

STM Social Justice Commission Meeting Minutes August 9, 2026

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 “For Deeper Gratitude” Christine Valters-Paintner

Review of [July Meeting Minutes](#) No corrections

OLD BUSINESS/UPDATES:

1. **Fairtrade Sales** –
 - Dates for upcoming extended sales (Click on link to sign up: [September 12&13](#), [October 17&18](#), [November 21& 22](#), [December 5&6](#), [December 19&20](#))
2. **STM LGBTQ+ Faith Sharing**
Fellowship gatherings planned after 8:30 Mass the first Sunday of the month, Faith Sharing meetings the third Thursday of the month. Social and/or volunteer activities to be planned by the group.
3. **STM Allies Group** - Initial group formation meeting was 7/31/26. The group discussed hosting a panel discussion of personal experiences of family members, and how families are affected by the history of Catholic opposition to LGBTQ+ persons. Discussion of “LGBTQ+ Friends and Families Group” as a more welcoming name.
4. **Racial Equity Report** - No August meeting
[Racial Equity Initiative Meeting Agenda/Minutes](#)
5. **Green Team Update** - Jay
 - Next meeting: Monday, August 10th, 7:00PM [Agenda](#)
 - [Rooted: the Invitation of Science, Nature and Spirit](#), 9/23, Our Lady of the Prairie
 - **Film screening** - “[Groundswell](#)” at STM in September during Season of Creation. Third installment in restorative agriculture documentaries (“[Kiss the Ground](#)” and “[Common Ground](#)”).
 - Earthcare retreat at STM Saturday, Oct 10th - 9AM to 3PM
5. **Food pantry collection and distribution** -
 - [Sign-up Genius](#) assistance was created. Knights of Columbus are providing delivery to local food pantries on a rotating basis.
 - 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. Knights purchased bins with wheels, declined our request to split the cost of totes. Social Justice fund will help cover the cost.
 - We will need baskets and signs to display totes the weekend of distribution, signs directing donations to collection bins or MPR.
6. **Catholic Worker House Meals and Foot Clinic**- meal donations and servers needed:
[September 6, 2026](#) [October 4, 2026](#)

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E4BA8AD2EAAFA7-64648118-october#/>

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7. 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.**

8. Social Justice Grant Meeting -

- “Tithing Grants” to be changed to “Social Justice Grants” to better reflect the purpose and function of the grants.
- Reviewed grant application and consideration process: **“Policies and procedures”** document formed to maintain consistency over time. **Policy approved**
- STM Parish Finance Council approved an increase in funding for grants from 1% to 1.5% of parish donations yearly (\$9750 per grant cycle). With addition of Fair trade sales \$13,628 is available for upcoming grants in September.
- Focus on one (or more) of the 7 Themes of Social Teaching each grant cycle.
- Increase the grant amount to \$2500 maximum. Each organization may receive one grant per year.
- 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 Social Justice grants are, why we do them, how parishioners can help.
- Social Justice Grants to be reviewed and approved in September and March.
- Grant application available in the FairTrade room, to be posted on parish website and STM FaceBook page.

NEW BUSINESS:

8. **CRC Coat Drive (Linda) 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.

9. **Diaper Drive - (Tom) 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.**

10. **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

11. **Stewardship Fair?** STM calendar lists Sept 19th/20th, but information about the format has not been communicated with commission chairs. Updates will be provided.

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FUTURE PLANNING:

11. **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?
12. **Catholic Social Teaching Education and Awareness**
 - Catholic Social Teachings to be included in Tithing grant announcements and promotions, focusing on a few teachings each tithing cycle to connect CST with tithing, charity and justice.
13. **Collaboration/Organization of Initiatives & Communication** -
Joan Maley (new Parish Council president) is reviewing our request to resume quarterly meetings of representatives from each commission.
14. **Longer term discussion** - as we continue to have multiple sub-groups, what should the focus of Social Justice be?
15. **Future Initiatives** - [Shared Spreadsheet](#) Social Justice Commission

Next Meeting - September 13, 2026 9:45 AM in MPR