



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

● August 19, 2013..... Several delegates from the Louisville trip presented a report of Compassionate Louisville at the Rigali Center to Archbishop Robert Carlson, Chair of the Interfaith Partnership Cabinet. The outcome of the report was an agreement to bring the Louisville report to the full Cabinet at its October 3rd meeting.

● October 3, 2013..... A presentation was made to the full IP Cabinet. After discussion, the Cabinet agreed to continuing exploration of the initiative, and Archbishop Carlson appointed members of the Cabinet—IP Cabinet Vice-Chair Rev. C. Jessel Strong, Rev. Sherrie Saunders, and Maryl Walters, to “explore IP’s participation in a process for the St. Louis Region to become a Compassionate City according to the Charter of Compassion, as part of city-wide 250th Anniversary celebrations.”

On this date these appointees presented an update to the Cabinet and the IP staff on the Compassionate Cities initiative. They shared the genesis of a similar effort from three other Compassionate Cities – Seattle, Houston and Nashville. In each case they uncovered the initial steps in each city’s process, who was involved and how, and noted the ways in which interfaith organizations played a role in the initiative but did not run the ongoing efforts.

They noted examples of how each city differently embodies the Charter for Compassion in its own setting. They began to offer names of persons and organizations who should be at the “table” going forward, and asked the Cabinet’s ideas for other possible partners. After further discussion and clarification, the Cabinet unanimously agreed that the Compassionate City process should go to the next level in early 2014 and then asked for continued updates from the working group.

● November 20, 2013..... On this date these appointees presented an update to the Cabinet and the IP staff on the Compassionate Cities initiative. They shared the genesis of a similar effort from three other Compassionate Cities – Seattle, Houston and Nashville. In each case they uncovered the initial steps in each city’s process, who was involved and how, and noted the ways in which interfaith organizations played a role in the initiative but did not run the ongoing efforts. They noted examples of how each city differently embodies the Charter for Compassion in its own setting. They began to offer names of persons and organizations who should be at the “table” going forward, and asked the Cabinet’s ideas for other possible partners. After further discussion and clarification, the Cabinet unanimously agreed that the Compassionate City process should go to the next level in early 2014 and then asked for continued updates from the working group.

● January 2014..... The working group met in late January of 2014 with a slightly higher attendance of several new individuals interested in the initiative. The meetings of the working group, eventually to be renamed the ‘Coordinating Circle,’ have been taking place at The Well, an Interfaith Resource Center, adjacent to the Brentwood Christian Science Church on Brentwood Blvd.

(continued)



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES *(continued)*

- January 2014 *(continued)*..... The group decided to invite Tom Williams of Compassionate Louisville, to do an in-service with those in the St. Louis group willing to attend. Tom is the Convener and an eloquent spokesperson for the Louisville effort. The St. Louis delegation had met him in August of 2013 on their visit to Louisville. He agreed to make a visit to St. Louis in May of 2014.
- May 2014..... Tom Williams provides an in-service for the St. Louis group. The plan was to seek Tom's input and to begin to think strategically for a further broadening of this initiative for the St. Louis context. Accompanying Tom was Stephanie Barnett, a nurse, who shared the story of her involvement with the movement in Louisville. At this time, the CSTL effort was led by Interfaith Partnership under the leadership of the Rev. David Mehl, its Executive Director.
- November 2014..... A first Town Hall meeting was held, kindness of the St. Louis Union leadership, at the Sheet Metal Workers' Union Hall, at Chouteau and Jefferson in St. Louis. The meeting, open to the public, celebrated the compassionate leadership revealed in the Ferguson, Missouri uprising. With stunning reality this leadership became clear in the events of Ferguson.

I confronted the blatant racism that remains in the St. Louis region, a remnant of the Civil War, the fact that Missouri was a slave state, and that the Dred Scott decision was given on the downtown St. Louis Court House steps.

This lingering wound was opened again by the race riots of the 60's in East St. Louis when that industrial hub collapsed economically, and the poor black population flooded across the river into north St. Louis. St. Louis lives today with the city-county divide created by the white flight that still awaits racial healing.
- Early 2015..... The group was meeting at The Well on Brentwood, hosted kindly by the Christian Science Church community. By February the group was discussing an approach to both the St. Louis Mayor and the County Executive for a Proclamation on St. Louis entering the process of becoming a Compassionate City, and work began on a text to offer to them.
- March 30, 2015..... With a budget of still approximately \$2400 from Interfaith Partnership, a second Town Hall Meeting was scheduled. UMSL was chosen because it was geographically in the 'eye of the storm,' being so near to Ferguson. Engaging West County groups had become, by this time a growing part of the discussion.
- May 5, 2015..... In March of 2015 Sara Rahim became an intern with CompassionateSTL to do a one-month project of updating CSTL's structure toward future growth. She completed this project by May 5, and it included suggestions for the future of CSTL. An effort at this time to obtain a \$15,000 grant from the Parliament of World Religions Office during the summer of 2015 unfortunately failed.
- December 2015..... David Mehl gathered the group to discuss CSTL's directions and priorities for 2016, which would mean establishing a transitional leadership, as he would not be continuing. The growth of the Compassionate City Network was now conflicting with his role as Executive Director of Interfaith Partnership. By February, Rabbi Jim Goodman was initiating CSTL 'Musical Constellation' Concerts to raise awareness of the group's efforts, and Gabe Vitale an intern with St. Louis University, became active in encouraging the 'Compassionate Games' on the new CSTL Facebook page.

