclusively in Black communities. One possible idea is for the Archdiocese to invite a speaker on the topic of Black contributions to American culture. Several possible speakers were suggested.

White Christian Racism: Eileen had asked committee members to read an article regarding the predominance of racism among white Christians in the Midwest by Dr. Robert P. Jones, president of the Public Religious Research Institute. Dr. Jones, who has a PhD in Religion from Emory University, is

the author of *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy*, *The End of White Christian America*, *A Path to a Shared American Future*, and *White too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity* which won the 2021 American Book Award. According to the article, the racist assumptions of white Christians in the Midwest are nearly as virulent as those of Southern Evangelical Christians.

One suggestion as a way to address the racist beliefs of so many Christians is for churches to prominently display books that provide a Christian response to racism. Purchasing some books was agreed upon. Some titles were suggested, and a decision on which books to purchase will be considered at our April meeting. Another suggestion was to include responding to traumatic events in Black communities during petitions at Mass.

Election 2024: Members were asked to consider ways to encourage voters for discussion at the April meeting.

Announcements:

- Synod Listening session: St Matthias Church, March 13, 9:00-11:00 am
- Catholic Charities has joined Habitat for Humanity, Interfaith America, and YMCA of the USA to combat polarization in society
- Six Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood event has been rescheduled to May.
- Courage MKE is having an open house on Friday, March 15 for apartments available to the LGBTQ youth 18-24 with a ribbon cutting at 11:30 am. Tours will be available all day.

Next Meeting: April 11, Prayer – Emily and Kevin

Closing: 7:35 with Prayer for the Homebound