

STM Social Justice Commission Meeting Minutes

Sunday, July 12, 2026 9:45 AM

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

Opening Prayer “The Noise of Politics” from Prayers for a Privileged People (Walter Bruggemann)

Review of June Meeting Minutes -No corrections made

OLD BUSINESS/UPDATES:

1. **Fairtrade Sales** –
 - Proposed dates for upcoming extended sales: September 12&13, October 17&18, November 21& 22, December 5&6, December 19&20 - Kim to confirm availability of these with Maricarla
2. **STM LGBTQ+ Faith Sharing** – Adam - First social event went well. Fellowship gatherings planned after 8:30 Mass the first Sunday of the month, Faith sharing the third Thursday of the month. Social and/or volunteer activities to be planned by the group.
3. **STM Allies Group** - Planning meeting scheduled 7/31/26, 10 AM at STM (room TBA)
4. **Racial Equity Report** -
 - **Juneteenth celebration** was June 14th at 4 pm. Attendance was fewer people than hoped for, earlier planning and promotion planned for next year.
5. **Green Team Update** - Jay
 - Minutes from July meeting:
https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=388dc1af72&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msg-f:1870488225452036588&th=19f54f217a9e91ec&view=att&disp=safe&realattid=f_mrhe70uc0&zw
 - Earthcare retreat at STM Saturday, Oct 10th - 9AM to 3PM
 - [Climate Change Actions You Can Take to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint](#), 7/17, Our Lady of the Prairie
 - [Rooted: the Invitation of Science, Nature and Spirit](#), 9/23, Our Lady of the Prairie
 - [Food & Water Watch retreat day Saturday August 1](#)
 - **Film screening** - “[Groundswell](#)” at STM in September during Season of Creation. Third installment in restorative agriculture documentaries (“[Kiss the Ground](#)” and “[Common Ground](#)”).
6. **Food pantry collection and distribution - (Karla Smith)**
 - [Sign-up Genius](#) assistance was created.
 - Trial period of weighing and boxing donations on the last Saturday of the month after 5:30 Mass; we may need to switch to Sunday if not enough volunteer response for Saturdays.
 - Better awareness and promotion discussed - bulletin and Mass announcements, resume handing out printed “The Last Shall Be First” tote bags at church the week prior to food collection.
7. **Catholic Worker House Meals and Foot Clinic**- meal donations and servers needed:
 - [August 2, 2026](#), [September 6, 2026](#) [October 4, 2026](#)

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8. New Member Meal 8/15/26

- Next meal: Saturday, August 15, 2026 after 5:15 Mass - **Sofia, Patrick and Linda volunteered to coordinate and staff table. Tom will provide folder with handouts. Kim to contact Judy Frits about potentially having desserts at the table.**

9. Tithing Grant Meeting -

- Reviewed tithing grant process.
- Funding increased by Finance Council from 1% to 1.5% (\$9750 twice per year, beginning in August) Plus revenue from Fair Trade Sales
- Focus to shift to giving local grants while also educating on national/international needs.
- Focus on one (or more) of the 7 Themes of Social Teaching each grant cycle.
- Increase the grant amount to \$2500 maximum.
- Continue to promote fair trade sales to increase our ability to give grants.
- Provide parish education (using the bulletin, website and FB page) regarding what tithing grants are, why we do them, how parishioners can help.
- Tithing Grants to be reviewed and approved in September and March.
- **Next meeting 8/6/26 7:00 PM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4884889632?omn=85832103234>

NEW BUSINESS:

10. **Table of Grace Meal** - Not enough interest at this time for STM to commit to providing and staffing a meal. Will ask St Mary's and St Pat's for sign ups that STM parishioners can help with providing food and serving when they are serving meals.
11. **CRC Coat Drive - Week of October 11th at The River Community Church**
STM to collect coats and wearable winter clothing and boots 2 to 3 weeks prior to distribution. Will need to confirm collection and storage area availability.
Volunteer signup will be placed in bulletin and hopefully on STM webpage when it's available.
12. **Diaper Drive** - Supports Coralville Community Food pantry. Packaging event planned for October 21st at CCFP. STM to collect diaper donations the first 3 weekends in October. Signup for packing event to be forwarded when available.
13. **Other volunteer opportunities:**
 - **Ready, Set, School - School Supply Distribution (United Way)**
 - i. **Friday, August 14 & Saturday, August 15**
Johnson County Fairgrounds – Building C
4261 Oak Crest Hill Rd SE, Iowa City
 - ii. Info here: <https://www.unitedwayjwc.org/backtoschool>
 - iii. Linda will write an announcement for bulletin and FB

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- **DVIP Furniture Drive and Building Event with Houses into Homes**
 - i. Info on new DVIP housing:
<https://dviapiowa.org/making-magic-happen-at-the-row-furniture-drive-in-partnership-with-houses-into-homes/>
 - ii. August 11th Furniture build sign up:
<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/housesintohomes/event/magic/>

FUTURE PLANNING:

14. **Succession Planning** - Kim to step down as co-chair in August, Tom to remain co-chair for 1 more year. Overlapping co-chairs going forward, with a 2 year term for each chairperson. Who is interested? I promise it will be do-able and kinda fun!
15. **Catholic Social Teaching Education and Awareness**
 - Will include Social Teachings in Tithing grant announcements and promotions, focusing on a few teachings each tithing cycle to connect CST with tithing, charity and justice.
16. **Collaboration/Organization of Initiatives & Communication** -
Will ask Joan Maley (new Parish Council president) to resume quarterly meetings of STM Commission chairs to review planned activities and create opportunities for cooperative efforts and avoid duplication.
17. **Longer term discussion** - as we continue to have multiple sub-groups, what should the focus of Social Justice be?
18. **Future Initiatives** - [Shared Spreadsheet](#) Social Justice Commission

Next Meeting - August 9, 2026 9:45 AM MPR