

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT Feb. 7, 2019

A meeting of the Social Justice Committee was held Feb. 7, 2019 at First Parish. Present were: Sonia D'Alarcao, Joanna Elsmore, Betty Gilson, Susan Irish and Rev. Rachel Tedesco. The following items were discussed and decided.

The bank balance is \$3,798.16 of which \$1,041.69 is for *Read to Me, Father*. Betty added that there is a \$21.60 balance from the Write for Rights expenses which will be added to the account. Also, new books for the Read program were just ordered for \$86.74.

Betty reported on the Write for Rights program held at her house on Jan. 29. Although only four people were able to attend, they wrote 40 letters for Amnesty International (AI). This included 20 to activists or their families and 20 to government agencies on their behalf. Also, four other people made donations for stamps and materials. The Peace Committee will probably not repeat this program, but support AI in other ways.

The next BLM film will be *Loving* on Feb. 26. This is the story of an interracial couple in VA who get married while it is still illegal there. The film for March 26 is *The Great Debaters* about a debate team at a predominantly black college in 1935 in TX. We again discussed whether to continue the program for a third year, with the consensus being we should. Betty showed the group the article in the *Community Connections* email from Susan McCombe at BSU which has the notice of the Feb. film.

We discussed the possibility of Carol Allen of the Dept. of Children and Families speaking at First Parish about the need for foster homes in the Bridgewater area. At Rev. Paul's suggestion we have asked her about participating in the April 7 service. The April theme is *Wholeness*, so it would be appropriate. Betty had sent emails to Carol with this invitation.

Betty said that A. J. Derby attended the *Night of Remembrance* Jan. 27 at Trinity Episcopal Church. She also continues to attend the monthly meetings of *Mercy Street* also held there. These are programs for family and friends impacted by drug issues.

We discussed the spring Pride event at First Parish. Betty will contact Lee Forest, the Pride Center Director at BSU, about possible dates in April and themes for the event.

Several suggestions were made for the help pamphlet on which we are working. Rachel has started a spread sheet of the information. She mentioned the pamphlet at an area minister's meeting and the response was very enthusiastic. We decided the three Bridgewaters should be targeted. It will include the BAMSI information which Sonia provided, information from Bridgewater Town Clerk Merilee Hunt, and an abridged version of a Plymouth County Sheriff's letter passed on from Rev. Paul. Rachel and Susan will check for more suggestions from the E. Bridgewater Council on Aging and other agencies in that town. Joanna will do the same for W. Bridgewater and Betty for Bridgewater.

Rachel reported on recent and upcoming activism. She attended a very successful Women's March in New Bedford with Bobbe Anderson and Kate Martin.

She also attended the Pancake Breakfast for BSU students at the Bridgewater United Methodist Church. It was a great breakfast with Bobbe Anderson making pancakes. Unfortunately, only three students attended.

Rev. Paul, Rachel, Tony Winters and Yasmeen Thompson attended Sanctuary Boston webinars on holding evening services. This was an issue raised in the house meetings as well in an SJC meeting. The Worship Committee will be working on plans for this.

Due to illness, Rachel was unable to attend a small UU Mass Action Lobby Day. However, she is planning on attending the Annual Lobby Day on Tues., April 10. This starts in the morning at Arlington Street Church and continues in the afternoon with meetings with lawmakers at the State House. The key issues are: Safe Communities, Immigration, Climate Action Justice, Economic Justice with Rise Up Massachusetts, and Ending Mass Incarceration.

In other business we discussed a letter from Norwell Visiting Nurse Association requesting volunteers for hospice training and decided that Betty would put the information in the next weekly messages.

The SJC received an invitation to a fundraising event in Boston for Red Cloud Indian School. After some discussion we decided the theme for the Feb./March Bulletin Board would be information about some of the activities in which we are involved. Betty and Susan put a few items on the board. Rachel will print out a title and some pictures of events which will be posted this coming Sunday.

Speaking on behalf of the R E Committee, Sonia told us that they would like to have a share the plate month to help with scholarships for R E students to summer camp programs at Ferry Beach and possibly other locations. Since there was no open month before July, we decided to change Mercy Street from June to September and use June for the scholarship program.

Betty announced that \$247.00 was raised for Comfort Zone Camp. Sonia shared a letter from BAMSI thanking the church for our share the plate donation.

The next meeting will be for the full SJC on Thurs., March 7 at 7:00 pm at First Parish.