

# St. Vincent de Paul Parish Council

May 12, 2020

## Minutes

### 1) Attendance

- a) Present: Amber Hendricks (9:30 rep, Parish Council President); Fr. Ray Chase (Pastor); Colleen McCahill (Pastoral Associate); Anne Freeburger (Corporator); Peggy Meyer (Co-Chair, Social Action Committee); John Moore (Chair, Education & Enrichment Committee), Al Reichelt, (Co-Chair, Liturgy Committee); Corinne Agren-Barnes (9:30 rep, Secretary); Jim Casey (Chair, Ad Hoc Committee); Mark Palmer (Chair, Finance Committee); Gerry Fialkowski (Co-Chair, Liturgy Committee); Ned Banks, (9:30 rep)
- b) Absent: Graham Yearley (Corporator); Dennis McMullin (Facilities Committee); Alana Florio (ALIVE); laisha Payton (11:45 rep); Peggy Shouse (9:30 rep, Vice-President)

### 2) Pastor's Report

- a) Fr. Ray shared that there was discussion of issuing an invitation to contribute to a Covid-19 fund in the newsletter, but that he hasn't heard anything further.

### 3) New Business

- a) Discussion: Letter from the Archbishop.
  - i) There is a decent chance that the state may enter into Phase 1 of reopening before the next parish council meeting. We need to ask, *what does this mean for the parish?* Phase 1 will include administering certain sacraments, opening the church up for private prayer—not private gatherings—and reconciliation. We also need to ask, *if we are opening the church up for these services, are there things we know we will be doing relatively soon after opening?* Most weddings have been rescheduled for next year on the same date; one couple is continuing with their date in September, but they are open to postponing—they do not want to be constrained in the number of people who can attend. There are a number of funerals to be done—the parish needs to contact families and find out if they want to move forward during this soft stage of reopening or wait until more people can attend.
  - ii) Colleen & Fr. Ray talked about opening up for private prayer. The proposed schedule is Mondays & Thursdays from 6p-7p, and Wednesdays & Thursdays from 12p-1p; Fr. Ray will be gatekeeper for the Monday & Wednesday gatherings; Either Brian, Fr. Ray or Colleen—whoever is available—will be gatekeeper for the Tuesday and Thursday gatherings. There will be 10 chairs set up in the gathering space; Attendees will have to use hand sanitizer when they come in, wear a mask, and will not have bathroom privileges—with accommodations made for special circumstances. There will be established procedures for sanitizing the space. No other spaces will be used during these gatherings.

- (1) *Will we need to set up a system to decide who will attend?* Right now the plan is to have sign-ups. We don't know how many people will be interested in attending. May have to make some changes once we have a better idea of the number of interested attendees.
  - (2) *What is plan for when people leave?* People sanitize coming in and going out. Sanitize chairs. Ask people to be very thoughtful about touching things as they come and go.
  - (3) *Could the doors to the church be propped open during these gatherings?* It is not likely that the doors would be propped open.
  - (4) Those attending will be informed about restricted bathroom use before they come.
  - (5) *Why the number ten for the number of people at the private prayer gatherings?* Because that is the limit set by the Governor. If this changes, we will take the new information into consideration.
- iii) The Thomistic Institute issued guidelines—developed in consultation with doctors, canon lawyers, etc.—for liturgy, & sacraments, etc. Fr. Ray will send link. (<https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>) Only thing in the guidelines that Fr. Ray said we will not be doing that at St. V's is distributing communion on the tongue.
  - iv) *Do we have to mark spots in the pews where people need to sit once the sanctuary is opened for use?* The instructions are not that specific.
  - v) *If we have preventative measures in place (hand sanitizing & masks) do we also have to sanitize who church?* This question was sent to the Archdiocese.
  - vi) Amber will send along a document about things parishes need to think about before reopening. Colleen found the document useful to consider as part of looking forward. (See below.)
  - vii) Colleen attended a webinar discussing the reopening of churches. One topic that came up is that there will be come people who don't come back at all—for lots of reasons. The webinar asked participants to consider how in this situation can we continue to build the body of Christ and reach out to one another.
  - viii) St. V's will continue to live stream mass. The parish needs to get some type of equipment to continue to do this even after opening up. What can we do now to start on that? We can start asking these questions. This could be used as a potential evangelization tool. May have significant impact on those who choose to watch.
    - (1) *Are resources available from Archdiocese to determine the best possible way to do this?* This is something to be looked into.
  - ix) *Is there a service the parish can use to sanitize the church?* Vanguard, a cleaning service already used by the church, has offered their sanitizing surface. This is something parish will continue to look into. Colleen expressed some concerns about sanitizing the pews because they are faux finished and original to church. Need to make sure the cleaners used wont take off the finish.
  - x) When we go back to weekend services, the decision will probably be made for us and we will not be able to have two masses on Sunday.

