

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH
FEBRUARY 8, 2011**

The meeting was brought to order by the Council President, Jim Casey, at 7:35pm and prayer was offered by Anne Freeberger.

In attendance: Fr. Richard Lawrence (Pastor), Jim Casey (President), Audrey Rogers (Vice-President), Nancy O'Neill (7:15 Mass Rep.), Jack Bonner (9:30 Mass Rep.), Jim Lochner (9:30 Mass Rep.), Kevin O'Reilly (9:30 Mass Rep.), Kathy Jeffra (Education Committee Vice Chair), Valerie Rolandelli and Bill McNamara (Liturgy Committee Chair and Vice Chair), Dennis Flynn (Finance Committee Vice-Chair), Pat Ball (Facilities Committee Chair), Ray Heil and Peggy Meyer (Social Action Committee Chair and Vice Chair), Anne Marie Freeberger (Corporator).

Absent: Pete McDowell, Teresa Payne, and Graham Yearley.

Pastor's Report

Fr. Lawrence noted that only two weeks have elapsed since our last meeting but he did convene a staff meeting in which he requested a new, revised, or updated job description for each salaried staff position (excepting the cantor). He expects these by the end of February for Council review at the March meeting. His plan is to ask staff for goals and objectives for the next year; these will be discussed between Fr. Lawrence and the respective staff person based on the duties outlined in the job description.

Finance Committee Report

Dennis Flynn distributed income and expense sheets for the seven months [ending January 31, 2011] of this current fiscal year. He pointed out that cash flow between the two is as expected. There is an expense of \$3,979 in Extraordinary Capital Repairs for the initial architectural consultation for upcoming projects. This debit is only temporary pending its repayment by the St Vincent Historic Trust Fund whose purpose is to support the structural upkeep of the buildings. Dennis also pointed out that weekend Mass attendance has leveled off (average for this seven month period in 2010 was 256, in 2011 has been 255) while average per capita weekly offertory donations increased from \$14.55 to \$16.00.

Council Committee Charters

Five of the six committees had charters before Council for review. The Council deferred to the judgment of each committee in its delineation of the scope of its responsibilities for the mission sector delegated to it by the Council. The Council accepted the review strategy of ensuring that all committee charters [1] stated the committee's mission, [2] outlined responsibilities related to planning, and coordination, [3] provided for leadership, terms of office, and duties, [4] identified existing subcommittees and working groups, and [5] listed the frequency of committee meetings.

Note: Several areas that have been variably addressed in the charters have to do with the interaction of the committee with salaried staff, the responsibility for the training and formation of volunteer parishioners, and the evaluation of parish programs. These topics were discussed at the January meeting without resolution. They were not placed on the agenda this month pending Fr. Lawrence's plan for the upcoming review of staff job descriptions which should provide more clarity.

The Council approved all five charters (the sixth for Communications and Outreach Committee had been approved in November). Ray Heil asked if committees had the capacity to revise their charters as circumstances evolve and all agreed that such capacity was the prerogative of the committee.

Committee Presentations to Council

The Council has accepted that becoming a mission-driven community will require all Council members to be fully cognizant of how the committees are implementing our parish mission in their respective sectors. Consequently the Council decided to focus on the work of one committee each month in order to bring the committee's mission into the life of the Council for full Council engagement, cross-committee fertilization, and proactive thinking. Committees were asked to present in five areas. Communications and Outreach was rescheduled to February along with Liturgy.

Communications and Outreach Committee (Audrey Rogers, Acting Chair): Based on written report to Council and discussion at meeting:

What do you see as the major issues facing the parish community?

[1] The challenge to provide effective, responsible, transparent lay leadership.

Despite our constitution, the Council is not perceived as providing co-leadership with the Pastor.

[2] Our status as an intentional community, small in numbers and dependent on an aging volunteer base. The level of volunteerism is remarkable and the devotion of the volunteers is amazing. But we implement the same programs year after year without assessing changing needs or evaluating what we are doing.

[3] The prevalence of 'problem' attitudes. Disengagement with community life, resistance to change, self-satisfaction with *status quo*, belief that nothing can change until Fr. Lawrence retires.

