

**Strategic Ministry Committee  
Minutes from September 15, 2020 Meeting (7:30-9:50pm, Zoom)**

**In attendance:** Rev. Mike Dangelo, Aaron Dunn, Alex Ewing, Anila Jacobs, Debby Mills, Katie McEachern, Judy Oulund, Carolyn Ross, Peter Schilling, Amy Weed, and Leslie Williams. Also in attendance were Barrie Rose Bliss, Maisie Pollard, and Steve Mead. Anne Grandin was absent.

***Meeting opening:***

Given continued restrictions due to coronavirus (COVID-19), SMC met again via Zoom video conference. Minutes from the June 16, 2020 SMC Meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.

***Partner Updates from Advisory Heads / SMC Liasons:***

Maisie Pollard provided an update on **St Stephen's Youth Program (SSYP)**, confirming that despite COVID SSYP successfully ran its annual B-SAFE summer program beginning in early July. As in past years, Redeemer provided lunch for the two days of training but instead of serving it Maisie simply ordered the food and had it dropped off. Maisie noted that she had ordered it from a list of Black and Latinx owned Boston businesses that SSYP had provided, and it was very good. Maisie also revealed that a group of Redeemer folks (Amy Luster, Lucia Dolan, Barrie Rose, and Mike Dangelo) would be meeting with SSYP the following day (Sept. 16) re: programming for the coming year and how we can continue to strengthen our partnership. Maisie also reported that Redeemer continues to provide a lot of food for SSYP's B-LOVE program, including FUEL bags and fresh chicken (stored in two freezers generously donated by an anonymous Redeemer family). Plans under consideration include how to plan events including youth from both Redeemer and SSYP, as well as how to host this year's annual Christmas / Holiday party. Maisie noted that everyone on both sides of the partnership are enthusiastic about how the relationship is evolving, and that SSYP learned a lot from running B-SAFE over the summer that can be used to deliver the school year program, B-READY, safely.

Mike shared that the Diocese, which has been a significant financial supporter of SSYP since its inception, is currently reviewing its 2020 budget to determine how to decrease assessments in order to provide some financial relief for parishes struggling due to the impact of COVID. Therefore, there is likely to be a significant reduction in financial support for the Diocese's ministries, including SSYP. Mike is in the process of reaching out to St Andrew's in Wellesley to see how we might partner together to help SSYP bridge the difference. More to come.

Maisie did not have an update on **Epiphany**, but Carolyn Ross noted that she has been dropping off FUEL backpacks and that the students are back and there is a lot of excitement and good energy. The Early Learning Center (ELC) also resumed operations in July, though Leslie noted that volunteers are restricted from being present.

Steve Mead did not have any update on **Pilgrim Africa / Beacon of Hope School**.

Peter Schilling provided a brief update on **FUEL** noting that Velura Perry recently reported that during the school year period (September - August) in 2019 FUEL provided 4,538 bags of food — a staggering 218% increase from the 1,429 bags delivered in 2018. Carolyn Ross (who frequently volunteers with FUEL) noted that each bag contains approximately 10 pounds of food, which means FUEL delivered over 22 tons of food in 2019! In addition, Mike has continued to supply fresh chicken and dairy products to both SSYP and Epiphany since the summer. Nevertheless, FUEL's budget remains healthy at \$30,500 as the majority of food has

been supplied by generous donors from the Redeemer, as well as other churches which began partnering with us during the summer including St Andrews and some Newton families. Newton school deliveries are beginning to pick up again with the resumption of classes.

Mike Dangelo gave a brief update on **Common Cathedral (CC)**. He noted that Pam Wertz, the rector of Emmanuel (the the church housing CC and providing toilets for the homeless) was “gobsmacked” and exceedingly grateful for the Redeemer’s \$3,000 unsolicited contribution during the summer (\$2,000 from SMC and \$1,000 from the Rector’s Discretionary Fund) toward the increased cleaning costs the church was incurring due to COVID. Mike, who is also the Treasurer for CC, reported that CC had a “banner year” and had raised 85% of its annual donations because — more aware of the need — people have stepped up during COVID. During the summer multiple families provided sandwiches, etc. for CC, and on Sunday, September 20th Deborah Tamulis has organized for Redeemer folks to provide 200+ sandwiches, granola bars, snacks, drinks, etc. for worship services. Again, due to COVID restrictions no Redeemer folks will be able to attend the worship services and serve the lunch, but Deborah will drop it off in the morning. CC continues to have huge needs, especially with the huge rate of COVID infection among the homeless population, but thankfully staff has remained healthy. Mike noted that a new administrative assistant for CC’s Executive Director, Amanda Grant-Rose, is currently being on-boarded. She is expected to help leverage Amanda’s time and help with grant applications. Over the summer CC lost a street minister, so it is still looking to fill that position.

