

20 years of outreach, giving and fun



Holy Spirit's Social Concerns Committee
2002-2022

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF HOLY SPIRIT SOCIAL CONCERNS ACTIVITY

Your Social Concerns Committee has provided support for many different charities and support groups, locally, state-wide, nationally and internationally.

Funds for this support have come from individual parishioner donations, grants applied for and received, monies provided by the Vestry, the Memorial Foundation and the Diocese, and funds raised through activities organized by your Social Concerns Committee.

PRIMARY RECIPIENTS OF HOLY SPIRIT SUPPORT

LOCAL COMMUNITY

Assistance through Rector/Priest Discretionary Funds.	\$107,713
Partnership Health Center	65,151
UM Campus Ministry	64,295
Holy Spirit Food Fund	60,947
Habitat for Humanity	51,660
Missoula Interfaith Collaborative	22,780
Hellgate High School/Hellgate Cares	15,720
Spirit at Play Scholarship Fund	11,302

STATE AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Camp Marshall	\$54,791
Episcopal Relief & Development	32,384
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	16,704
United Thank Offering	12,846
Prayer Books For St. Paul's, New Orleans	7,675
Various Native American Support Groups	3,130

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

Episcopal Relief & Development	\$32,384
Myanmar Students and Teachers	23,272
Mexican Fishermen and Students (El Golfo)	6,876
Kangaya Medical Clinic, Zambia	5,125
Bethlehem Ministry / Haiti Shoebox Project	3,934
Donations related to Immigration (RGBM, etc.)	3,430



Connecting With Our World

In these pages you will find twenty years of incredible history, the story of Holy Spirit's efforts to connect with our community, our state, our nation and the world!

Before we get to that story, it is important to recognize two parishioners who were key to making all of this happen, The Rev. Steve Oreskovich and Bob Deaton. Twenty years ago, Rev. Oreskovich challenged a group of parishioners to focus on how Holy Spirit relates to the world around us, especially to our community. Soon after, Bob Deaton answered that challenge, and our Social Concerns Committee was born. Special thanks to both of them, as we celebrate the work done by so many at Holy Spirit over these two decades!

In financial terms, the story is simple: through parishioners' donations, grants applied for and received, monies provided by the Vestry, the Memorial Foundation and the Diocese, and funds raised through activities organized by your Social Concerns Committee, Holy Spirit has contributed more than \$670,000 to the betterment of the world. And this does not include many, many hours of enthusiastic volunteer efforts, lovingly given by so many of our parishioners, all of which have clearly been even more important than the dollars given.

The stories behind some of our major projects are included in this anniversary booklet, and I urge you to read them, to take them to heart, and to appreciate the positive impact we have had... from a medium-sized church in Missoula, Montana. While our efforts have clearly been focused on our local community, they have also spanned the world: Mexico, Myanmar, Zambia, Haiti, and many other places through support of Episcopal Relief and Development.

But undoubtedly our greatest impact has been in our local community. Through both contributions and volunteers, Holy Spirit was instrumental in helping grow Partnership Health Center, the leading healthcare organization in our community for people with fewer resources. The same is true of the Missoula Food Bank, which last year provided support, sometimes occasionally and sometimes more than weekly, to 26% of the population of Missoula County. And the list goes on:

- Annual clothing drives to support the homeless through The Poverello Center, and school children
- Support of the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Montana
- Substantial contributions of funds and volunteer hours, both in construction and in providing meals, to support Habitat for Humanity
- As a founding member of the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative
- Semi-annual blood drives for the Red Cross

And please don't forget our Butterfly Grant Program, which enables any parishioner to request support for other local charitable efforts, and which has supported more than 30 projects, including several meant to help our Native American sisters and brothers. Finally, we have all learned more about our world and the good we can do, through the book studies and movie nights we have enjoyed over the years.

All of Holy Spirit is proud, and deservedly so, for these efforts -- Congratulations to all!

James H. Wiley
Chair, Social Concerns Committee

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From soccer balls to scholarships

The story of helping Mexican families in El Golfo de Santa Clara is really the story of a dedicated and persistent couple at Holy Spirit—Maggi and Chuck Teague.

Married in 1996, the couple started wintering in El Golfo. The town nestles at the northern tip of the Gulf of California—near where the Colorado River emptied out until the 1970s, when regular flows dried up after the river was dammed. Attracted by the town's beauty and calm, Chuck and Maggi took down a trailer in 1997, and joined an RV camping group. Soon they started going to a local worship service. Collections were used to buy Christmas presents for children. "We would go to Yuma," Chuck recalls, "and buy toys, stuffed dolls, bikes, and lots of soccer balls." In Misoula, the Teagues would haunt church rummage sales, gathering garbage bags full of clothing and used shoes. They would stuff their white long-bed Dodge pickup with clothes, pots and pans, sewing machines, blankets and other treasures and take off for Mexico.