- xi) The parish needs to purchase new technology to make this time more valuable for us.
- b) How has this time changed us? What has struck us about this time?
  - i) The ways in which St. V's has continued to do work of the parish even with all of the constraints set on us in terms of what we're able to do.
  - ii) Caused us who are staff to tap into our creativity to allow us to be more in touch with the community; we are excited by the possibilities out there for us.
  - iii) Jim Casey asked, are we are able to provide services to those experiencing homelessness?
  - iv) Peggy Meyer shared that SAC has talked about how we can continue to offer services in the safest way possible. There are a lot of things in Social Action that are happening.
  - v) There is an even greater need (esp. spiritual side) for services for those experiencing homelessness. The number of individuals hanging around the church has decreased significantly. No one is sure of where they've gone.
  - vi) Those being released from prison during this time also have great needs.
  - vii) Gerry talked about the importance of praying for those who don't have anyone else to pray for them.
  - viii) Those experiencing homeless are losing "people time." *How do we find ways to stay in relationship with those experiencing homelessness?*
    - (1) Can bring casserole dishes to Our Daily Bread.
- c) There was a discussion about making a second round of parish wide phone calls and it is the time to do so. People will stick with same people they called before. Al is willing to organize it again.
  - i) May 19, 20, and 21 were proposed as the days to make the second round of phone calls.
- d) The Liturgy Committee is planning a way for us to give feedback to one another about the liturgy. Keep an eye out for it.
- e) Audrey Rogers will do a virtual retreat on the same weekend as the originally scheduled parish retreat. It will be a presentation followed by a Question & Answer session rather than a discussion. One will be on Saturday mid-morning, with another on Sunday late afternoon. There will be other opportunities later in the following week for dialogue.
- f) Anne Gibson is looking for a way to offer vacation bible school.
- g) The Education and Enrichment Committee (EEC) is looking into ways for us to gather around the previously scheduled readings & discussions.
  - (1) The Racial Justice Subcommittee is going to see if the previously scheduled speakers would be willing to do a Zoom version.
  - (2) The EEC is looking into a book for the parish to read. TBD.
- h) Something needs to be communicated to the parish about the upcoming elections for the parish council.
  - (1) Elections will be held once we are able. The Council will notify the parish that this is the typical time for nominations. Since it is an unusual time, two people who are eligible to run for reelection have agreed to run for one more year. This is what the Council proposes given the current crisis. This

proposal was acceptable to all those at the May parish council meeting. If there are any suggestions please contact Anne Freeburger.

#### 4) **Article: Questions Your Church Should Answer Before People Return**

## Questions Your Church Should Answer Before People Return

1. **What if our worship gathering is initially limited to no more than 100 people?** Remember that we've been limited to gatherings of no more than 10 people in the recent past. If we are limited to a small number of people, what's the plan at your church to provide a place and time for them to worship?
2. **What adjustments will we make to the Eucharist?**
3. **What about the choir? What about congregational singing?** There has been a recommendation that both choirs and congregational singing be omitted until after a vaccine / reliable antibody test / reliable treatment is/are in place.
4. **How will we go forward with VBS?** Many churches are going to find new times and ways to provide a VBS experience.
5. **How will we take up your weekly offering?** Will you install boxes at the doors, or elsewhere in your church, so that worshipers can slide their envelopes, cash, or checks into those secured boxes?
6. **What are we doing now to sanitize and sterilize the church building?** What about the rectory? Now is the time to wipe down all surfaces. Have we sprayed pews and chairs with disinfectant? Who is wiping door knobs and handles?
7. **Are we going to continue offering Children's Liturgy of the Word on Sundays? What about Children's Religious Education (Faith Fun and Fellowship)?** As a short-term alternative, should family-centered worship be encouraged as *the* primary option? Should parents take their kids to worship and practice physical distancing?
8. **Are we going to continue hosting special events?** Will we continue to host weddings? How about funerals? Lecture series or movie nights? Game

nights? Bible study, book discussion groups, choir rehearsal, ministry meetings, Council meetings, Centering Prayer . . . How will we explain which ones continue and which ones don't?

