**Minutes of the February 10, 2016 food pantry meeting**

**Attendance:** Jan Balder, Tom Bertram, Carol Cantlon, Mary Clark, Mary Cook, Karen Durnin, Therese Frana, Judy Jakes, Pam Jameson, Nancy Kuczynski, Barb Loken, Joe Melde, Rita Patton, Julie Rodenberg, Patty Stetzer, John Stubler, Dave Wolf, Sister Bridget, Kathy Warzynski

The meeting began with the parish stewardship prayer. New people were welcomed. There were no additions or corrections to the minutes for the last meeting.

Under old business, we reviewed the Christmas Caring and Sharing event. Sister Bridget had gathered comments by e-mail after the event. There were favorable comments regarding the provision of child care and having three people to help with the distribution of food boxes. It was suggested at the meeting that having boxes to the left side of the altar and also on the left side of the worship space created a lot of congestion. After some discussion on other arrangements for the boxes, Therese Frana suggested that the boxes be loaded onto a trailer that would be parked close to the main entrance to the church. This would mean that the guest’s paper entitling them to the perishable food would also be used to obtain their food box. Guests would receive their gift cards and the paper inside. This would mean that boxes would be closer to guest vehicles, cutting down on the time and effort to haul them.This would also free up some space in the worship space for shopping. Have Christmas items in the guest room also worked well last year. Tom Bertram asked that boxes not be repacked if they appeared to be full. Boxes that appear to be less than full should be filled, however. It was also decided to discontinue the recipe for the chicken hot dish. Judy Jakes pointed out that 210 boxes were distributed, and 179 were returned, which is about what was returned last year. She thought that was what we could probably expect in the future.

Rotary Lights was also reviewed. St. Elizabeth was offered an extra night, so we received the food from December 24 in addition to that from December 11, 19, 23, and 25. Therese and Les Frana rented a trailer for December 11 and brought that food up the next morning for sorting/ shelving, which went well. December 19 was the Saturday before Christmas, and again, John Stubler rented a truck for that night’s collection. On Sunday morning, John had truck emptied by the time Tom Bertram arrived to help. Wednesday, December 23: Kathy and Larry Warzynski brought their truck to be loaded first and Carol and Dick Cantlon brought their truck to haul the next load. It was raining that night, but the first truck was filled completely, and the Cantlon truck was about 75% full. For December 24, a trailer was rented and left there over night to also collect the food from December 25. These five nights provided the most food that we have ever received from Rotary Lights. Many thanks to all those who picked up food, rented trailers and truck, and sorted and shelved/boxed the food at the pantry.

Thanks went to Julie Rodenberg for heading up a food drive at the vet clinic where she works; it was very successful, yielding about $2300 and an SUV full of food and pet supplies.

Judy Jakes provided some guidelines for packing boxes (distributed with the meeting agenda and minutes), and the group discussed packing boxes full and getting boxes. To address the problem of always having enough boxes, packing food in bags and using crates to transport the bags, and then stack them was revisited. Karen Durnin and Julie Rodenberg will look into getting crates/totes to be used/reused for packing, using some of the funds that Julie helped to raise.

A chart showing proposed subcommittees for this committee was passed around for everyone’s review. The subcommittees would be administrative, daily and weekly; food donations/food drives; special events; Tuesday/Friday box distribution/guest assistance; and Research/future planning.

Under new business, the Riverland Energy Coop food drive is currently going on. The food pantry will receive some of the food donated at the Onalaska office. Coop members who donate food receive light bulbs. Notice of the food drive is published in the church bulletin to encourage donations.

The Scout food drive is scheduled for March 12. Again this year, we have requested that the scouts deliver the food to the pantry as it is counted, rather than all at once. Last year, staggered delivery helped the volunteers at the food pantry sorting and shelving to keep up. Judy Jakes volunteered to be at the pantry at 10 am to prepare for the incoming food. Nancy Kuczynski, Barb Loken, and Mary Clark volunteered to come at 10:30 am to sort/shelve, and Therese Frana, Patty Stetzer, and Kathy Warzynski volunteered to come at 12:30 pm.

No reverse collections were scheduled. As of this meeting, Kathy Warzynski resigned as chair of the committee.

At the next meeting, the group will review the Riverland Energy food drive and the Scout food drive. If crates/totes are being used in packing food for distribution, the group will evaluate how they are working. Implementation of the new subcommittee structure for the committee will continue. The next meeting will be Thursday, April 28, 2016, at 6:30 pm in the gathering place.

The meeting adjourned with the prayer for mercy at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted February 11, 2016

Kathy Warzynski