Fishing for shrimp and corvina was El Golfo's chief industry, yet it was never prosperous. Both types of seafood depend on the nearby estuary for spawning, but while the shrimp season is fairly long (months with an R), the corvina season before Easter is short and hectic, resulting in a mad rush to market and depressed prices for fishermen. Yet the demand for this meaty, delicious white fish was high, and people would flock to El Golfo, camping on its miles of beautiful beaches.

A few years later, the fishermen's fortunes declined. Trawling for corvina with gillnets was killing the vaquita, an endangered dolphin. The government shut down the fishery, causing more unemployment and more need for aid. El Golfo's population began to decline. The Teagues took a bigger role in their group, leading it for nine years as they ramped up food assistance—vegetables, milk, lard, eggs, tortillas, liters of hot sauce. In 2012, the Teagues asked the Social Concerns Committee for a donation to buy



Maggi & Chuck Teague

food, toys and clothing. Among the purchases from the first \$300 check—twenty soccer balls. And thus began a relationship with SCC that continues. However, the nature of the project changed in 2016. "We were seeing more pregnant girls, leaving school, getting married at 15-16," Chuck remembers. "There was no future for them." If they could find money for girls to attend *preparatorio* (like our high school), graduates could get clerical or other white-collar jobs or go on to college. Tuition was \$200 a year. Not only did Social Concerns sign up as a sponsor, but so did two HSP families, in addition to others outside the church. This year, there will be sponsors for 25 girls and boys.

With advancing age and the Covid shutdowns, the Teagues left their beloved Mexico in 2020. They do not ask for thanks, but hundreds of El Golfo residents have benefited from their Christian charity, and the Social Concerns Committee is proud to have helped.

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Children in El Golfo check out some new donations

Deacon Myrna Chaney always had a heart for the Hellgate High School students and teachers who learn and grow in Holy Spirit's neighborhood. Some were students of our Holy Spirit families; they helped us to make each student walking by the parish even more real. Myrna worked with others to round up warm coat donations, gather supplies for the Family Resource Center (FRC), seek funds for gas and holiday gift cards, and more. All the while, she kept encouraging our parish to explore ways to be good Hellgate neighbors.

And with very good reason. For on any given year, more than 60 Hellgate students identify as homeless. Among students without stable housing, many are living with people other than their parents or guardians, and large families are living in crowded accommodations. And the stories of the students would help us to know that 25 percent of Hellgate students are at an economic disadvantage, and more than 30 percent currently qualify for free and reduced meals.

What Myrna helped to stir for Holy Spirit blossomed into a variety of opportunities for parishioners of all ages to get involved. A'Lisa Scott, a Hellgate graduate herself, signed on as the parish's Hellgate Ministry coordinator. Learning from Hellgate's FRC coordinator, we established a laundry fund at Sparkle for students needing clean clothes. There was also discussion about access to the occasional haircut. We joined forces with Compass Barber Shop and Shear Prophecy to make those available when needed. A handful of church school students known as the Warm Spirit Girls visited the FRC, listened for what was needed, and leveraged a grant from the Social Concerns Committee at a local department store to purchase needed clothing and food. We filled a peanut butter jar with donations, fed by the stories of one of our parishioners. Another parishioner was concerned about what afford-



Deacon Myrna Chaney

ability barriers to traffic education might mean for students who could then end up in the juvenile justice system for driving without a license. They raised funds from friends and neighbors, and now a traffic education scholarship program exists. Sometimes, it has been a gifted gas card that allowed a student to participate in extracurricular activities, or to get to a needed job. And gift cards at department stores have allowed students to do a little holiday shopping for those in their circles of support.

In recent years, Holy Spiriters have been welcoming annual Hellgate Sundays as a time for stories, stats, and giving. A'Lisa has also organized a "welcome back" table in the parking lot during the first

Loving Our Hellgate Neighbors

days of school. Chatting with students, parents, teachers, and neighbors over snacks, hot cocoa, and coffee has made them more real for us, and the parish a little more real for them.

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Social worker Tracy Ledyard (left) and Hellgate ministry coordinator A'Lisa Scott at the "welcome back" table.

Conquering fear and reaching out

On Sept. 27, 2009, congregants gathered at Holy Spirit parish buzzed with anticipation; Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori was preaching that morning as part of the diocesan convention. She opened her sermon recalling a recent visit to a Japanese church, started 150 years before by missionaries from The Episcopal Church. She talked about healers from the Church, other faiths, and no religious affiliation who worked together to serve people in need.

