

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
St. Vincent de Paul Church  
May 13, 2014**

The meeting was brought to order by the Council Vice-President, Sara Kelley, at 7:35 pm. Sara reminded us to offer our prayers for Audrey Rogers, who is recuperating from surgery, and for Rosie Graf and her family. We prayed the prayer which opened each session of the Second Vatican Council.

**In attendance:** Fr. Richard Lawrence, *Pastor*; Chris McCullough, *Pastoral Associate*; Sara Kelley, *Vice President, 9:30 Mass Rep*; Bethany Gregg, *9:30 Mass Rep.*; John Kober, Sr., *7:15 Mass Rep.*; Maureen Fitzsimmons, *Finance Committee Chair*; Laureen Brunelli, *Communications and Outreach Committee Chair*; Peggy Meyer, *Social Action Committee Co-Chair*; Peggy Shouse, *Education and Enrichment Committee Chair*; Anne Marie Freeburger, *Corporator*; and Louise Gregg, *Parishioner*.

**Excused Absence:** Audrey Rogers, *President, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Rosie Graf, *9:30 Mass Rep.*; Denise Hamilton, *11:45 Mass Rep*; David Potts, *Facility Committee Co-Chair*; Dan Rolandelli, *Facility Committee Co-Chair*; John Helie, *Liturgy Committee Chair*.

**Pastor's Report:**

Fr. Lawrence shared several anecdotes to illustrate how the Holy Spirit works within the Church. He stressed the importance of cooperation and maintaining links as a means of accomplishing our tasks.

**Pastoral Associate's Report:**

Chris McCullough announced that the Catholic Churches of Central City will be participating in the Dragon Boat Race to help raise funds for Catholic Charities and to develop community within and among the churches. Each boat will need 25 volunteer crew members, five or six from each of the parishes. Eight of the 25 volunteers must be female. The Race will take place in the Inner Harbor on September 6. Training for the Race will start in June and continue throughout the summer on one evening per week. There was some discussion of parishioners who might be interested. Anyone who is interested should see Chris for further information. Chris reported that Emalee Rodriguez, one of the Nursery workers, has tendered her resignation. Chris has already scheduled some interviews for her replacement. The new Nursery person will be hired by the end of June so that there will be no disruption in Nursery care. Chris has also begun working with our JVC volunteer, Kieran Rupert, who will start August 18.

**Finance Report:**

Maureen Fitzsimmons discussed the Finance Report which had already been emailed to the members. She noted that there has been one change in the balance sheet, i. e. the addition of the line "Contributions to the Endowment Fund." The annual large donation has been received and the \$60,000 Archdiocesan tax has been paid. While attendance has remained static, donations

have increased substantially. Father Lawrence requested that we be more careful about the use of rectory utilities. Some users are turning the thermostats up to 80 degrees, perhaps hoping to warm a space more quickly (it won't), and then neglecting to turn the thermostat down. He asked that parishioners who turn on lights or heat, please remember to turn them off.

### **Old Business:**

Louise Gregg reported that Baltimore City would be willing to make a recycling pickup on Fridays and perhaps a second one per week. She shared information about single stream recycling. Father Lawrence expressed concern whether this would interfere with or negate our current seven days per week trash pickup. Louise will call to find out. She also shared information about Interfaith Power and Light which offers further recycling resources and might be a potential link to our website. There was some discussion about the use of solar power but further research is needed because the church roof cannot support the necessary solar panels.

Parish Council elections are scheduled for the weekend of May 17-18. Bios have already been posted on the website. It was decided to have on-line voting available from 9:00 am on Friday, May 15 until 9:00 am on Tuesday, May 20. The availability of on-line voting will be posted on the email tree, on Facebook, on the web site, and in the bulletin. Voting will also take place during the weekend liturgies.

Chris reported that in response to the Audit Steve McDaniel and Jerome Bird have compiled a photo inventory showing various aspects of the church buildings. This will enable us to reconstruct the facilities in the event of a fire or other disaster. Disc copies of the inventory will be stored in several secure locations.

### **New Business**

Council received a request from Anne Gibson, on behalf of the Family Life Subcommittee, that the children's liturgy on Christmas Eve be changed from 7:15 pm to 5:15 pm. Parents thought that the current liturgy time was too late for many of the children. The Liturgy Committee has approved this proposal at its meeting on May 3, 2014. It was decided to place an announcement in the bulletin requesting that both positive and negative feedback be given to Council reps before a decision is made.

Chris mentioned that the Columbarium group wished to come to the next Council meeting to propose a survey.

Peggy Meyer reported that the BRIDGE Gubernatorial Forum was very successful. A thousand people attended, sixty of them from St. Vincent's Parish.

Peggy also reported that The Resource Exchange was awarded a \$7800 grant from Johns Hopkins Community Fund that will help with their expenses for Beds and Storage.

