

St. Irenaeus Christian Service Commission

Who We Are and What We Did this Fiscal Year (2017/2018)

Christian Service Commission – *to act as a model and resource of Catholic Social Teaching to enable the entire parish community to put the social teaching of the Church into action. The Commission creates and promotes programs which strive to address human needs and achieve justice. Members – Leigh Ann Grubbs, Kathleen Larkin, Ron Melnik, Florie Mojica, Cindy Monaghan, Pat Palouljian, Dale Proulx, Debbie Pruent, Eileen Ross, Terry Statz, Colleen Steyer, Marilyn St. James, Nan St. Peter, Chris Wogan, Deacon John Wright*

CHRISTIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE SUMMARIES FOR 2017/2018:

Earth Ministry – *to call the parish to a deeper respect for God's creation and engage the parish community, through education and activities, in practices which better care for and celebrate God's creation, with particular attention to those practices which help the world's poor. Leader – Susan Cesiel*

- Planted and maintained flower gardens to provide an inviting and beautiful place for prayer; the bounty of the vegetable garden was shared with parishioners; removed the old spirea shrubs at the activities building and replaced them with new boxwood shrubs; kitchen scraps and garden clippings were composted instead of being thrown in the trash
- Researched and recommended the purchase of recycling bins; four are now in place in the parish hall
- Educated parishioners on care of creation through bulletin articles—topics included radon testing, starting flowers indoors from seed, Christmas tree recycling, benefits of LED lights, not wasting food, and where to recycle Styrofoam and plastic bags
- Began the process of conducting another energy audit of all church buildings, with the goal of being environmentally responsible and reducing energy consumption (and, consequently, saving money)

Gospel of Life – *to enliven the parish response to the universal respect and dignity appropriate to all human life. Leader – Nan St. Peter*

- Began each meeting with scripture and prayer
- Planned a “Mass for Life” and reception for members of our community on anniversary of Roe V. Wade
- Incorporated ‘Respect Life’ theme (*Be Not Afraid*) into liturgy for Respect Life Sunday in October
- Participated in “40 Days for Life” Prayer Vigils in Sterling Heights, where team members prayed and sang outside an abortion clinic for an hour each week (6 weeks in the Fall and during Lent)
- Supported weekly Adoration during Lent and Advent
- Supported Birth Choice Mobile Ultrasound Unit, Crossroads Care Center, Detroit Pregnancy Test and Help Center, Gianna House, and Right to Life/Lifespan through various collections and donations

Parish Health Ministry – *to enhance the quality of life for parishioners by integrating our Catholic faith with healing through health education, counseling, and programs. Leader – Denise Munaco*

- Maintained strong relationship with Faith Community Nursing
- Updated first aid kits for the parish hall, kitchen, church, and youth group
- Provided fall risk assessment, and blood pressure and stroke screenings during Sunday Socials
- Hosted a fall Flu/Pneumonia Clinic with blood sugar screenings; and spring seminar on the ‘Human-Animal Bond’
- Arranged annual AED refresher course for our ushers; provided free radon test kits to parishioners
- Wrote monthly health education articles for the bulletin—including articles on mental health
- Created prayer blankets with SOS guests; provided Thanksgiving dinner for parish family in need
- Supported the Gary Bernstein Clinic (a local health care agency serving low and no-income clients)

Senior Fellowship – *to promote fellowship and spirituality among parishioners 55 years and over through social activities, outreach projects, and a sharing of common interests. Leader – Ron Melnik*

- Membership increased to 180 members
- Hosted five dinner events that included inspirational and informational speakers and entertainment
- Hosted four Lunch, Cards and Games events including December Christmas Fun Bingo
- Coordinated a Lunch Bunch group that met every other month at local restaurants to allow for socialization for those who may not get out to the evening events
- Sponsored a July and January collection for CCRT—gathering toiletries, caps, scarves, gloves, and school uniforms
- 2017 marked the 10th anniversary of the SF group, and September's dinner event recognized that milestone and the people who were instrumental in getting this ministry established

Special Needs Prayer Group – *to promote fellowship and spirituality through creative expression, prayer, skits, and crafts. Leaders – Deacon John and Annette Wright*

- Special Needs Disciples met monthly for prayer and activities—the Special Needs Disciples often acted out stories in Scripture according to the liturgical calendar; had an off-site bowling party; finished the year with a cookout
- Twenty team members planned; 35-50 disciples from 10-15 group homes and parishes participated each month

St. Irenaeus Christian Service Programs

Our Outreach and Service this Fiscal Year (2017/2018)

Back to School Blessings – Toni Allen, Nancy Berrigan, and Andrea Yamarino led the collection and distribution of back to school necessities for CCRT (Pontiac), John Paul Secondary School (Uganda), and Neighborhood House (Rochester).