Midway through her sermon, the Presiding Bishop heartened the congregation with the following:

I met some of those unexpected healers on Friday at the Partnership Health Center. Mostly they aren't health professionals and they haven't been to medical or nursing school and they don't have degrees in psychology or social work. But they are helping to heal the folks who come in a great variety of ways, like welcoming the clients, filing and making phone calls, writing grant proposals to raise money. There are more of them, too, who aren't Episcopalians or even Christians, but they are doing Jesus' work.

It was a marvelous moment, one that had been six years in the making. In June of 2003, the Social Concerns Committee undertook an outreach project with Partnership Health Center, the local medical and dental clinic serving low-income clients. Fourteen parishioners began by performing clerical jobs at PHC that had drawn trained professionals away from other more important duties. If the HSP volunteers were unsure what lay ahead, so were some PHC staffers. One later shared that she feared the newcomers would do more proselytizing than genuine helping!



Star PHC volunteer Jeanne Clark (left) and former director Kim Mansch (right) greet Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori in the dental clinic

From that initial summer, Holy Spirit's partnership with the health clinic blossomed. Over the next 10 years, the ranks of volunteers grew as high as 36, including some parishioners who joined for one-time projects. Two dozen of those volunteers worked weekly shifts for years, greeting clients, filing dental charts and telephoning clients to remind them of upcoming appointments. One of the favorite callers was the Rev. Donald Guthrie, born in Scotland and educated at Oxford University. With his Scottish accent, clients felt like royalty was requesting their presence at the clinic. For many years, HSP volunteers annually donated more than 2000 hours of assistance at the clinic.

Bob Deaton became a stalwart in PHC's growing mental health program along with parishioner and psycholo-

gist Delia Campfield. Bob also wrote two successful grants to the Church's United Thank Offering ministry to expand the clinic's work. One in 2005, was for \$35,230, a second, in 2010, for \$38,000. Kirk Johnson designed 10,000 brochures for the clinic, which were printed by Mike and Jan Peissig. Tom Todd served on the PHC board.

As the clinic expanded and became financially more stable, and its use of technology grew, PHC was able to hire its own staff to do many of the tasks once performed by volunteers. The final volunteers ended their tenure in 2018. As the Presiding Bishop had challenged us in her sermon, "Can you reach out, even through your fear?" Thankfully, many Holy Spirit parishioners did at PHC.

■ ad anyone walked into the Holy Spirit parish hall after the 10:15 service on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2010, he or she might have wondered what in the world was going on! Rows of dominos were set up along the floor shaped into a map of Haiti, where playing dominos is a national past-time; one end of the strand lay before a shrouded, bulbous shape. Upon command, members of the youth group knocked down the Haiti dominos, and Social Concerns Committee members revealed a Christmas tree hung with simple paper ornaments with price tags. After the unveiling, more than 60 parishioners flocked to tables set up for playing a variety of domino games, with memorable names like Chicken Foot and Mexican Train.

Many munched on slices of donated Domino's pizza and chocolate brownies flecked with white frosting to, of course, look like dominos. Haitian music blared from a boom box.

Behind the music and laughter, the event held a serious purpose: to raise money throughout Advent to aid schoolchildren in Haiti. On January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake, 15 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital city, had destroyed buildings, including all hospitals in the capital, killed an estimated 160,000 people and displaced another 1.5 million. The Social Concerns Committee

wanted to find a way for Holy Spirit to help, and were blessed by the knowledge and contacts of two parishioners, Sam and Ann Houston, who had lived for many years in the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. A group called Bethlehem Ministry, started by an Episcopal church in Atlanta, had been working to improve conditions in Haiti since 1986. Bethlehem Ministry focused on projects in Terrier Rouge in Northern Haiti through the Rev. Jean Monique Bruno, a Haitian Episcopal priest and friend of the Houstons. A connection was made.

That Sunday, congregants of all ages shared in learning and playing domino games and checked out the ornaments on the tree. Ornaments featured



Keo Burcham (center) leads parishioners in a spirited game of fundraising dominos

Haitian children and detailed products and opportunities we parishioners could "buy" to make schooling possible for the boys and girls who came to

Dominos

for

Haiti

Terrier Rouge after losing their homes and schools in the earthquake. By the close of Advent, parishioners had donated \$3,026 to benefit schoolchildren in Terrier Rouge. The amount made it possible for 14 children to remain enrolled at St. Barthélémy School and helped to pay for their medical care.

