

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE (SJC) MEETING REPORT JANUARY 8, 2019

A meeting of the Social Justice Committee was held Jan. 8, 2019 at First Parish U U Church. Present were Sonia D'Alarcao, Joanna Elsmore, Janet Dye, Betty Gilson and the Rev. Rachel Tedesco. The following issues were discussed and decided.

The SJC bank balance is \$3,140.60 of which \$1,041.69 is for *the Read to Me, Father* program. The RTMF balance remains so high because the staff at OCCC has been slow in vetting fathers for the program. The profit from the Holly Day Fair table was \$237.75. In addition \$325 was made from the sale of gift cards to benefit MainSpring House.

The plans for the upcoming SJC service on Jan. 13 was discussed. The theme is "How to Talk to People with Whom You Disagree". Three approaches to this issue will be presented in three short skits. Betty described who would be doing involved with the service: Jim Quinn, BSU Theater Professor, is the writer and producer. Two young male actors, Andrew and Ethan Child, will act out the skits. The order of service was reviewed.

The Share the Plate February Share the Plate charity is Health Imperatives, located on Torrey Street in Brockton. This organization provides a wide range of affordable health and human services assistance to residents of the Greater Brockton area. (website: <http://healthimperatives.org/greater-brockton/>)

The next Black Lives Matter film will be *Moonlight* on Tues., Jan. 22 at 7:00 pm at First Parish. This film gives three defining chapters in the life of a young black man growing up in Miami. It will be shown in the church sanctuary because of the dress rehearsals for the play taking place in the UPH. The February film, *Loving*, will be shown on Tues., Feb. 26, probably in the UPH. *Loving* is about a mixed-race couple in Virginia who get married when it is still illegal in that state. We discussed some possible films for the next season: *If Beale Street Could Talk*, *The Klansman* and *Green Card*.

We discussed whether we should do a third season. Attendance has been a bit down at some of the films and not as many Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect members attend. Janet will speak with the BCCR about their opinion since they are co-sponsors.

A discussion followed on how to better advertise our films, especially to the BSU student community. Suggestions were a large outdoor sign on School Street to be seen by the students walking by. In addition, we could post announcements on Snapchat and Instagram, mediums favored by young people over Facebook. Sonia will consult with her daughter Rosalynn about this.

Betty announced that the community is invited to a *Night of Remembrance* service to be held at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Bridgewater on Sun. Jan. 27 at 5:00 p.m. followed by a buffet supper. This is a service to remember those affected by the opioid crisis, sponsored by Mercy Street, a non-denominational support program for families affected by addiction. On the last Wednesday of each month Mercy Street and Trinity Church co-host a safe gathering place for those affected by a loved one's addiction. It begins with a supper at 6:00 pm, followed by separate programs for children and adults. It was agreed that Mercy Street be our Share the Plate charity in June.

Betty had received a request from Amnesty International to participate in a winter letter writing campaign, Write for Rights (W4R) event. This annual AI program asks participants to write letters for people in jeopardy due to their social activism. The Peace Committee has taken over this project for the church and has scheduled a writing session to take place on Tuesday, Jan.

29 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Betty's house. Volunteers will write letters to and for ten women prisoners of conscience who are in urgent need of help.

Rachel discussed her project to develop a pamphlet on Bridgewater Area human services and resources. This is designed to help clergy (and others) in town direct people who come to them in need of some sort of assistance. She has already developed a resource spreadsheet, based on information from Town Clerk Marilee Hunt. She learned from Sonia that there is already a Greater Brockton call-in "Helpline" which points residents of the area to a wide range of support services and community resources. Sonia has given Rachel the Helpline informational flyer and volunteered to bring a supply of these flyers to the church for whomever needs them. The two resources may overlap but complement each other. Further discussion was tabled.

2019 Women's March Southcoast: Rachel has announced in the *Bridging* and in weekly church emails that there will be a Women's March in New Bedford on Saturday, Jan. 19 at noon. People are invited to join her in a carpool from the church parking lot to New Bedford. Alternatively, they may join the group at the march. To date, two people have replied.

Carol Allen of Unity Church of North Easton had asked Rev. Paul if she could address the church about the need for foster care homes in Bridgewater. Rev. Paul had passed this request on to Betty. It was decided that presenting such a talk at coffee hour wouldn't work very well. It would be better to present this during a worship service, either during the regular church year or during a summer service. Or to have a separate program. The group agreed an earlier date was better since the need was so great. And to have Ms. Allen speak, but no more than a few minutes at the beginning of a service, to get a bigger audience. Rachel will bring this up with Rev. Paul or the Worship Committee to see if they're open to the idea.

The next SJC meeting will be on Thurs., Feb. 7. The next Green Sanctuary Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 10.