

STM Social Justice Commission Meeting Agenda

Sunday, June 14, 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

Review of May Meeting Minutes-

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M8mBUrf494_LMCbtcBcqNB69Ln1kG1nxPfkHAKFcMpA/edit?usp=sharing

OLD BUSINESS/UPDATES:

1. **Fairtrade Sales –**
 - Deposit after sale 6/13-14 was \$760 cash/check, \$200 credit card.
 - Additional sale dates tbd.
2. **Sunday Afternoon Lecture Series:**
 - a. Dr Hitchon helped arrange for a local Muslim neighbor to give a talk about the Islamic faith, about 60 people attended. Dr Hitchon suggested showing a movie about the Arab revolt in 1936 against British colonial rule, “Palestine 36”. We will look at possible dates this Fall, with discussion following.
3. **Bread for the World Offering of Letters - Linda**
 - a. The Bread for the World Offering of Letters was presented at masses on May 9/10, 16/17 and 23/24. Good response with 216 letters distributed, 116 returned to church and mailed, over 60 cards with additional QR code distributed.
4. **St Thomas More LGBTQ+ Faith Sharing Group – Adam**
 - STM LGBTQ+ “Faith Sharing Group” approved by parish council. It will be placed under the Social Justice Commission, with its own heading/button on the webpage. Contact will be via QR code on the webpage or thorough stm.lgbtq@gmail.com
 - Kickoff event for LGBTQ+ members on June 25th. Bulletin, FaceBook and Mass announcements have been made.
 - **LGBTQ Allies and Family group** - Leadership Team for planning and program development will meet - Kim, April, Wayne, Mary Merchant, Ann Elsbecker and others who are interested.
5. **Knights of Columbus Dresser Build** Dresser and nightstand assembly took place on May 16th for [Houses into Homes](#). 12 dressers and 11 nightstands completed..
6. **Racial Equity Report -**
 - **Juneteenth celebration** was June 14th at 4 pm. Prayers and songs were in the Church, followed by ice cream social in the Social Hall, 30 people attended.
 - Anthony Betters, Jr. from the African American Museum of Iowa <https://blackiowa.org/> provided information about the history of Juneteenth as a celebration of freedom, and noted that the museum is the only one in Iowa dedicated to African American history. All are invited to attend their Juneteenth celebration on Saturday, June 20th. <https://blackiowa.org/events/juneteenth/> Multiple Iowa City activities have been planned: https://icjuneteenth.com/?page_id=20

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7. Green Team Update - [June Meeting Notes](#)

Discussed the future addition of solar panels, and the benefit of starting planning now, with creating a solar panel directed donation fund as an option to have adequate funds available to get the panels installed in a timely fashion. Multiple financial and environmental benefits will be gained the sooner the panels can be added.

Next meeting 7/6/2026

8. Food pantry collection and distribution - (Karla Smith)

- Met with the Knights of Columbus to review the current process for collection, documentation, and delivery of donated food, and to determine needs for additional volunteers.
- [Sign-up Genius](#) assistance was created. **More volunteers needed!**
- A 3-month trial period started to weigh and box donations on the last Saturday of the month after 5:30 Mass. It may need to switch to Sunday if not enough volunteer response for Saturdays.

9. Catholic Worker House Meals and Foot Clinic- meal donations and servers needed:

- [July 5, 2026](#), August 2, 2026, September 6, 2026

10. New Member Meals Future dates: (SignUp Genius coming soon!)

- Saturday, August 15, 2026 after 5:15 Mass
- Sunday, January 10, 2027 after 11:00 Mass
- Saturday, May 2nd, 2027 after 5:15 Mass
- Suggestions for more engagement at the weekends included:
 - Having desserts available at each table
 - Providing lists of volunteer opportunities, including how often (monthly, quarterly, etc.) and level of involvement.

11. Tithing Grant Meeting -

- Reviewed tithing grant process.
- Additional funding was requested, and an increase from 1% to 1.5% was received (\$19,500 yearly beginning August, plus Fair Trade Sales)
- Discussion continues regarding current process, standard vs. discretionary grants, dollar limit per grant, possible "theme" for each cycle.
- **Next meeting 6/17 7:00 PM**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4884889632?omn=85832103234>

12. Habitat for Humanity Build - STM volunteer crews worked on June 12th and 13th at 1503 Prairie du Chien, one of 4 homes Habitat will be building in that location. The family that will move into the home has 4 children, one special needs who requires wheelchair access. 10 volunteers from STM participated -fellowship and new skills were in abundant supply!

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FUTURE PLANNING:

13. **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. Tom will start contacting people to be co-chair, and expects to have a positive response!

14. **Catholic Social Teaching Education and Awareness**

- Monthly - pulpit announcement, bulletin submission, short discussion in meeting (EFJ Resources)
- Note how each of our initiatives reflect intentions of CST
- Catholic Social Teaching in a Year

15. **Collaboration/Organization of Initiatives -**

Quarterly meetings of Commission chairs were held prior to COVID, we will look into resuming periodic meetings for Commissions to share and coordinate activities.

16. **Longer term discussion** - As we continue to have multiple sub-groups, what should the focus of Social Justice be? Multiple ideas were presented, including parish initiatives to address Housing, Mental Health, Aging/Loneliness, Intergenerational engagement, Meal delivery. Exploring a Parish Nurse position was discussed as a way to address the multiple needs of parish members that pertain to aging, mobility, social supports, hospital follow-up, etc. with additional spiritual support. Members who have belonged to other parishes with nursing staff commented on the benefits to parishioners who are marginalized by age, income, family loss, etc. and the popularity of the supports made available.

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

Next Meeting - July 12, 2026 9:45 AM MPR