

FULL SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT for SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

A meeting of the full Social Justice Committee was held Sept. 3 on ZOOM. Present were: Debbie Baumgarten, Janet Dye, Betty Gilson, Susan Irish and Rev. Rachel Tedesco. The following issues were discussed and decided.

1. The current Bank balance is \$4,021.78 of which \$1,283.22 is for *Read to Me, Father* and \$131.00 is for R E Scholarship.
2. MainSpring House lunches were successfully prepared: 75 for MainSpring House on Aug. 11 and 25 on Aug. 13 for Evelyn House. Lunches for both locations will be prepared on Sept. 11. Betty will arrange for an October date.
3. Reports from branches
 - a. Green Sanctuary Committee
 - i. The GS service postponed from April will be presented on Sept. 27. It will be an environmental justice program on insects.
 - ii. They will be holding their Annual Metal Recycling Collection, probably on Oct. 3. After the date is confirmed we will invite Middleboro and Taunton to participate. Rachel will check with Middleboro and Betty will check with Taunton. Proceeds will benefit local Food Pantry.
 - b. Peace Committee
 - i. Sonia D'Alarcao did summer service on her volunteer work for Project Somos. Several other volunteers were present at the excellent ZOOM service.
 - ii. Committee will present Annual Peace service on Sun., Sept. 20 in conjunction with United Nations International Day of Peace.
 - iii. Since this is a ZOOM service some traditions will be virtual. Our guest speaker for the service will be Betty Burkes, an educator and activist for five decades. She has been a Montessori teacher for children, a peace educator with the United Nations, and educational consultant with *Rethinkers in New Orleans*. Her activism has been expressed internationally and nationally with the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom* and as a columnist at the *Cape Cod Times*. She began her meditation practice over 40 years ago with Phiroz Mehta at the Buddhist Society in London, and with Krishnamurti during his residences near London. Since 2001 those seeds of mindfulness and loving kindness have been nourished at CIMC (Cambridge Insight Meditation Center). Betty served on the CIMC Board of directors since 2012.
 - iv. Jim Quinn will take photos of the Peace Pole to include in the service in some way.
 - c. Welcoming Congregation Renewal plans
 - i. James Hayes-Bohanan sent in a report for the Welcoming Congregation Renewal Committee. The group presented a number of educational programs throughout the year, and continued to meet early in the pandemic.

- ii. Summer plans were not fulfilled due to family concerns for James.
 - iii. At the recent church leadership retreat, it was decided that it is time to embark on the formal renewal process. James will be reconvening the group soon to resume planning for this.
- 4. Black Lives Matter Film series
 - a. Sept. 22 at 7:00 pm there will be a ZOOM discussion of the Henry Louis Gates, Jr. PBS series *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross*. Sonia sent in suggestions for the meeting. She said we should prepare discussion questions such as: “What was something new you learned?” “What stood out for you?” “How does African American history impact the present?” We will need to form break out rooms for this discussion if a large number are present. Sonia offered to act as host and set these up in case neither Rev. Paul or Laurie Lessner attend.
 - b. The committee is still looking for an appropriate film on Indigenous Americans for Oct. 27. Possibly *The Condor and the Eagle* if we can work out details.
 - c. Nov. film will probably be a documentary *Uncomfortable Truth*. This is a film about the 400 years of institutional racism in the country. We may be able to watch this using our library cards, Janet Dye will check with BPL. (Possibly Laurie Lessner also.) Rebecca Cordeiro of BCCR found information on this film.
 - d. Dec. 28 will be *True Justice*. About Bryan Stevenson’s fight for equality in the criminal justice system. Rebecca Cordeiro is arranging for this showing.
- 5. Parish Committee will be discussing the status of Black Lives Matter banner. We support a large banner. There should also be a BLM sign in the Wayside Pulpit.
- 6. Share the Plate
 - a. Sept. is supporting the Wampanoag Tribe.
 - b. Oct. is usually for BIC. They are currently donating strictly to COVID -19 concerns in Brockton so this is an appropriate choice.
 - c. Nov. will be for Guest at Your Table.
 - d. Dec. will be divided 50/50 between D.I.C.E. and BCCR to support their diversity work.
- 7. U U the Vote
 - a. Parishioners were invited to donate directly to this program.
 - b. Betty sent out a notice requesting volunteers to work on a phone bank for this.
- 8. Report from Rachel
 - a. Rachel has attended meetings of the Coalition for Social Justice. On Sept. 17 she will be receiving an award from CSJ for her service.
 - b. Rachel spoke with Rev. Sarah Person at Middleboro UU about Social Justice & Social Service committees and activities there. Here is information comparing Middleboro and Bridgewater UU churches

Bridgewater: Rev. Rachel described our several social justice and social service activities: including Black Lives Matter film series and discussion with BCCR and BLM standouts in Bridgewater Center. Also involvement with the Bridgewater Old Colony prisons and the *Read to Me, Father*, preparing MainSpring House bagged lunches once a month. The Green Sanctuary Committee focuses on recycling and reuse. Peace

Committee focuses on an annual Peace Service in the fall. Share the Plate organizations, including UU Mass Action and local charities.

Middleboro: Black Lives Matter Standouts. Presently the church holds BLM standouts each weekday, 6:00-6:30 p.m. to catch commuter traffic. May change this when sunsets are earlier. It's all up for discussion. New: Racial Justice Taskforce. The church is in the process of reconstituting their racial justice focus. This effort is led by Deanne Bonnar and Natalie Johnson. The Goal: To help develop initiatives supported by the *whole* congregation. This process is in 4 distinct tracks: (i) Self development & growth; raising white self-awareness; (ii) Education; (iii) Advocacy & witness; (iv) Service. There will be no collaboration with other groups or engagement with service until they've gone through the first 3 tracks. On Sept. 20, the leaders will begin engaging the congregation as a whole. (Note that Middleboro also has a Green Sanctuary Committee, whose purpose is similar to our GS.)

Financial contributions --

Bridgewater Share the Plate collections for mostly local charities and organizations. One organization is chosen for each month. *(No such activity in Middleboro... as far as I know.)*

9. Other actions

- a. Standouts on the Bridgewater Common are now being held once a month.
- b. Working with BCCR re: policing issues
- c. Betty will contact Lee Forest of the BSU Pride Center to see whether there are ways we can work together during the fall semester.
- d. Debbie shared information about a Sustainability webinar at BSU. Betty will send the message to the church email list.

Next SJC meeting will be Oct. 1 at 7:30 pm probably on ZOOM.