

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Members of the Social Justice and Outreach Committee include: Elizabeth Duckstein, St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon; Patricia Eagon, St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon; Bill Farra, Community of Celebration; Duwayne Ladd, St. Peter's, Blairsville; Nancy Lapp, Holy Cross, Homewood; Marianne Novy, Redeemer, Squirrel Hill; Anne Robb, Calvary, East Liberty; Wesley Rohrer, St. Andrew's, Highland Park; Linda Schneider, St. Brendan's, Franklin Park; and Tom Slater, Calvary, East Liberty. The Rev. Michael Foley of Redeemer, Squirrel Hill, and Lawrence Wray, St. Andrew's, Highland Park, were members until May and June, respectively.

We recommended, and Diocesan Council approved, the disbursement of the 2017 diocesan Lambeth funds, totaling \$3,881, as follows:

International

- American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, \$1000

Regional

- PA Refugee Resettlement Program (after hearing from us, they asked us to direct it to a local organization working with refugees, and we chose Jewish Family and Children's Services), \$1000

Local

- Garden of Peace project (works with transgender youth), \$627
- Living in Liberty (works with victims of human trafficking), \$627
- Allegheny County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates, works to help children in need of representation in the legal system), \$627.

The committee encourages service, education, and advocacy with regard to social justice issues. We want to learn from and, when appropriate, work with other faith groups in Pittsburgh and elsewhere as well as with other parts of the wider Episcopal Church.

Our service now includes working with Andy Muhl in coordinating Trinity Cathedral's hosting of a walk-in ministry that rotates weekly among the five churches of the Downtown Ministerium. We have a team of about 20 volunteers that provides food, toiletries, transportation and referrals. We serve an average of 60 people each month, with especially high demand in winter months. We have received substantial funding for food from PittsburghGives and large in-kind donations of items such as diapers from St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon; St. Brendan's, Franklin Park; and Calvary, East Liberty. Those parishes, as well as the Trinity Cathedral parish and Redeemer, Squirrel Hill, provide regular volunteers.

We also offer grants for vegetable gardens. This year, we received applications and gave grants to the Community of Celebration; St. Andrew's, Highland Park; and St. David's, Peters Township. Here, too, our funds were supplemented by some church donations. Another area of service concerning food is in helping the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. We publicized and participated in a food packing day there on March 24.

As part of our education program, we sponsored an illustrated lecture by Tina Whitehead, held last December at Calvary, East Liberty, on the history of Jerusalem and current issues in Palestinian-Israeli relations. Ms. Whitehead lives part of the year in Israel and works with Sabeel, a Palestinian-Christian peace and justice organization.

We worked together with the Committee on Race and Reconciliation to arrange a facilitated discussion of short films on residential segregation (*The Delmar Divide*) and parents' talks with African-American children about racism (*The Talk*). Held on Sunday, March 11 at St. Andrew's, Highland Park, this was

well-attended and had good participation. These films have been used by the Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN), which trained the facilitators, Ben Rumbaugh and Lauren Enty Rumbaugh.

We have been investigating justice and service issues related to incarceration. In April, Scilla Wahrhaftig, of Pittsburgh Friends Meeting, told us about activism against solitary confinement in Pennsylvania and also about the Healing Communities Program, which trains congregations to help currently or formerly incarcerated members and their families. She stressed the leadership of the PA Council of Churches, especially through Sandy Strauss.

Protecting the environment has been a continuing concern. In February, we wrote to Jerry Stephenson, president of the Board of Trustees, noting that the General Convention of 2015 passed a resolution urging all dioceses and parishes of The Episcopal Church to engage the topic of divestment from fossil fuels and reinvestment in clean energy within the coming year. The response was that the Trustees had a committee that was considering the general issue of socially responsible investments.

We studied other General Convention resolutions and discussed with invited clergy how to promote goals such as divestment from fossil fuels, reduction of energy and carbon usage both personally and institutionally, and stopping construction of new, highly polluting petrochemical plants such as Shell's. We support the statewide conference of Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light, scheduled to be held in Pittsburgh for the first time on October 27 at St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon.

At our July meeting, Jon Delano gave us an extensive report on the General Convention, especially the resolutions from the Domestic Social Justice Committee. Nancy Lapp described the resolutions that supported human rights in Israel and Palestine.

This is a time of multiple justice concerns in the U.S. and internationally, and accordingly, much local justice work. As committee chair, I frequently inform parish outreach coordinators and contacts about diocesan service, education, and advocacy events related to social justice. The committee would like to recognize the many ways in which diocesan members are contributing, especially through outreach to refugees and immigrants at St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon; St. Brendan's, Franklin Park; Redeemer, Squirrel Hill; and Calvary, East Liberty; and at St. Andrew's, Highland Park, through the organization *Hello Neighbor*.

As a committee under the auspices of Diocesan Council, we are grateful, as always, to Council for its support.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Novy, Chair