

St Francis Social Justice Agenda
January 25th, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.
Lower-level Faith Formation Building

Present: Deacon Tom Renze, Sharon Witty, Zita Cashin, Mary Burns, Mary Lake, Kathy Leonard, Lynn Carroll, Jamie Williams, Mark & Elly Mack.

1. **Prayer** Mark led the Good Samaritan prayer
2. **House of Compassion** Mark & Elly did the meal in January and served about 40 people. Paula will have February, Lynn in March, Joyce in April and Mack's again in May. It has helped to have the sign-up sheet at church and have some new volunteers.
3. **Last Watch Update** This Saturday, Brenda Long will be giving a program on Human Trafficking at 1:00 at the library. She is from Garden Gate Ranch in Des Moines.
4. **Ukrainian Project** The newest family to come has both parents working already. There are no new plans for more families right now. FYI: CAPS has a program that offers "refugee" children opportunities they would not otherwise get. An example was when they took a group of kids bowling on Saturday. We were there and talked with them and they were having a great time.
5. **Sister Parish Update:** We were planning on them visiting this fall, but it might be much later than that due to the difficulty in getting Visas. We are starting the prayer partners again during Lent so I would encourage people to sign up for that. We did a Zoom with them last week and there were concerns about the new priest and the many changes happening at the parish. The plan will be to Zoom with the new priest in March after each of our parishes takes time to reassess the parish agreement. This will be a good time to get to know the priest and for him to understand the Sister Parish

agreement and a good time for us to look over the agreement. We are also planning to have the “Romero stations” during Lent.

6. 4th Sunday Collection - Instead of the Good Samaritan fund for February we will propose funds to go to Big Brothers Big Sisters.

7. Circle of Support The staff from Catholic Charities have brought the training to St Francis on 2 separate times. Currently, there seem to be enough volunteers for the Circle of Support but possibly not enough volunteers for the Mentoring part. Tom and the people from Catholic Charities feel we are progressing and will continue to work with people here to get the program off the ground.

8. Giving Tree Summary- 22 families plus CIRSI individuals were helped this year. Twenty (20) gift tags not returned. Also this year we had one family that couldn't find their \$30 gift card. Together with the \$30 gift card and the 16 gifts not returned, \$210 was taken from the account. Adding up the estimated totals of gifts & 1 gift card per family, the 2023 Giving Tree generated ~\$4,800 in donations.

9. Respect Life Committee update- Minutes of their meeting were shared via email.

10. Good Samaritan Fund Update: Since Sister Chris has left, there has been no one assigned to handle the requests coming to the office for financial assistance from the Good Samaritan Funds. A meeting was held with Fr Alan, Deacon Tom, John Fink, Mary Claire Mohrfeld, and Elly Mack to discuss the funds. Because of the big time commitment involved and no staff available to handle the requests, it was decided that we would continue to have a Good Samaritan Fund, but most of the requests would be referred to outside agencies. We would reassess the amount of money in the account a couple of times a year. If the amount would exceed \$5,000, then that extra amount would be sent to a local agency. The decision for allocating those funds would be made by the St Francis Social Justice committee. Fr Alan and Deacon Tom wanted to have a plan for

hotel rooms for the homeless the Deacons might encounter after closing St Mary's church. Elly would check with YSS and the Police Department regarding how they deal with paying for hotel rooms for the homeless. Also, Elly would send the parish office a list of community resources for them to refer to when requests come to them. Fr Alan suggested having the list of Community Resources on the webpage. In doing more research on this discovered someone from MICA is working on a list also. Elly is working with her and decided it might be better to wait until that list is done before putting it on the webpage. Lynn also suggested rather than putting the resource list on the website we just use the 211 number for families.

11. Misc/Next Meeting Jolene Jebson from Trinity Luthern invited people from St Francis to come on February 28th at noon to an informational meeting at the library regarding the Hamus Israel information and updates. The person presenting is ELCA Pastor Jack Mithelman of Urbandale. He is a member of the Peace Not Walls Committee of the SE Iowa Synd. Elly will share with the group and Father Alan the flyer once the information is compiled.

Also, at the next meeting, on February 22nd, Kendra Sorenson from the United Way will give a 30-minute presentation on the ALICE project. ALICE is the acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE is the working poor.

Because of how the calendar falls in March with Holy Week, we will be moving that meeting to March 21st. We will possibly be having an update from Courtney Dufford from AMOS during that meeting.

Respectfully submitted
Elly Mack