

First Meeting of the St. John's Social Justice and Outreach Group

Thursday, March ___, 2017

Denson Lounge

Present: Penny Holt; Patricia Manning; Anne Moone; Peggy Wilmot; Murray Luft; Larry Scyner; John McLaren

Apologies: Rhoda Brodie-Smith; Kathleen Gibson

This meeting was the first of the new group and designed to discuss: 1. A mandate for the group; 2. Membership of the group; 3. Communication issues; 4. Meeting schedules.

1.Mandate: it was agreed that the group has the following functions:

- (a) To encourage parish involvement in social justice and outreach programs that accord with the values and available resources of this faith community. This function involves both a visioning and implementation and advocacy process. In addition to validating existing programs and communicating those ministries and their impact to the parish, the group can also act as a catalyst for brainstorming and consciousness on other initiatives whether episodic or ongoing, and, where appropriate, to advocate for support of them to the parish. Examples given at the meeting included: organizing or supporting electors meetings on social justice issues during election campaigns; organizing initiatives (conferences, education sessions, letter writing campaigns, even press conferences) to address and highlight social justice issues and to encourage parishioners to get behind them and collectively to put pressure on representatives of the various levels of government, and the Diocese and National Church (examples included: refugee and immigration policy; poverty and housing; justice for Aboriginal communities). Particular reference was made to the need to get behind the objective of reconciliation with First Peoples to which we are committed in principle, but with little evidence as of now of any meaningful corporate action. On another matter Anne Moon undertook to contact the young women who represented local federal constituencies at the Daughters of the

Vote session on Parliament Hill in March to see whether they might be prepared to talk at the parish in the near future

- (b) To evaluate on the basis of consultation and advise the Clergy, Wardens and Parish Council on new or revived programs of social justice and social outreach in the parish on the one hand, and on the other to evaluate and recommend to the clergy, Wardens and Parish Council that existing programs that should be closed down or reduced.
- (c) Coordinating effort on social justice and outreach projects in the parish where this seems sensible, and to ensure that the Parish community is fully apprised of the range of social justice and outreach programs in place and their need for physical, moral and financial support.
- (d) Nurturing a positive relationship between the St. John's social justice and outreach programs and those in other Anglican parishes and the Diocese of British Columbia, cross community initiatives (the prime example being GVAT) and interfaith projects in Victoria and region. We are already in the process of working with GVAT and their ongoing process of discerning issues which can be used corporately to seek commitments from local politicians on social issues.

2.Membership: it was agreed that the following programs, if not represented in the group already, should be invited to appoint a representative: the Food Bank; Alliance Cooking; Out of the Rain Shelter Program; PWRDF; the Refugee Support Program; GVAT Initiative: Amnesty Support; the St. John's LGBT Community. The group will have power to add if other programs are developed. Representation of groups should not exhaust the membership. The Parish should be represented by a warden, and the group reserves the right to add members with a general interest in and commitment to social justice and outreach.

3.Communication: there was agreement that as a group we should produce a channels of communication that will improve the parish's understanding of the current commitment to social justice and outreach and of new projects and challenges which are worthy of parishioners support. Among options discussed were: a periodic newsletter on both news from the trenches and information on other issues around which support in the parish could mobilize; and, use of the parish e-mail communication system according to the accepted protocols (Penny Holt has agreed to educate us on this). Displays at Sunday coffee are another way

of giving meaning to the reality of concern, whether for existing programs or new initiatives.

4.Meetings Schedule: it was agreed that for the moment we should meet on a bi-monthly basis with power to add extra meetings if necessary. The next meeting will be on Thursday, May ?? at 10.30, hopefully in the Denson Lounge.

Respectfully submitted, John McLaren