Chris announced that the Pride Parade will take place on Saturday, June 14. An Interfaith Worship Service will be held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, June 19, at Metropolitan Community Church, 401 West Monument Street. There are 24 churches participating, up from 8 last year. Chris will look into providing a banner which says St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Church for the parade.

## Committee Reports

### Liturgy Committee (Valerie Rolandelli, Chair)

- The Liturgy Committee met on May 3, 2014.
- Anne Gibson, on behalf of the Family Life Sub-Committee, presented a proposal to change the time of the Christmas Eve liturgy to 5:00 pm for Christmas Carols and 5:15 pm for the liturgy. The current time of 7 pm and 7:15 pm is difficult for many families. This proposal was approved. It was noted that significant communication regarding this change will need to occur. This action will require Parish Council approval.
- We reviewed the Lent/Easter services held to date. In particular, we reviewed/critiqued those services that were reconstructed this Lent - Way of the Cross and Good Friday. Positive comments were received from parishioners as well as committee members. It was reported that the volunteers from Our Lady of the Fields (who hold the Friday night dinners for the homeless) who participated in and/or attended the Holy Thursday service were very impressed and moved by this liturgy.
- The All Night Easter Vigil was held again this year. Jack Gohn was praised by the Committee for his recruitment and programming efforts for this vigil. The Liturgy Committee will take a thorough, extensive look at the practice of holding an all-night Easter Vigil at its retreat in August. A parish survey in 2013 had indicated that many parish members would like this practice to be changed/revised. Valerie Rolandelli has collected thoughts/comments from the planners of this year's vigil. These will be reviewed and discussed at the committee's retreat.
- Janice Bonner advised the committee that Kevin Zembower has constructed a banner storage rack and it has been installed in the upper sacristy. He also made a new pole for the banners.
- St V's will recognize the high school seniors at the Pentecost service on June 8. Four high school seniors have been identified with two committed to participating. Valerie Rolandelli is coordinating with the families.
- The Summer Series will be held the first three Sundays of July and will again focus on the Eucharist using the Rolheiser book, *Our One Great Act of Fidelity*.  
**July 6th:** *The Eucharist and the Fullness of Relationship*  
 Drawing on Rolheiser's Chapters 1, 2, 4, 7

**July 13th:** *The Eucharist as an Invitation to Service*

Drawing on Rolheiser's Chapter 8, 9

**July 20th:** *The Eucharist as Our Priestly Prayer for the World*

Drawing on Rolheiser's Chapters 5, 12

- The chair of the committee next year will be Valerie Rolandelli and the co-chair will be Matt Hill. Many, many thanks to John Helie, who steps down as the chair, but will remain an active member of the committee.
- The next committee meeting is the annual retreat to be held on August 9, 2014 from 9:00 am to 1 pm.

Education and Enrichment Committee (*Peggy Shouse, Chair*)

- The E & E committee has not met since the last parish council meeting.
- However, there are three items that have come up since then.
  1. First communion for seven young parishioners took place on May 11, 2014.
  2. Fr. Julio Martinez, our retreat director for the parish retreat, May 30-June 1, 2014, presided at the 9:30 Mass on April 27. Response from parishioners was positive, with some people who have never gone on the parish retreat signing up after hearing him. He seemed willing to be adaptable to St. Vincent's style of doing things.
  3. Retreat dates for **2015** will be May 29-31. A director has tentatively (though not certainly) been arranged.

Social Action Committee (*Peggy Meyer and Ray Heil, Co-Chairs*)

- **Peace & Justice Committee:** The **BRIDGE gathering with the candidates running for Governor was a huge success.** 1000 attended and we had 60 from our parish. We were involved in the planning committees, gave testimony that evening and worked the forum. Four gubernatorial candidates attended and we stated our critical issues and they answered our questions. We demonstrated our faith in the Social Action Way of the Cross through the city on Good Friday. We joined with Pax Christi Md to present the stations and reflections. We are on the committee to work with City Council to ensure the \$3 million promised by Harbor East for affordable housing is realized. The attorney for Beyond the Boundaries is to help interpret the amendments to the Affordable Housing Act.
- **Emergency Services:** The food program gave groceries to families in April and spent \$514. The men's program gave clothing to 40 men in April and spent \$268.
- **The Resource Exchange:** We supplied 8 individuals, whom Healthcare for the Homeless placed in apartments, with furniture and starter kits in April. We should hear if we will get the grant from Johns Hopkins any day. We continue to get furniture from friends downsizing or that heard about us and we have two new volunteers. At the event with the

candidates for governor, the audience applauded the Resource Exchange program as we testified to the need for affordable housing.