The next year, Holy Spirit church school families continued assisting children in Haiti by packing 17 shoe boxes full of useful items to be given to Haitian children at Christmas, as part of another project run by Bethlehem Ministry. In 2012, church school families filled 19 boxes; in 2013, they packed 21!

Haiti remains a country ravaged by two earthquakes and three hurricanes since 2010, and by civil unrest and extreme poverty. But for one wonderful afternoon in December 2010 parishioners from Holy Spirit gathered to play dominos and provide stable schooling for 14 Haitian children 3,000 miles away.

Mission to Mandalay



Myanmar, a south Asian country whose name many did not recognize in 2014, captured the attention of the Social Concerns Committee that year. Before the decade was out, the country formerly known as Burma had captured the hearts of parishioners who ventured there to train English teachers and to appreciate the country's history and culture.

A 2013 book study of *Half the Sky*, describing the worldwide oppression of girls and women, provided the initial seed. The book, by New York Times columnist Nick Kristof and his wife, Sheryl WuDunn, led to microloans to women in several countries, to help start small businesses or farms. The SCC then hosted a banquet and auction in 2014 to raise money for girls' scholarships through Studer Trust, a Myanmar non-profit whose director, Cho Cho Lwin, lives in Missoula. Over \$12,000 was raised for six girls.

Parishioners began to think about a service project in Myanmar. Again, Cho Cho provided the answer: Studer Trust needed to train teachers in order to help improve the poor state of education in Myanmar. Native English speakers were badly needed in monastic schools to help train native teachers to teach a language that is needed for professional and other higher-level jobs. Yet few Myanmar teachers had even heard a native English speaker except on TV. Moreover, rote learning and recitation in huge classes further diminished effective learning.

After months of preparation, a group of 16 (all but three from Holy Spirit) flew to Mandalay in December 2015, then dispersed to four nearby monasteries to train the young teachers who welcomed us. Living conditions were sparse but comfortable. Deep bonds formed between trainers and teachers as we tackled the lessons

and absorbed a bit of each others' worlds through music, food, language, travel to nearby sights, and laughter, lots of laughter. After the training period, a short bus and train tour of parts of beautiful Kachin State to the northeast and a boat trip down the Ayeyarwaddy River to historic Bagan added depth to the trip. So did being there the day the country had its first democratic elections. Whatever we had been able to impart was repaid many-fold by our hosts, who showered us with kindness and love. For many it was the experience of a lifetime.

Other funding projects followed—a dental clinic in one of the monasteries, an electrical substation in another. A second, smaller group of four returned to Myanmar in early 2018 with a different training curriculum, but also stayed in monasteries and experienced once more the simple joys of Myanmar village life. The country seemed to be on the move, eager to push into the 21st century, leaving behind decades of repressive military rule.

Alas, the nation's dreams were crushed on Feb. 1, 2021, with a military coup that precipitated civil war. But Studer Trust was not about to stop building schools, convinced that better education was the key to progress. HSP trip "veterans" organized a global online fundraiser to build a school in remote Nagaland and quickly raised \$22,000, matched soon thereafter. The school is now finished and will be dedicated next year.



If a butterfly flutters its wings in the depths of the rain forest in South America, there will be a ripple in the wind in the deserts of Africa