Baldwin Soup Kitchen – Carmen Bonanni organized parishioners on a rotating basis to serve eight lunches during the past year to approximately 200 homeless and low-income men, women, and children at the Baldwin Center.

Blood Drives – Nan St. Peter and Joanne Schantz organized two blood drives (and student Addi Stanley coordinated the summer drive) for the non-profit MI Blood; highlights: 99 pints were collected, 24 first-time donors participated!

Christmas Adopt-a-Family – Jackie Lepore and CS staff coordinated the adoption of 36 low-income families from South Oakland Shelter, Power Company Kids Club, Readers Become Leaders, Lighthouse, St. Irenaeus, and Samaritas.

Christmas Roses in December – Jackie Lepore and CS and Catechetical staff coordinated the collection and delivery of approximately 700 gifts to local agencies for the poor.

Clean Out Your Desk Campaign – Dana Gale and Ellen Stuart led the collection, sorting, and donation of used school and office supplies to Rogers and Owen Elementary Schools in Pontiac.

Focus Hope Drivers – A dozen parishioners volunteered to help OPC deliver monthly food boxes to homebound residents of Avon Tower and Danish Village.

HOPE Adult Shelter – Janice Dalfovo-Dawson and Colleen Steyer co-led our HOPE Team (Brian Gallagher, Jackie Lepore, Denise Armstrong) which coordinated food, clothing, monetary donations and gifts; and led 40+ volunteers to serve dinner to 70 homeless guests at the Pontiac shelter for a week. We also hosted a summer cookout at the shelter.

Knit-Wits – Goldie Stoops led a group of knitters to create prayer blankets for those in the hospital; Baptismal bibs for our youngest church members; and winter accessories, blankets, baby clothing, and other items for those in need.

Lighthouse Drive – Brian Gallagher coordinated the delivery of toiletries, food, and dietary supplements that our parishioners collected for Lighthouse—one of the leading providers of emergency assistance in Oakland County.

Manna Meal – Larry Gatt led teams in the preparation and serving of hot soup, sandwiches, and fruit at this soup kitchen in Detroit once a month. Dale Proulx helped schedule approximately 25 rotating volunteers for this ministry.

Mary's Mantle Used Purse Drive – Lynn Coburn led the collection and pick up of used purses which were re-sold at Faith at Work; all proceeds benefitted Mary's Mantle (a Catholic residential program for homeless expectant mothers).

Mercy in Action Day Host Site – Hosted a prayer breakfast and coordinated ten service/outreach activities at church and in the community for parishioners and community members.

New Year's Day Meals on Wheels for OPC – Parishioners delivered meals to homebound seniors on nine routes.

Prison Ministry – Deacon John led prison Communion services, visited parishioners' incarcerated loved ones, and ministered to other inmates (including helping one begin RCIA classes).

Refugee Resettlement – Pat Palouljian represented St. Irenaeus on the North Oakland Catholic Parish Board, which adopted a Syrian refugee family of seven. St. Irenaeus took the lead in coordinating transportation—helping the father get through multiple surgeries and getting the mother to the grocery store. The family has been very grateful for our help.

Re-use, Recycle – Parishioners donated hundreds of postage stamps, eyeglasses, cell phones, religious items, and other recyclables to benefit charities.

Rosary Makers for the Missions – Rosary makers created and distributed 6480 mission rosaries—most went to missionaries overseas, but some were given to local evangelization efforts such as St. Paul Street Evangelization.

SOS Week of Hospitality – Jewel Messina coordinated dozens of volunteers as St. Irenaeus hosted 36 homeless people from the South Oakland Shelter at our parish in November; providing dinner, hospitality, showers, bedrooms, breakfast, sack lunches, rides, games and prizes, entertainment, and fellowship.

St. Pat's Senior Center – Karen Cook coordinated dinner in October and March at St. Pat's in Detroit; over 30 parishioners made desserts and a dozen confirmation students and parents helped serve.

Works of Mercy Events – Hundreds of parishioners engaged in works of mercy and acts of love during six separate events. We packed 800 SnackPax for hungry children in Detroit; 250 lunches for Jail & Outreach Ministry, CCRT, and HOPE Adult Shelter; 258 bags with after school snacks and activities for children in Pontiac (Baldwin Center and Power Company); and made 350 sandwiches for the Baldwin soup kitchen. We created 90 Loving Care Kits for cancer patients; and made 79 blankets for children in Pontiac; 98 rosaries for the missions, 205 bracelets for children in Detroit; 36 welcome kits for our SOS guests; 114 placemats, 100 bookmarks, and hundreds of hand-made 'thinking of you' and 'get well' cards.

