

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING ON NOV. 7, 2019 – Notes by Rev. Rachel

Present: Betty Gilson, Susan Irish, Sonia D'Alarcao and Rev. Rachel Tedesco.

Bank Balance: Betty reported that as of the last accounting, the balance was \$4,409.57, of which \$1,551.26 is committed to *Read to Me, Father*.

Committee Secretary Recruitment: Rev. Rachel volunteered to be the SJC secretary. Sonia volunteered to edit notes when needed.

GAYT program of the UUSC. We'll introduce this year's GAYT program on November 24th, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This will not be an intergenerational service. This year's theme is "Women Leaders, Strong Communities" – featuring the women-initiated programs the UUSC is sponsoring. RE children and youth can participate by handing out the GAYT boxes and UUSC info pamphlets before they go off to their RE classes. Betty noted that there are RE activities on the UUSC website which Sonia agreed to share with the RE committee.

Black Lives Matter film series: Betty noted that each of episodes of the "When They See Us" series was longer than anticipated and the content was intense. After showing it on Oct. 22, we decided to show only one part per evening, followed by discussion. The schedule was set for Part 2 on Nov. 12, Part 3 on Dec. 10 and Part 4 on Jan. 28. The subsequent months were changed, eliminating some older films. Then "See You Yesterday" was re-scheduled for the February showing. Films for the other dates remained the same. March: "The Hate You Give"; April "Mudbound"; May "If Beale Street Could Talk". These are recent films and ones which people may not have seen.

The Pride Event with BSU PRIDE Center: The fall event with the LGBTQA Pride Center from BSU was held earlier in the day from 1:00-2:00 pm. Lunch was provided by church members, followed by a presentation by Rev. Sprecher and discussion on the Welcoming Congregation Renewal program at First Parish.

Final plans for the Holly Day Fair: (a) Setup: Janet Dye (with possible help from Susan Irish) will set up at 10 a.m. on Friday morning in prep for the fair's start on Friday evening and will staff the table on Friday eve; (b) Sonia will staff the table on Saturday from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and Rachel will staff it from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; (c) Kat Gillespie will supply some homemade jams to be sold; (d) Other products for sale: Equal Exchange coffee's, teas, cocoa mixes, etc. (5) Betty will put together cocoa mixes in small jars. Susan Irish will help Betty to remove the labels from the bottle and Rachel Tedesco will assist in filling them. Janet Dye will provide stickers for the caps and instructions cards leftover from last year.

Latest on NuclearBan.ma. Rev. Rachel sent emails to 16 church members living in State Senators Timilty and Brady's districts. Both senators are on a committee which is presently studying bills to ban the production of nuclear weapons in Mass. The message to members asks them to send emails supporting the three bills banning nuclear weapon manufacturing and asking that these bills be discharged from the committee to the Senate floor.

Reports from Sonia:

1. Animal Ministry Renewal. She had put an article in the Bridging and had sent out emails to the original UUAM members asking if people wanted to revive the committee to support UU Animal Ministry. She received no response (except for from one former member who states that they do not have the time to give to this). She concluded that at this time there seems little interest in reviving this. It was agreed that if projects/actions arise that relate to this, they will be brought to SJC for vetting and action as needed.
2. Welcoming Congregation Renewal. Sonia reported on the Sunday discussions, which are being held after coffee hour once a month. The WCRC began with the first one on October 14, presenting our WC history and why renewing is important at this time. The next one is scheduled for Nov. 17 on the topic "What is an ally?" The suggested book to have as a resource and for loan is The ABC's of LGBT+ by Ash Mardell. Betty will order 3 copies at \$13.75 each on Amazon for people to borrow and read. There will be no WCRC discussion in December as this is a busy month. The next meeting will be on January 19. The topic will be the meaning of related acronyms.
3. The BSU Food Pantry. Eileen Estudiante, Director of Student Outreach and Special Programs at BSU, appealed to Revered Paul and other local ministers for donations, including a list of items most needed. Sonia has posted the list on Facebook and submitted for weekly emails. There's a box in the hallway for contributions. Betty will deliver these to the Rondileau Campus Center.

American flag replacement. Betty volunteered to find an American flag to replace the one that's missing from our flag supply.

Rev. Rachel Report on Recent Activities:

1. Mass Bail Fund: Completed two bailouts at the Brockton District Courthouse – Oct. 15 and Oct. 18
2. Bridgewater Area Social Services brochure. She received information from Betty on the BSU Literacy Project, but there's very little room in the brochure to add this. There are still extra copies of the original to pass out. So we may hold back on redesigning the master copy for now.
3. Welcomed Vicki Elson and Timmons Wallis from Mass Peace Action on Sunday, Sept. 22. Unfortunately, they took too long at coffee hour to present their case (including a video) and to ask for supporters. In the future, we need to make it clearer to guests that coffee hour isn't a good time to talk to the congregation.
4. Coordinated with state organizations on lobbying for 3 anti-nuclear bills in the State House. (presented above)
5. Looking ahead: A Climate Strike Rally is scheduled in Brockton near Stonehill College on Sunday, Nov. 10. This will be followed by a "MA Climate Debate" between Sen. Markey and Senate candidate Shannon Liss-Riordan at Stonehill's McCarthy Auditorium. Rev. Rachel plans to attend and is spreading the word to Democratic Committee members in her hometown of East Bridgewater. Since the church needs to stay non-partisan, she's not announcing to church members.

6. ROE Act Advocacy Day on Thursday, Nov. 14. Rev. Rachel may attend this lobbying day at the State House.

Other:

- An Act of Racism in East Bridgewater: Betty brought up the news of a racist incident in East Bridgewater featured in *The Enterprise* on Nov. 4. EB high school students posted a video on social media with white students wearing black face and saying the n-word. The video has since been taken down. School officials held assemblies in the junior and senior high schools denouncing this and said they would investigate further. But Sonia felt the reaction was inadequate. Rev. Rachel will talk to Vernon and Sam as leaders in the Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect (BCCR) about their response. The SJC will likely support what BCCR decides to do.
- Betty announced that BSU has appointed Dr, Mary Grant as the new administrator of the Richard Martin Institute of Social Justice. Betty will write a letter to Dr. Grant to say we worked with the Institute in the past and want to do so in the future.

The next meeting of the SJC is scheduled for Thursday, December 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the church.