

S.J. & P. CLUSTER MEETING Minutes-1/10/08

Present: Marie Palmer, Al Palmer, Gisele Lynes, Melanie Stevens, Anne Daly, Paula Moses, Therese Lessard, Donna Bilodeau, Sue Umberger, Joyce Letellier
Excused: Lucette Pellerin, Beth Gilman

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. After the opening prayer, led by Gisele Lynes, the sign in sheet was completed. The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted. Gisele introduced our guest speaker for the evening, Edith Forst of St. Philip's. Edith explained the proposed Lenten project for the cluster. The project is for the benefit of the missionary in Senegal, Africa. The parishioners of St. Philip's were involved in this worthwhile cause during last year's Lenten period. Edith is an associate of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. The project is raising money for the digging of a well in the Senegal region of Africa. St. Philip's raised \$4000 last Lent for this project. Edith explained how the sanctuary was decorated – with a bucket for all to deposit. This was money put aside, as a family, during Lent. Before the offertory of each Mass-Father called all, including children, to come forward to deposit their collections. Edith also proposed another Lenten project. This is “The carrying of another's cross”. This was also a great success at St. Philip's. It gave a great sense of community and bringing together of all parishioners. Members were invited to write their names on a small wooden cross. Say prayers to lay all of your burdens on that cross. Parishioners were then asked to take another's cross and pray for that person. On Palm Sunday, at the sign of Peace, the crosses were exchanged. It was a very powerful experience.

The SJ&P Parish reps who were present thought both the well project and the Cross exchange were wonderful Lenten activities and were interested in carrying the ideas back to their own parishes. The members present voted to implement the well project this Lent, with the approval of their Pastor, and to recommend the well project to MHT and St. Margaret Parishes. Paula expressed the opinion that the Cross exchange was not really a SJ&P activity but rather something which should fall under W&S. She suggested that it be brought back to the local W&S Commissions for their consideration. She also commented that with all the other activities underway particularly in Biddeford & Saco, i.e. new Mass schedules, Disciples in Mission, etc. that the cross exchange might be even more powerful if done next year, once the new schedules were in place, to help the new parish of Good Shepherd build community.

In other business, the sock collection is coming along fine in all parishes.

Beth Gilman from St. Margaret's sent a report to the meeting in which she noted that they had given out 46 baskets for Thanksgiving and 13 families for the Christmas giving tree at St. Margaret's.

Also, the youth ministry is doing the Souper Bowl Sunday collection for the local food pantries again this year. All parishes will be participating. It was noted that in the Biddeford churches, the Church Life committee said they would support and fill in for the Youth Ministry folks if needed on this project.

Melanie Stevens from St. Andre's, reported a food collection is taken at mass every week for the Stone Soup food pantry in their neighborhood.

The St. Mary's Christmas Giving tree was a great success with over 80 gifts collected and distributed to veterans, nursing home residents, St. Andre's home, the Maine Way residence, Esther House and local Biddeford & Saco families in need.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 14th, at the Biddeford Catholic Center at 6:30 p.m.- with St. Mary's as the host.

Respectfully submitted by,
Marie Palmer, St. Philip's