

Social Justice Commission Meeting Minutes Monday, December 15, 2025 - 7 PM

The St. Thomas More Social Justice Commission strives to put Faith into Action, serving all Creation with a keen awareness of Catholic Social Teaching.

1. **Opening Prayer** - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
2. **Welcoming of New Members** - No new members present
3. **Approval of November Meeting Minutes** - No changes noted.
4. **GREEN Team Report** - December 1 Meeting Notes:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ahv9wg2fAA2HwRV6pMLTxufSFZQDEg5V59zStbO3JV8/edit?usp=sharing>
5. **Racial Equity Update** -
 - a. Group will have a retreat and planning the morning of January 24, 2026
 - b. Planning for Lenten Stations of the Cross in progress.

OLD BUSINESS:

6. **Stewardship Weekend** -
 - a. Recap/thoughts for next year -
 - i. There was a lot going on in the gathering space at the same time. It was recommended that maybe we consider having a “stewardship weekend” multiple times per year to keep initiatives and mission in front of people. Wayne and Adam will take this to the Pastoral Council.
 - b. Brochure holder -
 - i. We will be installing a brochure holder in the fair trade room that includes information about multiple organizations offering and accepting help.
7. **Open Heartland/CWH Family Gift Sponsorship** -
 - a. Wrapping event on November 16th provided gifts for thirty families.
 - b. ****Delivery assistance is needed** for CWH families in IC, West Liberty and Muscatine** - Ann H, Jan C, Sue & Wayne F., Mary & Jim M. and Adam S. volunteered to help. **Others interested can contact Kim or Tom.**
 - c. Rethinking for next year -
 - Dinner with Open Heartland Families at STM including shared dishes, activities for children (face painting, cookie decorating, something that represents other cultures)
 - Purchase of gifts would then follow the meeting of the family
 - Kim and Tom will follow up with Deb Dunkhase on this discussion.
 - Other ideas can be forwarded to the group.

Social Justice Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 15, 2025 - 7 PM

8. Other Holiday Initiatives -

- a. Toys for Tots/DVIP - two truckloads of toys were delivered by Wayne for Toys-for-Tots, and a carload of items for DVIP. KofC also had a nice number of donations. Thank you for your generosity!
- b. Christmas Tree Decorating - cancelled due to lack of availability. Two donated trees were delivered to the Catholic Worker Houses (from Barb Swanson and Novaks) and they were decorated by residents of the houses.

NEW/ONGOING BUSINESS:

9. Table of Grace update - Tracy Lees reported that over 100 people were served at the last meal, and 88 to-go meals

- a. **STM Meal** - January 25, 2026 -Requesting walking tacos. Tracy will send out Sign-up Genius
- b. Blessing bags - clothing donations are no longer being accepted due to inappropriateness of items received. Blessing bags will be assembled and distributed at meals instead. An Amazon wishlist will be distributed for participation in this.

10. Inside Out update - Tracy Lees reported that numbers of people dropping in for assistance is increasing.

- a. If you are aware of anyone willing to employ or rent to people coming out of prison, please contact Inside Out. This is getting increasingly difficult for these individuals. These men and women are often being mentored by someone.
- b. Donations of men' s socks, underwear and white t-shirts are always needed.

11. Open Heartland -

- a. Always in need of Size 5 & 6 diapers, women's hygiene products

12. If unable to make it over to an organization, donations to Inside Out, Open Heartland or CWH can be placed in the Fair Trade room. Please indicate who they are intended for and we will deliver

13. Fairtrade Sales –

- a. Collaboration with Mosaic - went very well. We will likely repeat this again next year.
- b. Summary of sales/expenses - one sale cancelled due to weather, but still sold over \$700 this past weekend.

Social Justice Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 15, 2025 - 7 PM

- c. **Addition of Franciscans for Peace soap & lotion products** - available in Fair trade room after 12/16. Information on this organization can be found here: <https://franciscanpeacemakers.org/pages/our-programs>

14. Catholic Worker House Meals -

- a. Next meals: January 4 and February 1, 2026
 - i. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E4BA8AD2EAAFA7-60885960-january>
 - ii. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E4BA8AD2EAAFA7-60886146-february>

15. SAGES -

- a. January 6, 2026 Potluck (all are welcome)
- b. February/March - Wisdom Jesus by Cynthia Bourgeault
- c. **Please feel free to invite others!**

2026 PLANNING:

16. Emphasis on Catholic Social Teaching Education and Awareness

- a. **Monthly** - pulpit announcement, bulletin submission, short discussion in meeting (EFJ Resources)
- b. **January** - start with overview of CST using USCCB and EFJ resources:
 - i. <https://www.usccb.org/sjp/catholic-social-teaching>
 - ii. <https://educationforjustice.org/homepage-member/>
- c. Note how each of our parish's initiatives reflect intentions of CST
- d. **Catholic Social Teaching in a Year opportunity: a year looking at Rerum Novarum:** <https://flocknote.com/catholic-social-teaching-in-a-year/>
- e. **Please contact Kim if interested in assisting in the planning of this initiative. This may include writing bulletin announcements, website updates, and other communication efforts.**

17. Collaboration/Organization of Initiatives -

- a. How do we prevent overlap of efforts and requests of parishioners -
 - i. Look for a more consistent way to share information
 - ii. Kim and Tom meeting with the Knights of Columbus
 - iii. Consider spreading our "charitable events" out throughout the year, less emphasis on buying in December?
- b. What should the focus of Social Justice be? - making sure we are working on charity and justice. Include education and awareness resources.

18. Future Initiatives - Shared Spreadsheet [Social Justice Commission Initiatives](#)

- a. *Development of **LGBTQ+ & Allies Faith Sharing Group*** - Group discussed what the needs are, and expressed a desire to start small ("soft-opening").

Social Justice Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 15, 2025 - 7 PM

- b. Fleece Blankets for Guatemala (50x60) - Kim will create a sign-up genius for the ~50 blankets needed. These can be cut but not tied.

19. Lenten Works of Mercy Projects (Feb 18 to April 2, 2026)

- a. Please submit ideas for organizations/projects; Backpack drive added.

20. February Tithing Grants - applications will be put out in January. These applications are available for all parishioners, including commissioners. If you have an organization you would like supported, please fill out a form!

21. Next Meeting – January 11, 2026 9:45 AM MPR (upstairs)

22. Future Meetings - (9:45 AM in church MPR unless otherwise noted):

- January 11, 2026
- February 8, 2026
- March 8, 2026
- April 12, 2026
- May 11, 2026 **Monday 7 PM
- June 14, 2026
- July 12, 2026
- August 9, 2026
- September 13, 2026