What have been the major challenges for your committee in the past?

This is a new committee emerging from community needs for effective internal and external communication and for effective community engagement of newly registered parishioners.

What are your committee's present and future challenges?

Our biggest challenge is identifying and recruiting parishioners with technology expertise. This is particularly important for how our community is presented on the web where more and more people search for parish communities.

What are your committee's goals in the upcoming year?

This year we are working on a reformat of the St V website and the weekly bulletin. Both are in progress. After that, we will address the registration process and implement a method for follow up. Next year, we hope to establish avenues for the publication of our community events and outreach to people and groups who may be interested in our way of living church.

How can other standing committees assist your committee in achieving your goals?

The new website will be participatory with each organizational unit in the parish having access and responsibility for its own website calendar. Our committee will provide training manuals and resource support, but each unit needs to identify a person responsible for this task.

Liturgy Committee: (Valerie Rolandelli, Chair)

What do you see as the major issues facing the parish community?

- [1] Change and growth in identity under new leadership
- [2] Attracting younger people to the parish
- [3] Stemming the loss of parishioners
- [4] Reorganization after current pastor's retirement

What have been the major challenges for your committee in the past?

- [1] Producing creative liturgies
- [2] Handling diverse views on liturgies (music, announcements at Mass, Easter Vigil, etc.) e.g. vigil concerns: who is best served by our all night structure? The service is inaccessible to many, including families with young children;
- [3] Attracting more/new planners, lectors, altar dressers, etc.
- [4] Is our committee primarily or only for 9:30 community? Challenge of recruiting membership from other Mass communities.

What are your committee's present and future challenges?

- [1] Our current challenges continue as future ones
- [2] Implementing the new missal changes in Advent 2011
- [3] Attracting under-represented parishioners; members with children; young adults and young professionals; young marrieds
- [4] Attracting volunteers for chair and co-chair positions, especially now that attendance at Parish Council is mandated which adds a considerable time-commitment.

What are your committee's goals in the upcoming year?

- [1] Continue to educate and enrich Liturgy Committee members
- [2] Develop the entire community spiritually to empower their priesthood
- [3] Continue to evaluate the size of the community participating in liturgical services
- [4] Decide how we want to respond to the new missal in a principled way
- [5] Develop ways to entice and involve young adults
- [6] Continue professional training for liturgy planning.

How can other standing committees assist your committee in achieving your goals?

- [1] Education Committee
 - a. Assist in training the parish for new Missal language

- b. Coordinate parish education activities, perhaps bringing some into liturgies
- [2] Communication and Outreach
 - a. Publicity for Taizé services
 - b. Enhance the website

Valerie had initiated her presentation with outlining the scope of the Liturgy Committee and all the subgroups for which it has responsibility in coordinating the training and scheduling of many, many volunteers. The Council expressed amazement at the depth and quality of lay involvement in 9:30 liturgies.

The Social Action Committee will present in March.

Committee Reports

Education and Enrichment Committee [Kathy Jeffra, Vice Chair]

The committee is preparing for the Lenten Lecture Series with Fr. John Donahue (Wednesdays 3/16, 30 and 4/13). In developing its charter, the committee decided to approach its many duties through a six subcommittee structure. One subcommittee on the annual retreat (May 14-15) will be meeting with Dr. Pat Fosarelli to discuss the logistics on February 12. Maureen Daly met with the committee to discuss St. Vincent's hosting a five session series in conjunction with the Archdiocesan *Beyond the Boundaries* in May and June. The series will focus on adult formation based on Catholic social teaching on economic justice. St. Vincent would be inviting Corpus Christi and St. Ignatius to co-sponsor.