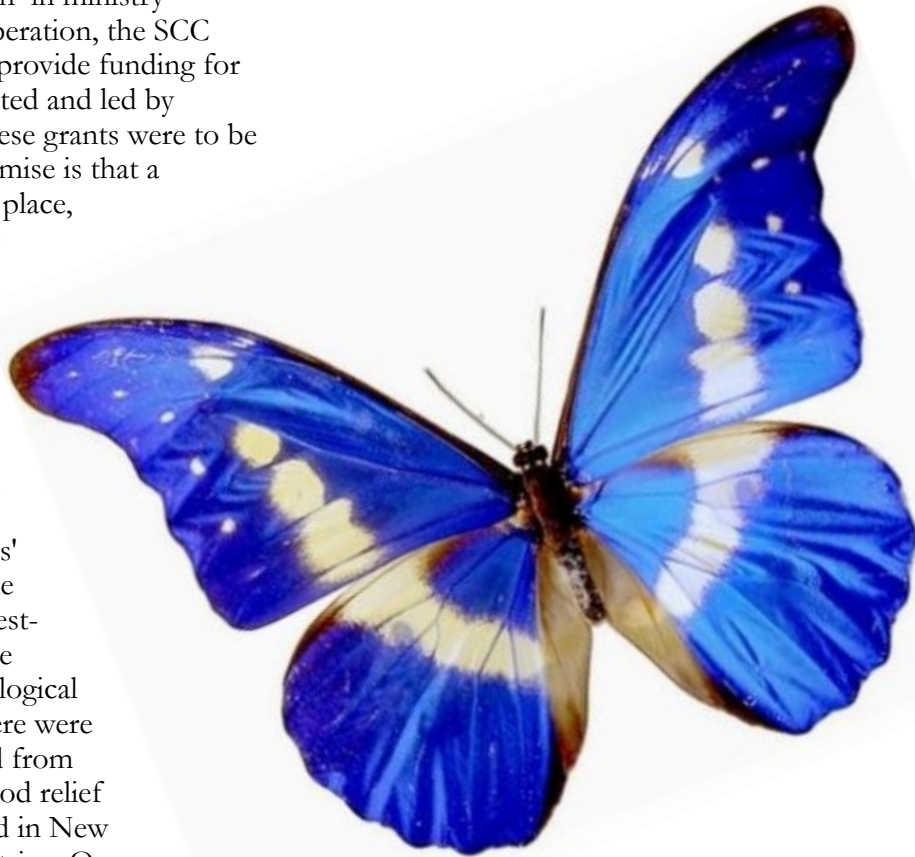
Butterfly grants

In 2015, Reverend Terri approached the Vestry with a request for more parishioner involvement in the ministries of Holy Spirit Parish. She was looking to involve more of the congregation in ministry projects. After considerable deliberation, the SCC initiated the Butterfly Grants to provide funding for small, innovative projects suggested and led by parishioners of Holy Spirit. These grants were to be called Butterfly Grants. The premise is that a small event at the right time and place, could trigger a set of events that will ultimately cause changes in unknown ways and in unknown places.

The question was asked of the congregation "If you had a grant of up to \$300, what would you like to do?" "As could be expected, given HSP parishioners' many talents and interests, people proposed a wide variety of interesting, far-reaching projects." There were projects to create a thanatological harp CD for end of life care, there were gift cards for individuals released from prison, there was funding for flood relief victims in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. One of the more successful was a project suggested by our own "Warm Spirit Girls". They took their \$300 grant and leveraged it in negotiation with Kohl's department store for a \$1000 of warm clothing that was distributed to a variety of shelters for the houseless. To date the creative parishioners of HSP have initiated 38 projects for a total of \$9,982.

OTHER BUTTERFLY GRANTS

Soft Landing After School Program
Tiny library - Bob Wattenberg
Homeless Students Resource Room - Jody Thomasson
Funding for Uganda - Thomas Starting
Palomas Women's Shelter in Palomas, Mexico
Ft. Belknap Rummage Sale Project - Mary Tromley
Tuition for El Golfo students - Maggi and Chuck Teague
Innocence Project - Bob Deaton
2018 Flood Emergency - Holly Swartz
Project Connect - Carla Mettling



"Warm Spirit Girls" (from left) Stella Harberd, Rose Wiltse, Violet Ries and Liesel Strohmaier leveraged a butterfly grant for \$1,000 worth of warm clothing for the homeless.

Welcoming With Dignity

An ice storm on the U.S.-Mexico border in 2021 gave rise to our parish partnership with the Rio Grande Borderland Ministries. The Social Concerns Committee responded to the suffering of migrants who were ill prepared for the severe cold with a \$500 donation to a shelter for migrants in Ojinaga, Mexico. Intrigued that the shelter was supported by the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande, and recognizing that suffering caused by the storm was only part of the humanitarian needs along the border, the committee agreed to support ministries of The Episcopal Church working on the border. In July, 2021, the Holy Spirit Vestry agreed to engage in a year-to-year partnership with the Rio Grande Borderland Ministries.

Rio Grande Borderland Ministries (RGBM) is an established program of The Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande serving the borderlands of New Mexico and far west Texas. For decades, RGBM has worked to provide humanitarian support to vulnerable people along the border. The compassionate response of RGBM is simple—to feed, shelter, and care for their neighbors on both sides of the border. The ministry supports shelters for vulnerable communities on both sides of the US/Mexico border, serving asylum seekers and unaccompanied

minors in the Mexican border communities of Ojinaga, Juarez, and Palomas.

Our parish covenant with RGBM, renewed annually, involves commitments of stewardship, prayer, and time. We make an annual parish pledge to RGBM (\$1,000 per year in 2021 and 2022). In addition, the SCC raises funds by hosting benefit events for RGBM (\$3130 raised in 2021 and 2022). We include migrants and migration ministries in our Prayers of the People on Sundays. And, we have invested countless hours researching border issues, traveling to the border to see for ourselves what goes on there, telling stories about our borderland experiences, preparing opportunities for other Montana Episcopalians to learn about the borderlands, and advocating for immigration reform.