- **Inter-Faith Activities:** Our discussions with other faith representatives should yield some joint participation in the fall. There is a Jewish movement for farming using Levitical principles and we are exploring Food Justice activities. We were the only Catholic Church working on the BRIDGE event previously discussed.
- **Jonestown Planning Council:** Developers continue to work with us on plans for the vacant properties. The City met with neighborhood groups to determine specifics for the park. We did not meet this month but planning continues.
- **Friday Dinner:** We had 231 guests on Friday even though it was only the second week of the month. We distributed back packs and suitcases that we picked up from Helping Up Mission. We also distributed clothing and new t-shirts to the ladies for Mother's Day.
- **Helping Up Mission:** HUM are cleaning the park the first and third Saturdays of each month.
- **Christopher Place:** The men at Christopher Place cleaned the park on the 2nd Saturday.

Facilities Committee (*Dave Potts and Dan Rolandelli, Co-Chairs*)

- The committee will be meeting on Monday so there is no new report.

Communications and Outreach Committee (*Laureen Miles Brunelli, Chair*)

- The C&O Committee met on April 10, 2014. In attendance were Joe Yingling, Jackie Range, Anne Maura English, Audrey Rogers, Chris McCullough and Laureen
- **Family Life Committee Proposal for a Dry Erase Board**  
From a proposal from the Family Life Committee: "At the April 6, 2014 Family Life Subcommittee meeting we proposed purchasing a 3 foot by 2 foot (or smaller) dry-erase board to hang in the gathering space above the pink Family Mass Bags. This dry-erase board would be used to post upcoming Family Life Subcommittee events...."
- The C&O Committee discussed the Family Life Committee's proposal for a dry erase board at length. The committee was happy to have a committee so focused on communication and outreach, and we really want to encourage that. So with that in mind, we decided to recommend to the pastoral team that the staff purchase a small, attractive bulletin board on which the committee's written material could be posted. We asked, though, that FL Committee keep in mind that when the Gathering Space is reconfigured for better communication, this bulletin board would likely be moved or removed as all the communications/information in the Gathering Space were consolidated in one place.

The reasons for the changes from the original dry-erase proposal were that we felt a dry erase board could be prone to outdated information, could be messy or inaccurate, drawn on by anyone, and its limited size would make it hard to communicate more specific information about the offerings that St. V has for kids and families.

- Other potential communication-related issues (that wouldn't necessarily be solved by the switch to a bulletin board) were that other committees might use it for their information and/or want their own signage. And if we had a proliferation of similar requests, what criteria would St. V use to decide which groups could have their own signage?
- And then some other concerns that aren't necessarily communications-oriented are the aesthetics of it and the fact that the Gathering Space is designed with the intent to be worship space, so signage in that space could be distracting to worship. These last two issues were mentioned in our discussion of the board but brought on a broader discussion of our own desire to reconfigure the Gathering Space to have a communications center and all the issues that might go with that. We recognize that issues like aesthetics and distraction during worship are really beyond the scope of either of the C&O or FL Committees.
- This is why we made our recommendation to the pastoral team for its consideration in deciding on whether a FL board is appropriate in that space.
- **Parish Strategic Plan**  
The committee discussed its role in evangelization, outreach and marketing. This was identified as an area that needs attention in the Strategic Plan. However, the plan's timeline does not include specific action items on it. As some of the tasks of evangelization fall within the responsibility of the C&O Committee, it discussed this issue. We will continue to look at ways to take actions over the course of the next year that would help increase attendance. However, no immediate plans to study the issue of outreach further were made.
- **Additional Ideas**  
From this conversation about outreach and the discussion of about the FL Committee's sign, though, a few ideas related to attracting new parishioners or re-engaging old ones were generated:
- We decided to pursue purchasing advertising related to the new FFF program for preschool and kindergarten, Godly Play. In addition to advertising, we would like to find other ways to promote this new program. Chris mentioned that the liturgy that ends Vacation Bible School will have a Godly-Play-like liturgy. We would like to promote this liturgy as a way for people to get understand what exactly Godly Play is. We felt that word-of-mouth by other parishioners about it could be very valuable but that people will need to see a demonstration of it in order to really recommend it. Laureen will look into costs and types of advertising in Baltimore Child magazine. Chris will contact the FL Committee to gather more information about Godly Play.

- Also, we also would like to send out letters to people whose children were baptized here and are now of an age to start FFF in Godly Play and/or for families whose children are approaching First Communion age. These letters would invite people to come to St. V for its many offerings for families. Barbara Hodnett has started collecting up this info (starting with potential First Communicants first), and a volunteer is putting it into a spreadsheet.
- Anne Maura English will research how St. V might disseminate information to incoming medical students/residents at University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins.
- **Publicity for The Resource Exchange**  
This old business was not discussed at length because Michael Keating who has been the point person on this was not in attendance.
- **Future Committee Leadership**  
Lauren said she would continue as chair for another year.

**Meeting Closed with Prayer at 8:59 pm.**

**Reminders:** The Next Parish Council Meeting is June 10 at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Marie Freeburger