Liturgy Committee [Valerie Rolandelli, Chair]

At Fr. Lawrence's suggestion, the committee has had the opportunity this year, given the long period between the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of Lent, to sponsor a 7 week series on Matthew's Sermon on the Mount which is in process. The next Taizé service is Sunday, February 13. The committee has also worked on the upcoming Lenten theme (probably 'Living Our Faith'); this is being coordinated with the proposal by Anne Maura English to focus the congregation with a series of Lenten reflections on *Renewing our Baptism Vows*. The three parish Reconciliation Service is at St Vincent's this year on March 23. The committee also reported on its consultation with the parents of young children on a Mass booklet and is proposing that a few be purchased to be distributed with bulletins for the children to use during Mass. The parents of the one child who could receive First Eucharist this year have decided to wait for a larger class next year; consequently there will be no First Eucharist at St. Vincent's this year.

Social Action Committee [Peggy Meyer, Vice Chair]

The committee is holding Sunday morning sessions on 2/20 and 2/27 to invite new ideas and proposals for social justice initiatives and engage new members.

BRIDGE: There was a leadership meeting in January. Ray Heil reports that committee members will meet with BRIDGE Executive Committee to address concerns.

Our Jonestown Neighborhood: Al Barry, a former city planner and consultant on Jonestown Urban Renewal Plan, attended the last Jonestown Planning Council meeting and presented ideas for revitalizing the Jonestown area. One proposal, on the drawing board for years and seemingly only awaiting funding, is the demolition of the lower JFX (I-83) and its restoration to a ground-level boulevard.

Emergency Services: This working group gave out 140 Christmas bags, a turkey, and box from the Maryland Food Bank. Monthly grocery support went to 100 families in the month of January. Men's clothing program assisted 63 men in December and 53 in January.

Friday Evening Meal Program: We continue to work with Our Lady of the Fields in providing hot meals to 180-300 neighborhood hungry every Friday evening. St Vincent de Paul Society provides clothing in our parking lot on the first Fridays of the month.

Our InterParochial School at Sts. James and John: Our parishioners continue to help in upgrading the library and teaching.

Interfaith Dialogue: The committee has been trying to identify any high school student who may be interested in attending a five-day interfaith conference in April.

Habitat: Rick Ulrich presented a slide program to parishioners on January 16 about his working trip to Haiti.

Events: The Archdiocese Social Ministry Convocation will be on Saturday March 5 from 8:00-2:00 at Seton-Keough High School in southwest Baltimore. Maureen Daly is a featured speaker. Pre-registration is required for lunch (\$10) but one can pay at the door without lunch.

The committee thanks parishioners who attended Pax Christi Advent Services.

Facilities Committee [Pat Ball, Chair]

While few parishioners have come forward for committee membership, the committee has received many volunteers to work on its various projects. The committee has been able to negotiate a good contract for snow removal for a better price than last year and this service is in place. Thanks to the efforts of Pat Ball and Peggy Meyer, arrangements have been made with the nearby Helping Up Mission and Our Daily Bread's Christopher Place to provide manpower for various projects. Currently, they have been helping with the weekly Park Clean and Clears and as the weather warms they will work with Larry Fenaroli on other outside projects.

Art and Architecture Working Group: Lou Mank has been overseeing the gutter replacement on the south side of the church in anticipation of the upcoming stained glass window restoration. The working group is also beginning the preliminary planning on a Baptismal Font for the church; this is one of the last planned interior renovations and has been on indefinite hold pending adequate funds.

Communications and Outreach Committee [Audrey Rogers, Acting Chair]

The relevant content from the current website has been edited and updated and new content has been written for the new website format. Cross links have been identified. All content has been submitted to the appropriate chairs and coordinators of the involved groups and approved. The Committee is reconsidering the best vehicle for website sponsoring; the company that was originally contacted provides a template that has proven to be difficult to adapt to our particular needs. This will delay the launch date a few weeks. Special thanks to Bill McNamara and Joe Yingling for their efforts.

The reformatted bulletin is ready to go and this is due to Tom Hyatt's layout and design contributions. However, it will require an operational website in order to produce its weekly calendar

The Committee offers a special note of gratitude to Jerome Bird who has maintained our current website faithfully for over a decade. Jerome is retiring from his position as webmaster.

The meeting was closed with a prayer at 9:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by,

Audrey Rogers for Pete McDowell, Secretary to the Council