

# Peace and Justice Committee

## Annual Report for 2020

The Peace and Justice Committee meets once a month on a Monday evening. Its main issues during 2020 have been social justice, gun violence, treatment of immigrants, and homelessness. We also on occasion support the work of the Simpler Living Ministry to address environmental stewardship.

Needless to say, the work of the Committee has been somewhat hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic, which closed the Cathedral physically in the middle of March. In particular, we have been unable to sponsor or participate in events requiring physical presence. However, many recurring events have been able to continue as online events.

In January Katherine Bom of St. Luke's in North Park visited with the Committee toward seeking volunteers to mentor refugees in the St. Luke's community. With the onset of the pandemic and the need for physical distance, this was put on hold.

The Committee-sponsored *Principles for Social Justice* was re-adopted by the Cathedral Chapter in April. The Committee has recommended the permanent posting of framed displays of the *Principles* on Cathedral grounds. Representatives of the Committee have been in discussion with the Dean and staff members about the placement and form of the framed displays. There had been delays in this due to the apartment tower construction project, and these efforts were put on hold with the closing of the Cathedral due to the pandemic.

In the Spring the Dean asked the Committee to deliberate on how St. Paul's should handle requests for endorsement and support of various non-Cathedral events and projects. In particular, she asked us to present a forum on the topic.

There had been an example in the Spring that led to this. The organization *San Diegans for Gun Violence Prevention* had asked for a Cathedral statement of support for two bills in Sacramento. A later example in the Spring was a request that the Dean join a statement by the Deans of the Episcopal Cathedrals in California supporting rent and mortgage payment forbearance during the pandemic.

The Committee spawned a Task Force to mount the forum, which was held on Sunday, September 27. In the mounting of that forum the task force drafted for the Dean and Chapter a statement of procedure, which was presented at the forum. The level of interest and discussion at the Sunday morning forum led the task force to conduct a second forum in the evening of October 27. The draft procedure is currently in trial use. Further, in connection with another endorsement request, the Task Force contacted All Saints, Pasadena, which had already been listed as a "sponsor" of that event. Following on that there was voiced an intention to for the Task Force to meet by Zoom with the Rev. Susan Russell of All Saints in the New Year about their handling of such requests.

In June the police execution of George Floyd and the growing presence of the *Black Lives Matter* movement led to Committee discussion about how St. Paul's might respond. At that point both the "Waking Up White in America" Sunday morning forum series and the ten month "Sacred Ground" study and discussion series had been scheduled. It was also noted in the Committee that St. Paul's *Principles for Social Justice* were quite relevant.

The Rev. Canon Richard Lief has engaged the Committee in mounting a series of occasional Sunday evening events consisting of a potluck dinner with film and discussion following Evensong. We had one virtual version of this series in 2020, which was a screening of the PBS

video “Revolution of the Heart: The Dorothy Day Story” in September as part of St. Paul’s observance of the International Day of Peace.

Since the Sandy Hook school shooting in December 2012, St. Paul’s has participated with the San Diego gun violence prevention community in an annual vigil. The customary vigil format was not possible this year due to the pandemic. Instead *San Diegans for Gun Violence Prevention* proposed observance in a number of ways of “A Season of Peace”. Under that framework, the Committee recommended that the theme be incorporated in our Blue Christmas service, and the Committee asked for promotion of the video <https://sd4gvp.org/8-years-on-remembering-sandy-hook/> in the weekly bulletin.

Respectfully submitted,

William F. Hammond