

Minutes—Social Justice Committee Meeting 10/08/2020

Attendees:

Mike Schley, Leader	JD Ice	Stephanie Mitchell
Sue King	Judy Ice	Marcia Fort
Cindy Ingalls	Lori Edwards	Mark LaMantia
Jessica Brueggeman	Katie Hirscher	Elizabeth Lusk
John Fisher	Juan Ayala-Carmona	Dustin Ingalls
Shelley Kane	Tom Cadwallader	John Semmes
Jerry Perkins	Harry Hurd	Charlotte Sullivan
Trenna Perkins	Marcia Hurd	

Mike opened the meeting with prayer at 7:00 p.m.

- Illuminate Class - Charlotte Sullivan provided an update
 - Had 2nd week of the Illuminate class this week; great turnout; last night's topic was focused on corporate and political aspects of criminal justice system; next week Juan Ayala-Carmona will be our speaker. He will share his experience as a prison chaplain and will focus more on the personal/family side of incarceration; last week of the class will focus on the bail bond system – the speaker is David Bland
 - Anyone can still participate even if they have missed previous classes; email Charlotte to join
- Vote Campaign – JD Ice provided an update
 - The steering committee decided to do some educational outreach to support voting
 - In the congregational email you will see a vote banner and a message encouraging people to vote and providing facts around how to vote
 - Katie and JD have offered to witness people's ballots and also to drive people to early voting; Mark LaMantia, Stephanie Mitchell and Marcia Fort have also volunteered to help; JD will reach out to the group for support as needed
- Criminal Justice Subgroup - update provided by Mark LaMantia and Juan Ayala-Carmona
 - Had a series of zoom mtgs with people who had previously indicated interest in being a part of the subgroup; expect to have around 11 participants
 - They are identifying specific issues of interest
 - They will continue to research and investigate specific topics and determine how to focus and move forward
 - On October 28th, the Wake County Bar Association and the 10th Judicial District are having their first collaborative form for community engagement – the focus is on creating lasting change in courthouse communities
- Housing Subgroup - Lori Edwards provided an update
 - Dustin Ingalls will co-chair with Lori
 - Current participants in this subgroup are Charlotte Sullivan, Nettie Carson and Pat Cash; would like more people to join

- Originally in the sign-up genius there was a larger “Poverty” topic group outlined. Lori has gone back to those that signed up for “poverty” and asked them to select more specific subtopics. The steering committee has prioritized housing and education as they see them as being more actionable right now.
- The subgroup is on the front end of the housing topic and will be exploring partnerships and ways to move forward
- JD saw in news today large monetary donation by Chase towards affordable housing
- Katie mentioned a book and resource called “The Eviction Lab.”
 - The lab works in conjunction with our very own Wake Forest University Law School and is a great resource for eviction data and has some great tools to get data and share it on social media <https://evictionlab.org/>
 - The book is “Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City” by Matthew Desmond – he lives with and follows eight different families going through the eviction process and tries to understand the relationships between landlords, tenants and housing policy
<https://www.quailridgebooks.com/book/9780553447453>
 - NPR interview with the author
<https://www.npr.org/2018/04/12/601783346/first-ever-evictions-database-shows-were-in-the-middle-of-a-housing-crisis>
- Education Subgroup – update provided by Judy Ice and Sue King
 - Judy mentioned she was appreciative to have Sue’s deep expertise in NC Education. Sue had been a principal in Wake County Schools before retiring.
 - They are in the process of recruiting for this subgroup and are reaching out to people who have indicated interest via sign up genius
 - They have discussed possibly getting the NC Justice Center to do a briefing for the subgroup to help them focus and determine a path forward
 - The Leandro decision was a significant NC Supreme Court Decision regarding provision of equal education for all – most recently the WestEd consulting group released their report to the court outlining the actions needed for the state to comply with the ruling.
- Connections Function - Elizabeth Lusk provided an update
 - Elizabeth and Sherry Hay are continuing to update the spreadsheet of people/groups to reach out to
 - John Semmes made Mike aware of an interest that the governor’s office has in connection with faith communities on social justice – Brian Pappal has a contact; Mike is connecting with Brian’s contact to learn more
 - Per request by the steering committee, they reached out to Anne Stark to ask about her plans with the youth on social justice topics and reported she has several things coming up in the next month
 - 21-day challenge for high school youth and they also will be watching the movie *The Hate You Give*
 - How to be Antiracist – this will be a book study for middle school youth

- Sherry and Elizabeth are also working on a survey as well (that will be used to gather information from potential partnering community people/groups)
- Communications Function - Jessica Brueggeman provided an update
 - The steering committee has a communication plan, that includes continued outreach to the congregation (through email) and also continued communication with the SJ committee through our FB group; they are also considering an email newsletter every other week specifically for those folks who have been involved in this committee or one of our SJ programs – more to come here
 - Jessica asked for feedback on how we are communicating and if anyone would like to help with communications including posting on social media, please reach out to her
 - Cindy stated that the church as an Instagram page and can help post there
 - Mike suggested to use the SJ logo when posting as this helps with recognition
 - JD asked that we please continue to ask people on the congregation to join this committee and our efforts. Jessica and Mike will work on that.
- Discussion of Briefings from NC Justice Center – Mike Schley
 - Mike has arranged to get us private briefings from the NC Justice Center – they do advocacy work in a number of areas
 - Mike and JD propose having the NC Justice Center do a briefing at our monthly meetings the next few months
 - Charlotte suggested coordinating the sequence of briefings with the topics of our next education program which is planned to start early next year. The topic is not yet determined, but having done criminal justice for about six months we might shift the focus to education or housing.
 - The group agreed with this approach for the next few months
- Research/Overview of TREC – Katie Hirscher
 - Katie provided an overview of TREC (Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice); Katie will be sharing the deck she used to provide the overview
 - Upcoming TREC task force meetings in October and November (dates in deck provided by Katie)

Mike closed the meeting by reading the following prayer by Lydia Neshangwe of Zimbabwe that was used as the benediction at our World Communion Sunday service.

Our God who is our creator God, our heavenly father
 Bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships.
 Bless us with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people.
 Bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war.
 Bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world.
 In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.

The meeting ended at approximately 8:07 p.m.

--Prepared by Jessica Brueggeman