9. **What about Sunday morning coffee klatsch?** Tables and chairs may need to be placed in storage so that people don't congregate within a couple of feet of one another.
10. **Will we continue offering online Mass and other liturgies?** Church leaders say their worship "attendance" and group attendance are up because people are finding them online.
11. **What is our plan when volunteers step down?** Some older volunteers are telling their church leaders they aren't coming back to serve until a vaccine is readily available. Will you be able to fully staff your ministries? What about the men's clothing ministry, The Resource Exchange, the Friday night dinner?
12. **What's our strategy to clean and sanitize our church in real time?** How will we keep the place clean and disinfected on a Sunday (or Saturday)? Does this give rise to a new team of people on campus whose ministry it is to walk around wiping door knobs, pew backs, and other surfaces? Who is going to clean restrooms throughout the time the church is open? Remember we'll have MANY people touching things while they are on campus.
13. **Do door greeters do their jobs differently, or at all?** In a COVID-19 world, do we really want someone holding the door open while a parishioner walks by within a foot or two of them?
14. **Because people may return very slowly to church, how will we count attendance and evangelization?** Should we or should we not take attendance during online worship and other online parish-based events or gatherings. It's almost a sure thing that worship attendance on campus will not be what it was pre-COVID-19.
15. **Should we add and/or shorten Masses to allow for social distancing?** If physical gatherings are limited in size, we have a few options: (1) offer more services (2) encourage people to continue worshiping online (3) block off pews so that people no longer sit right behind someone.

**16. What's our plan for Adult Faith Formation?**

**17. Will we reopen the doors of our church with a "worship only"**

**strategy?** Some parishes are choosing this option. They are adding services, removing chairs, practicing social distancing, and focusing on regaining momentum in worship. All ministry groups and committees will remain online for safety in the short-term, and will be added back to the on-campus experience in time.

**18. Do we have a plan for reducing expenses if our church's offerings don't**

**rebound?** This is the time for a "budget scrub." Churches need to be thinking, "What if..." – what if our offerings don't hold steady because of rising unemployment of members? Before the church returns to the building, every church needs a "plan B" strategy just in case giving drops in late summer or early fall. We (the church) possibly have not felt the financial impact of COVID-19 like we will in the days and months ahead.

**19. How will we deal with the rise of COVID-19 related**

**addictions?** Substance and alcohol sales are soaring. Are we ready to do lots of counseling and referring of people to professionals in our post-COVID 19 reality.

**20. Are we going to decrease the fellowship time between on-campus**

**worship services?** Some churches that have multiple services schedule up to 30 minutes of time between those events because they value the opportunity to gather, have coffee, and fellowship. In a COVID-19 world, it is a good idea *not* to let that happen. Shorter times between worship services will help reduce the "let's hang out and give each other COVID-19."

**21. Should we be investing in new digital equipment right now?**

Is this the time to admit that online worship is probably here to stay? If yes, then it makes sense to invest dollars now so that cameras and other equipment can be purchased that will help the church be more professional in the new online world of worship.

**22. Will a new staff or volunteer position emerge from COVID-19?**

Because the church has permanently moved online now, could it lead to the adoption of a new position of leadership? Will churches turn their attention to a

Virtual Pastor whose job it is to oversee the technical aspects of the new digital frontier? Will they become responsible to develop groups and strategies to reach people online? It's highly likely that this is going to take place; the role may first be added to a staff person who is currently serving the church, but when it is possible to split that role and afford a new person, churches may hire online pastors.

This list of questions is not exhaustive. It's representative of many things we should be thinking about right now. What would you add to this list? Let's pool our experience and wisdom to help the Body of Christ be prepared for the new world we find ourselves in. We've got to get the church thinking and talking about these things.