

New Brackett Church - SOCIAL JUSTICE Task Force Minutes March 22, 2022

Chair: Joanne Sterling

Scribe: Caron Chess

Attendees: Bill Oliver, Ann Coughlin, Will Green, Tookie Harris, Barbara Carter, Linda C-N, Sara Ingraham

Wabanaki Legislation Caron updated the status of the Wabanaki legislation. LD 906, LD 585, and 1626 were all voted out of committee largely along party lines.

Meeting with Mike Sylvester Joanne reported that Mike Sylvester is not running for a new term. He did not respond to our invitation for a meeting. Sue Robbins, who served on the League of Women Voters with Kim Peaslee, will be running.

Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition Brackett raised \$3,600 total from the congregation. MIRC needs the money not for individual families but to support meals they are serving to asylum seekers in hotels and motels. Bill reported that our crew filled individual meal trays with food and then packed them in boxes. Will will encourage sign-ups in his weekly newsletter.

Bulletin Board We were given a sizable bulletin board to highlight our activities. Anne will be leading the effort to keep it current.

Events, such as the art auction that the Bridge Committee is organizing, should be sent to Faith for posting on the PI Community Collaborative Bulletin Board.

Pierogi Making Margo is inviting in a professional cook who owns a restaurant in Portland to make pierogis in our kitchen. Donations for the cooking class will go to an organization in Ukraine. Pierogis will also be sold for a take out dinner.

Earth Day Bill, Mary Anne, and Linda are interested in making earth day signs and greeting the boat, as well as island clean up. SJTF enthusiasm included suggestions to involve kids and PEAT.

Policy for Brackett Public Support for Initiatives/Legislation

Board Recommendations were: 10 people to be in support of the letter before being brought to the Assembly; to be used only sparingly; brought to Assembly after a certain amount of interest and background work (such as letter-writing) had been already done; clear background information should be given to the Assembly with a good amount of lead time before the vote, if possible; 90% majority required to pass.

Among the suggestions were:

- Lending our name should be part of a larger strategy of engagement within the church. (This is a more in-depth approach than requiring a certain number of people to bring forward a proposal.)
- Involve a champion working with the SJTF and others

- Require educational and/or advocacy efforts prior to being brought to the Assembly
- Share through worship service
- Prepare clear background and provide lead time to review the request
- At least 75% of those present at the Assembly meeting required to pass (Do abstentions count?)

Our Wabanaki effort was referenced as a model although other proposals need not have the same extensive engagement. Over the course of several years Brackett sponsored a Wabanaki-led workshop on Wabanaki/Maine history, two book group discussions about related books, a church service focused on one of those books, a legislative forum, letter writing, and meetings with MUUSAN, which coordinates state-wide advocacy efforts.

We will continue this discussion at the next meeting as part of our larger SJTF strategy.

Next Meeting: April 26, 4 pm on Zoom.