

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Members of the Social Justice and Outreach Committee include the following: Elizabeth Duckstein, St. Paul's, Mt Lebanon; Patricia Eagon Stafford, St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon; Bill Farra, Community of Celebration, Aliquippa; Carol Gonzales, Emmanuel, North Side; Marilyn Mulvihill, St. Brendan's, Franklin Park; Marianne Novy, Redeemer, Squirrel Hill, Chair; Anne Robb, Calvary, East Liberty; Wesley Rohrer, St. Andrew's, Highland Park; Tom Slater, Calvary, East Liberty; Gloria Trevino, St. James, Penn Hills; Linda Tardy Wilson, Retired Deacon.

We are committed to promoting service, education, and advocacy with regard to social justice issues. We draw on the Episcopal Church's public policy positions and make interfaith and other intergroup alliances to achieve a positive impact in our region. Since the last time we reported in a pre-convention journal (2018), we have successfully proposed convention resolutions drawing on these positions every year—protecting the environment and helping those affected by the criminal justice system (2018), welcoming immigrants (2019), voting (2020) and climate action (2021). This year we are proposing a resolution advocating ways to reduce gun violence.

In 2019 we arranged a workshop led by Sandy Strauss of the PA Council of Churches on the Healing Communities Program, which educates congregations on how to help people returning from incarceration. That year we also sponsored a showing of the film *Plastic Paradise*, with a panel following, on the harmful effects of pollution. While live in-person talks were shut down because of the pandemic, we arranged zoom talks, mostly co-sponsored with the Commission on Race and Reconciliation, which were recorded and are accessible on the diocesan website:

David Harris, Pitt Law School, with John Welch, former Pittsburgh Police Chaplain responding, "A City Divided: Police/Citizen Violence, Police Reform," October 4, 2020

Erica Strassburger, City Council, and Summer Lee, State Representative, "Police Reform and Public Safety," Feb. 21, 2021

Jules Lobel, Pitt Law School, "What's wrong with solitary confinement," May 16, 2021

Panel with speakers from St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon, St. Stephen's, McKeesport, Calvary, East Liberty, UU Church of the North Hills, and Mt Lebanon United Lutheran Church, "How your church can fight climate change and save money," September 19, 2021

Joylette Portlock, Director of Sustainability Pittsburgh, "Forging a Better Future for All," October 26, 2022

For a long time we have given grants of up to \$500 to help parishes grow healthy food. Grants from church organizations and individuals supplement our budget for these grants. In 2021, because we could not spend money on in-person events, we followed up the climate panel with Green Church grants of up to \$500 to help churches reduce their energy usage. We followed up further with a workshop on April 20, 2022, in which recipients of those grants and others talked about what their parish is doing and hopes to do to help the environment. This was the beginning

of a Diocesan Creation Care Network, which has a Facebook page and a googlegroup. Tom Slater, patobyblack@yahoo.com, is the contact person.

We helped revitalize the walk-in food pantry at Trinity Cathedral, and still participate in it although its activities have been reduced because of Covid. And we have participated in and helped to publicize the Memorial to the Lost, an exhibit of t-shirts with the names and ages of victims of gun violence in Allegheny County this year, circulating among about a dozen local churches. One of our important responsibilities is publicizing events, especially from parishes and faith-based organizations, and we are grateful to Andy Muhl for the many times he has included notices from us in the diocesan email newsletter *Grace Happens*.

The diocese has given us the responsibility of recommending the distribution of the Lambeth Fund, which is supposed to be divided equally among an international organization, a national or regional one, and a local one. In 2021 our recommendation was that the local third of the fund of \$4667 should go to Jewish Family and Children's Services for their help of Afghan refugees and immigrants. We voted for our international fund to go to the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund, and our national/regional one to RAICES, which gives legal and other help to immigrants and refugees at US borders. From our own budget, we have also several times bought program ads for PIIN (Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network), an organization the diocese has helped for years, and Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light, which helps communities of faith respond to climate change and had its first state-wide conference in Pittsburgh at St. Paul's Mt. Lebanon in 2018.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Novy, Chair