

Minutes of EPF Retreat of October 6, 2016

Attendees: John Jackson, Frank and Blythe Baldwin, Nancy and Ed Siemon, Joey Cardamone, Deb Schmidle, Cathy Lewis, Linda Gaither.

Opening prayers: Deb read a catholic prayer from the week of peace.

Overview of last year's accomplishments:

- New meeting format worked well.
- Cathy Lewis returned to us from spending most of her time in NYC.
- Prayer card draft was completed.
- Parole event with Judith Brink was hosted by our chapter.
- Offering of letters with participants handwriting their letters about child nutrition. The event supported fellowship and community building among parishioners at St. John's.
- We supported each others' efforts in particular areas such as prisoner justice, Israel/Palestine, and nuclear disarmament.
- Attended Ira Hefland's presentation at Cornell about nuclear disarmament.

Spiritual Reflection Exercise: Members gave examples from scripture of inspiring passages.

- John: Amos 5:24. Justice flows down like a river and righteousness rolls down like an ever flowing stream.
- Linda: Luke 19:41-44. God's moment is now, but we don't see it.
- Blythe: Luke 7:20-23. The kingdom was here at that moment, but humans didn't understand and still don't.
- Deb: Matt. 25:31-40. Christ is in everyone, all people.
- Frank: Luke 16:1-8. Dishonest manager worked to help his situation with his master. Don't give up, keep working at peacemaking.
- Nancy: Mother Theresa felt disconnected from God but did the work in spite of those feelings. Kingdom of God is about all of us together.
- Ed: BCP prayer # 19: Prayer for our nation; ask for God's guidance for future leaders.
- Joey: Titus 3. Don't malign anyone; be kind to everyone and respect everyone. Don't look at people as "the other."

Looking ahead to this coming year:

The framework for planning is EPF's focus on Pray, Study, Act.

John posed some questions to guide our discussion

1. How can we creatively engage people in our respective parishes to pray, study, and act for peace?
2. What practices can we include in any pray, study, act rituals to build community and intergenerational involvement?
3. What specific rituals and practices and forms of community can we offer to those seeking to practice justice and peace?
4. What practices and rituals can transform our parishes, schools, communities to justice, peace, and love?
5. What practices and rituals and forms of community can energize and equip parishioners to minister and advocate justice and peace to the suffering world outside our church doors?

A short discussion followed as to the meaning of rituals and practices.

The following were suggested as activities in the framework of pray, study, act:

1. Celebrating social justice saints the second Wednesday of each month at the meditation service held every Wednesday at St. John's at 7 PM. John will coordinate a six month trial. Dorothy Day was suggested as a saint to celebrate in November. John will send the group an internet link for Holy Women, Holy Men to look at saints and their history.
2. Letter writing: on New Year's Eve after evening service; in regular monthly meetings; Human Rights Day at Amnesty International.
3. Palestine/Israel Study using "Steadfast Hope" study guide and DVD created by EPF PIN (Palestine/Israel network) members. Linda will work with the Catholic worker group for a joint study. It was suggested that we do this the first Monday and first Thursday in December. (Please note that this activity will actually be occurring on the first Monday and first Thursday of November). In conjunction with the study chapter members will watch "The Occupation of the American Mind" DVD as background on Sunday, October 30, at Cathy Lewis' home.
4. Activities for prisoner justice: attend the Tompkins County Legislature to keep updated on the jail expansion issue; join in the solitary confinement awareness group on the 23rd of each month at the entrance to the Tompkins County Library, 5:30 - 6:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned; dinner enjoyed by all.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Siemon