Montana Episcopalians talk to the Border Patrol at the 17-foot border wall in El Paso

At the invitation of RGBM staff, 14 Montana Episcopalians traveled to the border in 2022 to listen to the stories of the people who live and work along the border, and to learn about the spirit of the borderlands. We traveled along the border for five days, learning

about RGBM ministries and the network of relationships that makes them work. We talked with families seeking asylum in the United States, listening to their stories of danger and hardship, humbled by their faith, perseverance and resilience. Each day we confronted the question, “What would I do if my family was threatened in this way? Would I have the faith and courage to do what this family has done?” We talked to border patrol agents. They described the personal conflict they experience while upholding our outdated, sometimes unjust, immigration system. And, we viewed firsthand the cultural and environmental damage caused by the border wall. The SCC is preparing to take these powerful stories and “Holy Family, Human Family,” our reflection on the scriptural imperative to welcome

strangers, to interested parishes across our diocese.

Holy Spirit’s partnership with RGBM is an opportunity to become part of a sustainable effort to support the basic human needs of migrants on our southern border. It’s also an opportunity to reconnect with the stories that we learn in our church. As Christians we have clear direction to help the desperate, to treat all people with respect, and to

welcome with dignity all those who seek our shelter, food, and refuge. Our baptismal covenant instructs us to serve Christ, a child migrant, in all persons, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being.



Building Community

When is a dollhouse *not* a dollhouse? When it becomes a symbol to raise more than \$14,000 to build a real home with Habitat for Humanity of Missoula!

Holy Spirit Parish has been connected with Habitat since before the Social Concerns Committee formed. The parish became a covenant church with the local affiliate in 1991. Crews of parishioners joined other community members to build houses for local families. After the Social Concerns Committee was established in 2002, it took over managing the annual Habitat project.

In spring 2008, Habitat asked Holy Spirit to join with other local churches to participate in The Good Neighbor

Build. As part of that commitment, Holy Spirit agreed to contribute \$5,000, 250 hours of labor, and three lunches for volunteers working at the job site.

That's where the Social Concerns Committee and a very basic dollhouse that Lucia Solorzano and Clem Work had in their basement entered the picture. In 2009, parishioners "bought" various items that would go into a real Habitat house: flooring, shingles, windows, cabinets and other construction items for "building" toward \$5,000. In turn, SCC members and other enthusiastic parishioners upgraded the dollhouse set up in the parish hall, putting tiny shingles on the roof, framing and adding shutters to the windows, painting and tiling. Every week, parishioners gathered to see what changes had been made to "our" little Habitat house. At project's end, Holy Spirit had raised \$14,197, almost three times our goal! Parishioners then went on to donate more than 500 hours in labor on the housing site, more than twice what had been requested.

Four years later, Holy Spirit expanded on its dollhouse project and built a charming blue playhouse to be raffled

off as a fundraiser for Habitat. Holly Swartz found a set of plans for an outdoor playhouse, and a local building supply company provided materials at a discount thanks to Gary Swartz's brother. Parishioners, who were not carpenters, formed a building crew that gathered regularly in Sonia Zenk's garage. Doug Loskutoff oversaw the playhouse construction, and Jim Clark lent his expertise and sweat. Bob Deaton recruited a painting team, and the finished playhouse exceeded our parish dreams. The raffle raised \$5,150 for Habitat, and in a perfect story-book ending, the generous parishioners who won the playhouse donated it back to the family receiving one of the Habitat houses that year.

Holy Spirit has continued building regular-sized houses with Habitat every year since. Bob Brewer heads up fund-raising at the church. The Social Concerns Committee recruits volunteer work teams who each put in one day or more as builders. Other volunteers provide lunches for workers, and the SCC contributes \$750 annually to the local HfH affiliate. From dollhouse to playhouse to full-sized homes, Holy Spirit parishioners build them all!



The Road to Advocacy at Holy Spirit

Advocacy is often speaking on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves to make their needs known and proposing solutions to those who have the power to help. Traditionally, the church has not engaged in advocacy, but rather has worked directly with the individuals needing help. For instance, Holy Spirit Parish, with the Social Concerns Committee taking the lead, has worked with Partnership Health to ensure that the disadvantaged receive health care.

While this work continues to be important, it does not involve efforts to change the laws that cause or exacerbate suffering. The Social Concerns Committee believes we should be active in advocating for such change. Book studies in the past 10 years have informed us that certain institutions, and not just individuals failing to work hard enough to improve themselves, are root causes of poverty and suffering. Among others, *Half the Sky* revealed misogynistic structures around the world oppressing women;

The New Jim Crow showed penal systems perpetuating and worsening racism, and *Evicted* explained how housing laws have made people homeless.