(continued)



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES *(continued)*

- March 2016..... The *Ferguson Report* was published, and the explicit intent to engage the West County region in anti-racist efforts was born through the organization Faith for the Sake of All. As a part of Interfaith Partnership, CSTL entered into an anti-racist working relationship with Faith for the Sake of All (FSOA), and as a supporter of the Sheldon 9/11 Commemorative Concerts.
- June 2016..... The official logo of CSTL was approved. The Proclamation draft for the Mayor was ready, and plans began to take shape for a meeting with Mayor Slay. A plan was taking shape that by fall of 2016, CSTL would launch out on its own with a direct focus on the civic community with an interim leadership structure.
- October 1-December 31, 2016..... A Financial Proposal was provided for this transition with Katherine Van Uum, a scholar of the Science of Compassion, and James Comminellis, of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, as transitional leadership.
- April 2017..... Meetings were planned for June, August, October, and December.
- February 2018..... Critical questions were rising as to the identity and future goals of CSTL, and Katherine Van Uum wisely invited Joe Regan, formerly involved in the Compassionate Louisville Movement, to help CSTL develop a strategic plan.

What followed was a series of meetings with a small group of dedicated CSTL core members, who struggled with a re-visioning of the group as a distinct and fresh CSTL Network, operating distinct from Interfaith Partnership, and focusing on civic community engagement.

While always being mindful of CSTL's beginnings with Interfaith Partnership, and continuing to engage the interfaith community, the dependency would cease. Their transition period over, Katherine and James chose to move to the background, and the role of Convener fell to Carla Mae Streeter, OP, emerita professor at Aquinas Institute of Theology.
- March 2019..... The newly formed Core Group was ready to shape its Strategic Plan on paper, and a nine-month project began.
- January 2020..... CSTL's present reality can be explored under the 'About Us' menu bar of this website. The results of our work under Joe Reagan's firm and challenging guidance can also be found there. We have a three-year strategy, we have a ten-year Strategic Plan. We believe the St. Louis Region has tremendous potential as the heartland of the United States to influence the attitudinal shift needed in the country. To realize this potential, we must first tend to our wounded and racist history. Our effort to be recognized as a Compassionate City is the beginning of that healing.

 - We have begun.
 - We began the reactivation of our website and Facebook page.
 - Dave Oughton updated us on our growing list of organizations to contact, and Maryl shared a growing list of our Partners.
 - Dave and Carla Mae will be meeting with Mercy Hospital personnel on January 20.
 - Carla Mae will be presenting to the Faith and Labor Alliance and Justice Leaders from the Jewish community January 30.

(continued)



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES *(continued)*

- February 2020..... The Coordinating Circle met on February 10 at the Well, 9:15-11 a.m.

 - Maryl became our Keeper of the Lists: Partners and organizations to be contacted.
 - Maryl is working on obtaining someone to help shape our website; Steve DiSalvo will manage our Facebook page.
 - Dave will edit the Charter page and our Vision/Strategic Plan page with directions on how to become a Partner.
 - Beth reported on youth participation through Quest's Can-O-Vision, a mural-sculpture of 3000 donated food cans to be built and displayed at the St. Louis Science Center.
 - Jim Roos, founder of Sanctuary in the Ordinary and Neighborhood Enterprises, updated us on his efforts in preservation and management of low-cost housing.
 - Carla Mae reported on national efforts of some Compassionate Cities to eliminate homelessness, and on the meetings with the Faith and Labor Alliance, Mercy Hospital, and the B'nai Amoona Social Justice Coordinator.

- March 2020..... The Coordinating Circle met at The Well on March 9, 2020.

 - Carla Mae urged Core Members and Partners to try to bring in two or three new Partners each month.
 - Maryl introduced us to Andy Mehring, who will help us recreate our website.

- April 2020..... The usual meeting was cancelled due to the Social Distancing prompted by the virus.

- May 2020..... With kindness of Jim Poinsett, Executive Director of Interfaith Partnership, who hosted us, we met by Zoom on May 11, from 9 to 11.

 - Maryl reported that we now have an official domain name: Compassionate-STL.org.
 - Carla Mae will work with Andy to bring content to our Web site and its Menu Bar Pages.
 - Lea Koesterer introduced us to the efforts to end homelessness in Seattle by AWBS (Architects Without Borders Seattle).
 - The Islamic Community of St. Louis, which operates several free clinics in the area, has opened a virus testing site available to anyone who wishes to be tested.
 - SLU reported on its CompassionateSTL activity: hundreds of thousands of meals distributed to families, hot meals for elderly shut-ins, internet capability for 10 churches to give access to children for school programs and health care for those who would not otherwise have access.
 - MCU (Metropolitan Churches United) through our Partner David Gerth held a car parade May 8 to draw attention to youth at detention centers under threat from the virus; they are protesting legislative action in Jeff City to roll back 'clean' Missouri gerrymandering revisions passed by voters, and through census work are contacting Seniors to let them know help is there if they need it.
 - Carla Mae has been in contact with Gabrielle Kennedy, Executive Director of Faith for the Sake of All, to explore mutual support between FSOA and CSTLN.
 - A small group of Philip, Steve Hinson, and Lea Koesterer will explore future contact with the media.