St. Irenaeus Christian Service Outreach

How We Helped and Who We Supported this Fiscal Year (2017/2018)

Parish Services – to facilitate the parish response of support, hospitality, resource, and/or condolence for people in need. Staff leader – Cindy Monaghan, Christian Service Coordinator

Bereavement Ministry – Five active ministers reached out to dozens of families whose loved one passed this year; hosted “*Finding God in the Midst of our Pain*” workshop in the fall, and “*Grieving with Great Hope*” in the spring

Funeral Lunches – Jewel Messina, Diane Martin, and Pennie Folk led volunteers (to shop, set-up, cook, serve, clean-up, and wash linens on a rotating basis) to prepare beautiful, delicious luncheons for parishioners’ funeral guests

Good Samaritans – met for quarterly training meetings; provided numerous home visits, notes, phone calls, and transportation assistance to parishioners in need—including meals for a parishioner undergoing chemo; prepared and hand-delivered gifts to homebound parishioners, as well as 150 Samaritans and 100 Medilodge residents around the major holidays; continued outreach to Samaritans with monthly Communion services including refreshments and fellowship—and began a similar new ministry at Oakmont; hosted a summer cookout at Samaritans

Mental Health Ministry – Colleen Steyer helped this team develop a new program for families who have a loved one suffering from mental illness; Ron and Jilia Teachworth presented the 4-week program, “*Spiritual and Practical Tools for Families Impacted by Mental Illness*” reaching over 50 participants

Prayer Warriors – intercede on behalf of our parishioners; lifting specific concerns up to our Lord in prayer via an email prayer chain and occasional intercessory prayer group meetings; we cover requests that are called into the office or submitted via our website prayer link

Social Services – Helped parishioners and local families in need with: car-repairs (7); car payments (2); utility and medical bills (4); security deposits (5); new furnaces (2); gas cards (38); and grocery cards (33)

Organizations we supported financially this year include:

Abigayle Ministries, Agape Retreat Scholarships, Angel's Place, The Baldwin Center, Birth Choice, Bread for the World, CCRT, CRU, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, Catholic Charities (Puerto Rico Hurricane Relief), Catholics Confront Global Poverty, Catholic Relief Services, Clinton River Watershed Council, Corner Shower and Laundry, Covenant House Michigan, Crossroads Pregnancy Center (general), Crossroads Pregnancy Center (SHARE program), Day House, Dream Centers of MI (Lookout House), Faith at Work, Faith in Action, Forgotten Harvest, Friends of John Paul School, Friends of Kenyan Orphans, Furniture Bank of SE MI, Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan, Grace Centers of Hope, Guest House, Habitat for Humanity Oakland County, HOPE Adult Shelter, HOPE Recuperative Center, Humble Design, Inc., Interchurch Women of Rochester Area, Inter-Faith Volunteer Caregivers, International Justice Mission, Jail and Outreach Ministry, L'Arche, Lighthouse of Oakland County, Manna Community Meal, Mary's Children Family Center, Mary's Mantle, OCIMA, Opportunity International, Camp Ozanam, PAX Christi, The Power Company Kids' Club, Right to Life/Lifespan, Rochester Area Neighborhood House (general), Rochester Area Neighborhood House (food pantry), Samaritans (Refugee Resettlement), St. Dominic's Outreach Center, St. Patrick Senior Center, Pope Francis Center, South Oakland Shelter, Vista Maria, Witness For Peace, Witness to Innocence, and Stoney Creek High School students building a school in Nicaragua (Build On)

One of Christian Service's key partnerships in helping those in need is our own SVDP Conference...

St. Irenaeus St. Vincent de Paul – In the tradition of our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam and our patron, St. Vincent de Paul, and through the generous financial support of St. Irenaeus parishioners, our St. Vincent de Paul Conference provides emergency (critical) assistance on a case-by-case basis to parishioners and people living within our parish boundaries who have fallen on hard times. After an assessment of their needs, assistance may be provided in the form of food, clothing, furniture, utilities or rent assistance and/or referrals to other community agencies. We are a person-to-person Catholic Ministry that sees the face of Christ in the faces of those who are suffering.

As of today, our St. Irenaeus St. Vincent de Paul Conference has 13 Full-active Members, 15 Associate Members and one Spiritual Advisor. Since October 1 of 2017 (our current fiscal year) thanks to our extremely generous parishioners, we have been able to assist 49 people with rent, three with car repairs, and eight people with utility assistance; and contributed funds towards other SVdP efforts, including two food banks, one meal program, and our National organization's disaster relief efforts. Other activities since October involved two clothing drives (with the help of our parish youth), plus eight food collection drives. We oversaw the parish's Panera Bread Program where over 20 St. Irenaeus parishioners made daily pick-ups of leftover Panera bread products and delivered them to local nonprofits: primarily to OPC for their Meals on Wheels program. Finally, we have identified and enrolled four local children to attend SVdP's Camp Ozanam this summer.

After reviewing these three pages of opportunities, please consider how you would like to engage your gifts in our ministries.... Contact Cindy at 248-656-8720, or cmonaghan@stirenaeus.org

Many thanks to all the St. Irenaeus parishioners who serve with us!