### ***Discussion of CoR Statement on Race and the role of SMC***

Debby Mills led the SMC in a reflection on the “Church of the Redeemer’s Leadership Statement on Race” issued during the summer, as well as the “Robin Hood Syndrome” chapter in “*Waking Up White*.” Mike Dangelo noted that the statement, issued on behalf of the Vestry and Clergy, had received broad support. Members shared what stood out to them from the “Robin Hood” chapter, such as the concept of “dysfunctional rescuing,” and there was a general consensus that SMC wants to strive for achieving an equity model in all its partnerships, versus a charity model. Barrie Rose Bliss shared the following quote:

*“Those who are weak have great difficulty finding their place in our society. The image of the ideal human as powerful and capable disenfranchises the old, the sick, the less-abled. For me, society must, by definition, be inclusive of the needs and gifts of all its members. How can we lay claim to making an open and friendly society where human rights are respected and fostered when, by the values we teach and foster, we systematically exclude segments of our population? I believe that those we most often exclude from the normal life of society, people with disabilities, have profound lessons to teach us. When we do include them, they add richly to our lives and add immensely to our world.”*

– **Jean Vanier, [\*Becoming Human\*](#)**

We discussed arranging prayer groups with our partners, and Leslie Williams and Judy Oulund shared the experience with SSYP over the summer in which they had prayed for each of B-SAFE’s leaders and teens by name. There was agreement that it made sense to start with things we have in common, such as our faith, and Alex Ewing shared that he had found bible studies and prayer groups to be transformational in the past. We discussed how we might reach out to St Stephen’s worship community, as well as SSYP.

Members asked the question: How do we reach out while avoiding adopting a “Robin Hood” attitude? Mike noted two places to start:

- As a congregation, we need to begin doing our own soul work — be vulnerable to the Holy Spirit around issues related to our wealth, privilege, etc. and the ongoing conversion within us. Mike noted that we understand only in part, because we are only one part of the body of Christ. Where is the Spirit calling us to be?
- Seek a community hungry for the same things as we are. It is easy for CoR to handle program, but it feels as if we are being invited by the Holy Spirit to be in greater prayer with ourselves and partners.

Mike noted that there are great things happening at the Redeemer here in SMC with the amazing response we've had re: COVOD and on Thursday nights' during our conversations on "Race & Beloved Community." He suggested all SMC try attending the Thursday night gatherings.

### ***Financial Update & Discussion of Stewardship Campaign***

Aaron Dunn reviewed SMC's financial as of August 31, 2020:

General Fund \$46,905 (including \$24K for new ministries & FUEL buffer, \$15K for fall)  
 FUEL \$40,064 (including \$20K from the Easter offering, double historical levels)

Aaron also shared that this year the Redeemer's Stewardship drive is being led by the Rector (Mike Dangelo) and the Wardens (Aaron Dunn & Carolyn Ross), who are recommending that the Redeemer tithe 10% of the amount raised via Stewardship to outreach (SMC). This could result in a significant increase in financial support for SMC for the coming year, and as a result SMC will be prominently featured in the messaging. Vestry is anticipated to give final approval of this plan at its October meeting. Stewardship will be an important indicator of how connected parishioners continue to feel to the Redeemer during the pandemic. It also enables us to highlight SMC's response to COVID-19; there is opportunity in every crisis. Last year Stewardship raised \$902,000; this year the goal is \$1 million. SMC members discussed various ways of communicating, including video testimonies of experiences.

### ***New Business***

Debby Mills gave an update on CSL's plans for this year's annual Christmas Market, and the need to determine recipients for Angels for Outreach, which last year raised \$14K across all of the Redeemer's partners. Given the anticipated plan for Stewardship to increase funding for SMC, that it is often easier to communicate about & excite people about a single giving opportunity, and the anticipated financial need of SSYP, there was general agreement about directing giving to SSYP. Therefore, Peter Schilling moved that SMC recommend SSYP as the recipient for this year's Angels for Outreach offering, Katie McEachern seconded and the committee approved the recommendation unanimously.

Aaron noted that the subcommittee on New Initiatives would be meeting the following night (9/16), and that he would be working with Barbara on the website re: SMC information.

### ***Closing***

Alex Ewing adjourned the committee in prayer at 9:50pm.