

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Of St. Vincent de Paul Church
January 8, 2007**

The Parish Council of St. Vincent de Paul Church met on Tuesday, January 8th, 2008. Next meeting will be Tuesday, February 12, 2008. The meeting was brought to order at 7:35 by Colleen McCahill. Prayer was offered by Colleen McCahill. In attendance: Fr. Dick Lawrence, Bro. Jim Horan, Pat Ball, Nancy O'Neill, Joan Campbell, Colleen McCahill, Chris Kreeger, Barbara Murphy, Audrey Rogers, Dennis Moore, Graham Yearley, Anne Marie Freeburger, Molly Hyatt, Ray Heil, Kathy Brown, Dennis Flynn, Jerome Bird.

Old Business

Financial Report: Parish Council reviewed the financial report and most expenses seem on budget except utilities which were also not far off budget. Parking is running short for the year. Nothing has required major maintenance in the church so we are \$10,000 below budget. There was an increase in Sunday offertory due to there being five Sundays in December as well as Christmas. Ordinary revenue closely matched expenses.

Tower Finances: Total cost for the tower was \$429,000 but \$203,000 of that is covered by an insurance claim. We owe \$226,000. There was \$110,000 bequest, \$20,000 in the historic trust fund, \$45,000 in income from the Historic Trust Fund and we have had \$30,000 in donations for the tower restoration. We will owe approximately \$30,000 by July 30, 2008. That amount will hopefully be paid out of next year's income from the Historic Trust.

Homeless in the Park - Baltimore City Street to Home Project: Sheila Dixon has created a 10 year plan to end homelessness. To address that goal there is a new program that the city is investigating. Some members of the parish, Audrey Rogers and Colleen McCahill, attended training in NYC to learn about a creative way to house homeless people run by a program called Common Ground. This program has been well studied and the success rate is very good. It provides intensive, ongoing care that can continue for years. The residents have to pay rent if they have income (from work, SSI, veterans' benefits).

There are some new housing options available in Baltimore City for this population. The housing department has set aside 100 units now and will dedicate 100 more each year. The training was very positive and it was clear from the Baltimore City officials that there are opportunities for change underway for the park. Parish members want to be clear that there will be no forcible clearing of the folks that live there. The Health Department wants to operate this program in the park.

Colleen will suggest that city representatives come to us with a proposal that includes our own parish plan. The Council discussed presenting a draft plan at the Parish Town Meeting on January 27th. At the meeting Audrey could present the information from the training by Common Ground and also have a representative from the city to present their vision. Council also discussed creating a homeless task force within the parish that could collaborate with the city.

There was a strong suggestion that we state at the Town Meeting that it is the will of the Parish Council that the park will continue to be available as a refuge for the homeless and a place to find services with the goal of reducing the number of people there. We need to be clear with the parish that it is not our intention to close the park but to allow it to continue to be a gateway for the homeless. It was suggested that a written history of the park should be provided at the Town Meeting. Colleen suggested that she, Audrey, Dick and Deacon Bill meet with city representatives to help them craft a proposal that includes our wishes.

Colleen or Audrey will provide parish council members with internet links to information on Common Ground.

Pastor's Report: Christmas was well-attended and a lot of fun. We will rapidly be in Lent – February 6th is Ash Wednesday. There will be a talk by John Rogers tomorrow night on C.S. Lewis and later in the month a talk by Dick on the Liturgy of the Hours.

Committee Reports

Education: Retreat plans are in process. The new location will be in Pennsylvania at a Lutheran retreat camp. Two lodges have been rented. Camping is allowed and there is a pool.

Liturgy: Next meeting is on January 19th. All of the Lenten services have been planned and planners are in place. The committee is providing a

brochure for Lenten services in order to increase attendance. It will appear in the January Together Sharing Christ. A shortened version of this brochure will be sent out to the Catholics in a one mile radius for outreach purposes. Audrey mentioned that a volunteer will be needed to replace Tino Pasquarello to coordinate the Easter Breakfast.

Peace and Justice: No report. The committee has not met since the last meeting. Next meeting is January 26th.

Social Action Committee: Next meeting is January 19th. On the agenda will be to create a list of steps being taken with the homeless people in the park. The committee is interested in expanding their role with the city homeless issue. Also members of the Bridge congregations are being asked to bring other congregations into the organization. Council members made some suggestions of other parishes including Our Lady of the Fields in Anne Arundel County as well as St. Ignatius in Baltimore City.

Art and Architecture: The tower is finished and it is fully lit at night. The sale of rosettes yielded over \$1,000. More than 100 rosettes were purchased and have been distributed. The plaques are being completed now and will soon be distributed. Checks totaling \$1,035 were presented to the Pastor by the A&A Committee as a contribution toward the tower restoration fund. These monies are proceeds from the sale of rosettes and plaques. There will be a tower blessing in the spring and the remaining rosettes will be sold at that time.

Prayer Garden: The garden structures have been installed and the fence has been painted. It was a little over \$15,000 to complete. It will be planted in the spring. Pat and Ray Bahr paid for the additional costs and have pledged money for the plants. There are other repair needs that can be addressed in the future.

Pastoral Care Committee: There will be a training on February 3rd for new members who will have direct contact with recipients. There will be a handout for those volunteers. The volunteers will be divided into territories and there is coordinator for each territory.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 9:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Murphy