Our studies have motivated HSP members to educate ourselves and the parish further about these problems and possible solutions, and to become advocates for changing pernicious laws and institutions. To that end, SCC and HSP have been hosting panels, films, and talks addressing the need for action. HSP offered a panel on the history of advocacy in the Episcopal Church and training in civil discourse.

Our resolve to do advocacy found new strength when we discovered that the National Episcopal Church has been urging us for a long time to join them in taking positions on a wide range of social issues and solutions and in taking action to persuade our elected officials to implement those solutions. HSP members can contact their elected representatives

Join us for a

BOOKCafe

The Social Concerns Committee invites you to join us in reading and discussing these four meaningful books

Wednesday, September 18
6:30-8:30 pm in the parish hall

HOLY SPIRIT | EPISCOPAL CHURCH
130 South 6th Street East / Missoula, MT 59801 / 406.542.2167 / www.holyspiritmissoula.org

and use the National Episcopal Church's guidance.

As our advocacy would be most effective speaking as one voice for the whole parish, rather than as individuals, we have developed a process at HSP for identifying, approving, and undertaking parish-wide advocacy on any given issue. So far, the SCC has hosted workshops in which parishioners wrote letters to state legislators on behalf of HSP, advocating the protection and enlargement of Medicaid and the funding and reinstatement of mental health case managers. And we shared this letter with churches in western Montana. Representing the parish, we testified before legislators in Helena and spoke at Missoula Interfaith Collaborative's assemblies. We drafted a letter from the parish to the *Missoulian* on Medicaid, signed by Rev. Terri. And presently, we have a letter in the works advocating the passage of the Electoral Count Reform Bill, which aims to protect the integrity of future elections.

A great group of folks came out for our first session of Practicing Advocacy with Civility. As part of the evening's activities, participants helped create a cairn, a landmark, to help them find their way back to the idea of civility.



Hundreds of units and counting

According to Bob Deaton, our semi-annual blood drives began when Orson Murray pronounced, “We’re going to have a blood drive here, and you’re going to help me do it,” as he gestured at Bob. Orson’s proposal was among the ideas discussed at the first organizational meeting of the Social Concerns Committee, held on November 19, 2002. Most of the ideas discussed at the meeting were long-term, larger-scale projects that required some advance research and development.

To get the ball rolling, the 18 people attending the meeting agreed to take on a more immediate project—a one-time parish-wide blood drive in partnership with The American Red Cross. The blood drive was held in September, 2003. The committee deemed the blood drive a success, with 23 units of blood donated and made plans to regularly conduct semi-annual blood drives.

The parish has sponsored two blood drives each year since that first drive in 2003, for a total of 39 blood drives.



Doug Anderson gives blood in the parish hall

The blood drives are usually held in September and February. Red Cross records for Holy Spirit Parish blood drives only go back to 2010 when the Red Cross began tracking donations online. Since 2010, the Red Cross has collected an average of 23 units per drive at Holy Spirit, with a total of 565 units collected since 2010! At our most recent blood drive, held on September 23, 2022, the Red Cross collected 35 units of various blood products, more than they have collected at Holy Spirit Parish since 2003 when this special ministry began.

The life-saving blood products collected at our blood drives are available to hospitals and trauma centers across Montana and the Northwest. The Holy Spirit Parish blood drives were particularly appreciated during the Covid pandemic. When other Red Cross donation sites were unavailable, the Social Concerns Committee and the Holy Spirit vestry permitted the Red Cross to continue to use our Parish Hall.

Throughout the pandemic, Holy Spirit parishioners stepped up to keep the blood drives going, by donating blood, staffing the blood drives, and preparing and serving refreshments. In addition to our parishioners at Holy Spirit Parish, many donors come from the wider community. The semi-annual blood drives are one way Missoulians have come to know and depend on Holy Spirit Parish. 20



Orson Murray checks in Rev. Terri during a Red Cross blood draw at Holy Spirit



Andrea Wiley welcomes blood donors with tasty snacks

Funding a medical clinic in Zambia

In 2007, Missoulian Kit Fischer was a Peace Corps volunteer in Kangaya, in northwest Zambia. His original assignment was to help the community build a sustainable aquaculture with tilapia, to provide protein for the tribe's diet. The tribal leaders, however, made it clear that their greater need was for a medical clinic. The nearest clinic was 15 kilometers away, a three hour walk. Or, if they could find a bike, they would strap on a wicker chair to create an "ambulance". Since they had no medical clinic in the community, they had no bandages or medications; burns, cuts, malaria, poisoning and other maladies were often left untreated.

