

St. Thomas More Social Justice Commission Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2026 7 pm MPR

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 April Meeting Minutes- No comments or corrections noted.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **NAMI Walks** - May 2nd, Terry Trueblood Park -
 - STM had multiple parishioners involved. Over \$2800 raised.
 - April Rouner was acknowledged for her fundraising success this year (Thank you April!)
 - It was suggested that we consider a better way of communicating in order to walk together as a team next year.
2. **Fairtrade Sales** –
 - \$1280 deposited from Square and cash sales from April sale.
 - Next sale: June 13 & 14. Sign up [HERE](#)

NEW/ONGOING BUSINESS:

3. **Sunday Afternoon Lecture Series:**
 - a. Dr Hitchon has arranged for a local Muslim neighbor to give a presentation and discussion of the Islamic faith; Sunday, May 17th 3 to 5 PM, STM Social Hall.
 - b. **Cookies, refreshments and hosts/servers needed.** Sign up [HERE](#)
4. **Bread for the World Offering of Letters** -
 - a. The Bread for the World Offering of Letters was introduced at masses on May 9th and 10th due to passage of the House version of the Farm Bill, which is now in the Senate for consideration.
 - Postcards with information and QR code to link to online letters as well as paper copies of letters addressed to each Iowa Representative are available at the welcome desk,
 - This past weekend we had many people pick up letters and/or postcards, and we will continue to have this available after mass May 16/17.
 - We will be assisting with letter writing in the MPR and offering “bread” after all masses on May 23/24. **Please sign up [HERE](#) to assist and/or donate bread/rolls/muffins.**
 - Link to on-line letter writing [HERE](#)
 - Information about SNAP:
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w84r2Wnxm5DuYK76XqPDqM1PCN9XhUJw/view?usp=drive_link
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1byA7NooVluQJQRzBGT9NcECgJP6A-6Tr/view?usp=drive_link

5. **St Thomas More LGBTQ+ Ministry –**

- STM LGBTQ+ Ministry leadership team has been meeting monthly. Development of this group over the last several months has been included in Social Justice Commission reports to Council, but no responses have occurred to date.
- We have now been asked to place on hold further gatherings and events until reviewed by the Parish Council at their monthly meeting tomorrow (5/12/26). As of Monday night, discussion of the Ministry was not yet on the Council agenda, but Adam and Wayne will ask the Council for guidance on how to proceed and what type of announcements (bulletin, webpage, Social Media, Mass) are acceptable.
- All Social Justice Members present were vocal about their support of STM LGBTQ Ministry development.
- Email contact will be thorough stm.lgbtq@gmail.com

6. **Knights of Columbus Dresser Build** Dresser and nightstand assembly for [Houses into Homes](#) **STM lower level May 16th from 9am to noon.** Sign up to help assemble and/or contribute to the purchase of dresser and nightstand kits.

7. **Green Team Report** - Jay Gilchrist presented a summary of recent Green Team actions:

- Mission and call-to-action shared
- Habitat Solar Project (a way to pay for carbon offsets that in turn provides solar for Habitat homes) will be championed by the group and on the website
- October 10th - morning retreat with Connie Mutel. Connie will share her expertise with us, and we will spend some time on STM's land.
- Susie Puhl is in the process of planting numerous smaller trees and 30 to 35 larger trees that have been donated by parishioners. There is still opportunity to donate if interested.
- Solar Panel plan for the parish is being considered (after new church is paid off)
- Season of Creation - Living Water will be this year's theme.

8. **Racial Equity Report** - Joann Miller presented a summary of upcoming plans:

- **Juneteenth celebration** will be June 14th at 4 pm. Working with local African American leaders Royceann Porter and Frederick Newell on speakers and finalizing other plans. If interested in helping, please contact EZ or Hilary Douglas.

9. **Food pantry collection and distribution** - Working to set up a meeting with the Knights of Columbus to review current process for collection, documentation, and delivery, as well as determine needs for additional volunteers.

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

- [June 7, 2026](#)
- [July 5, 2026](#)

11. **New Member Meals** Each parish Commission has been asked to provide information at tables in the Social Hall during New Member Meals.

- Future dates:
 - 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.

12. **Tithing Grant Meeting** - Tuesday, May 12th, 7 pm [Zoom](#)

- Review and reconsider tithing grant process
- Discussion will include current process, standard vs. discretionary grants, dollar limit per grant.
- Consider new

13. **Habitat for Humanity Build** - IVHFH requested STM participation for a build. Will coordinate with the Knights of Columbus.

- Volunteers needed to help promote once dates are set.
- Include announcements that “no experience is needed”.

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**

- 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

16. **Collaboration/Organization of Initiatives** - How do we prevent duplication of efforts by multiple commissions and respond to requests of parishioners?

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 - June 14, 2026 9:45 AM MPR