Kit and the tribe made a deal. He would work on fundraising and the community would provide the labor. Upon hearing of the situa-



Peace Corps volunteer Kit Fischer and the completed Kangaya clinic

tion, the Social Concerns Committee developed a fundraising information event and a giving tree at Christmas of 2007 to help fund the clinic. More than \$5,000 was raised and the work began.

Thousands of hand-made bricks (to thwart termites) were made and fired in a traditional kiln. Women and children carried jugs of water a quarter mile to mix with the clay to make the bricks. Buckets of sand were carried to mix concrete. Wood for the roof was made with hand sawn 2 x 6's. The door and all the windows were handmade by the villagers. Medical supplies were purchased including a bed for delivering babies. And a local villager, Alan

Kamwandi, prepared to get advanced medical training in order to staff the clinic

The clinic was completed in eight months. In celebration, the community killed a goat and held a huge party. The chief made a big speech and while not intelligible to Kit, it appeared he and the entire community were extremely pleased and proud of their new medical clinic. To date the medical clinic continues to provide simple medical care to the tribe. It also provides lodging for the teacher at the school.

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Glenn Hladek, Lucía Solórzano and the giving tree for the Kangaya clinic



Villagers make bricks for the clinic

and there were plenty more projects...

HSP's marvelous **Minestrone Ministry** was an early supporter of efforts to provide stuffed backpacks for Camp Marshall's Grace Camp that serves children with an incarcerated parent. In 2010, Minestrone Ministry donated \$835 to purchase items to fill the packs. In later years, church school families and other parishioners donated the backpacks and scouted out sales on fluffy beach towels and toiletries to fill them.

Beginning in 2013, the Social Concerns Committee began collecting warm socks, hats, scarves and gloves for residents of the **Poverello Center**, the community's shelter for homeless adults. In 2021, when because of the pandemic there were no in-person church services and many of us stayed close to home, parishioners put collection bins on their porches and together contributed a record 43 pounds of socks, 18 pounds of scarves, 14 pounds of hats, and 13 pounds of gloves and mittens. Who would have thought that possible?

From 2016 until 2020, when the pandemic cancelled Missoula's **Back to School Bash**, parishioners joined forces with up to a dozen other local faith communities to donate more than 2,000 new and lightly used books annually for low-income children from preschool through seniors in high school. The bash brought joy to everyone involved, from the grinning kids who hugged books about dinosaurs, pirates and horses to their parents who shared precious memories of their own magical books.



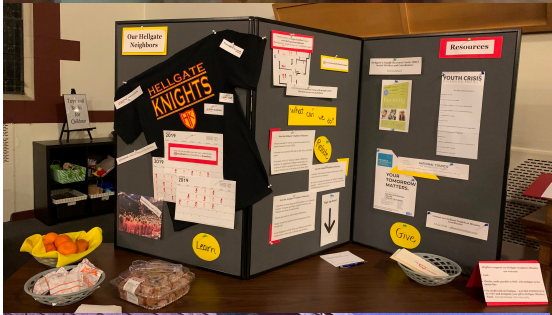
The Parenting Place has been another space where Holy Spirit parishioners have helped bring joy-- and sustenance. In 2007, HSP volunteers began cooking a weekly meal every Monday in March for families at the Parenting Place. Since that tasty start, Holy Spirit has become a Community Partner to the Parenting Place, providing annual financial support and involving volunteers in hands-on tasks during facility work days.

Holy Spirit was an early advocate of the **Missoula Food Bank**, providing significant financial support and volunteers well before the Social Concerns Committee began. And our support has continued. In 2011, for example, parishioners donated a staggering 872 pounds of food and almost \$2,790 slipped in those little yellow Food Fund envelopes tucked into the pews.



A focus on **Creation Care** has taken root within the Social Concerns Committee and the parish. What began in 2021 as three planned events expanded to a year's worth of activities, from glorious walks to witness the camas blooms at Packer's Meadows to workshops on journaling and container gardening, to sharing our solar power installation with participants at the 2022 Diocesan Convention.

Food opened doors for interfaith conversations in 2007 as HSP hosted a potluck to **welcome Muslim students** attending the University of Montana. After dinner, participants talked together, sharing beliefs, shattering myths and enhancing interfaith understanding. That evening expanded to others in subsequent years, with more faith communities.



Wednesday, Nov. 1 | 7 pm-8:30 pm
Parish Hall, Holy Spirit Episcopal Church
130 South 6th Street East





Holy Spirit Blood Drive

Location: Parish Hall
130 South 6th Street East

Thursday, September 22
1 pm - 6 pm

Sign up online at
www.redcrossblood.org