

Parish Council Minutes August 11, 2020 St. Vincent de Paul Church

In attendance by Zoom: Amber Hendricks, President; Rita & Denny McMullin, Al Reichelt, Mark Palmer, Jim Casey, Anne Freeburger, John Moore, Peggy Meyer, Corinne Agren-Barnes, Audrey Rogers, Gerry Fialkowski, Grahame Yearley, Charlie Chapman, and Peggy Shouse.

1. Amber opened the meeting with prayer, the reading of our mission statement and our sacred purpose statement.
2. Our guest for the beginning of the meeting was Jesus Eusebio-Perez, our representative on the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. He explained a little about how the council functions. The archbishop establishes the agenda and the council operates by voting rather than consensus. Mr. Eusebio-Perez reported that one item on a recent agenda was about methods of attracting lapsed Catholics back to the church. He responded to a few questions and asked for prayers for Catholic schools. He invited people to direct questions/concerns to him by email: perez.jesus372@gmail.com or by phone at 443-477-1157.
3. The budget was presented, discussed, amended, and accepted by consensus.
4. The council considered quotes for fire extinguishers from three companies and chose Safeline for the thoroughness of their proposal as well as relative cost.
5. Amber requested that we read 1 Kings 17-19 as preparation for the next council meeting on September 15, 2020, to be held in Colleen's back yard.
6. After praying the "Our Father" together, the meeting adjourned.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

200811- Liturgy Committee Report to Parish Council

The Liturgy Committee last met on July 25.

Agenda topics included reviewing the flow of the liturgy and the worship experience within COVID constraints; updates on the Summer Series on the Letter of James; discussion of how to implement the theme for the upcoming year on Catholic Social Teaching; and assigning planning responsibility for the Fall special celebrations (viz., St. Vincent Feast Day, Catechetical Sunday, and Day of the Dead- All Saints/All Souls).

The committee will hold a two-hour retreat by Zoom on Saturday, August 29, 10 am -12 pm. The retreat is designed for a visioning exercise reflecting on the theology of worship, our mission to promote the active participation of the laity in worship, and how to think creatively about all this within the social distancing constraints of the pandemic.

The next Liturgy Committee Business Meeting is on Saturday, September 26.

Audrey Rogers, Chair

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES July 21, 2020

Zoom meeting began at 10:30 AM with a prayer from Richard Rohr's "Meditations" led by Peggy Cronyn. Attending: Joe Cronyn, Peggy Cronyn, Chuck Frascati, Pat Frascati, Ray Heil, Marcia Metzler, Peggy Meyer, Jack Schmidt and Kathy Younkin.

Next meeting – Tuesday September 15, 2020 at 10:30 AM

Preventing Evictions and Foreclosures:

- Peggy M. asked if there was any legislative issues or other actions that the committee should consider. Joe stated that we were in a crisis situation with Covid, the economic problems and the loss of jobless benefits and we need to think about the upcoming issues of evictions and foreclosures which are going to be major problems locally.
- Peggy M. noted that Health Care for the Homeless and Episcopal Housing (St. Vincent's Dan McCarthy) were awarded tax credits to build 70 units (35 for homeless families and 35 for affordable housing) in the Oliver community. Weinberg Financial has given \$2 million and Homeland Bank is providing funds.
- Chuck mentioned that Beyond the Boundaries (BtB) has been working with Matt Hill and a large rental coalition who are sending petitions to the governor to use more of the federal money he received to prevent evictions. Chuck also said that BtB and other organizations are asking the governor and top state officials to reconvene a general assembly to address pressing issues. Chuck is going to talk to Matt Hill to see if he has any recommendations about what we can do.

Breaking Bread with the Hungry: Peggy M. has been talking with Ellen Draper about starting a Friday meal service using the breezeway as a pass-through where our neighbors could pick up a meal possibly starting in September.

The Resource Exchange:

- Peggy C. stated that we have completed 3 months of outreach: gift cards, bed-only moves and furniture moves. Eleven neighbors received beds and 6 who had already

received beds were provided with furniture. The moves have gone well and the Hoffberger team has been fabulous.

- Peggy C. expressed concern about the new JVC (Nathan) entering neighbor's homes because of Covid as Brian had sometimes entered. Peggy M. mentioned that she talked with Colleen who had already talked to Nathan and the JVC organization and that Nathan has already been cleared for such entry.
- Peggy C. will keep in close contact with Catherine at Health Care for the Homeless and watch the Covid developments in considering new future moves. She will also talk to Nathan about the moves.
- Joe described a recent pick-up with Ray and Dan Florea on a particularly hot day and they filled up the box truck. Joe said the units are reasonably filled. For a scheduled August 11 pick-up, Joe is thinking of renting a pick-up truck rather than a box trunk for several sofas, end tables and coffee tables. At the same time, Joe wants to cull some of the unusable stuff that is in the units. Joe also mentioned a whole house pick-up on August 18 with the hope that Ray would be available. Joe is asking for additional volunteers to help with the pick-ups.
- Peggy C. stated that Charlestown and all retirement places are off limits for the foreseeable future as far as sources of furniture and home goods.
- Peggy C. mentioned that Roland Park Presbyterian Church, which have been giving us home goods in giant packing kits, sent a gift of \$1,000.
- Peggy C. expressed concern with the use of words like "the people we serve" or "clients" to describe those that we help. Terms like those seem to imply a master/slave relationship or an unequal relationship. She wants the committee to think about suggestions for how to address those that we help. For example, our neighbors, our brothers or sisters etc., and get back to her with our thoughts.

Monday Food Program: Peggy M. stated that Brian has been handling that program beautifully and Nathan will be handling that once he arrives. She also mentioned that the program did not spend any money during June.

Men's Program:

- Peggy M. has been talking to Marcia (who has also been talking to Gayl Meier) and Colleen about distributing men's clothing. Marcia gives Brian clothing for distribution at the door. However, the requests for clothing at the door ministry have become overwhelming.
- We need to brainstorm to see if there is another way distribution can be handled.
- Maybe one day per week could be used where the JVC hands out clothing on the Fallsway side with the help of a volunteer. Gayl however was concerned about herself and other older volunteers possibly not being able to maintain social distancing.
- Marcia mentioned that she's thought about giving out bags of essentials (tee shirt, underwear, sox, toiletries) perhaps more often than once a month.

- Peggy M. thought that using the breezeway as a pass-through distribution area might work.
- Peggy M. asked Marcia to get together with the Thursday men's program volunteers to see if they can come up with a program.
- Peggy M. also mentioned that changing the Thursday program to another day would help to free up Nathan for both TRE moves and the men's program.
- Peggy M. noted that the program spent \$128 in June.

The Green Team:

- Kathy mentioned that she felt that due to everything else that was happening (Covid, racism, job losses, economic hardships etc.) that environmental issues were garnering less attention.
- Kathy pointed out H.R. 5845 The Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act of 2020, a bill that sets forth requirements related to waste and recycling collection systems for a variety of products and materials, including plastics. The bill makes certain producers of products (e.g., packaging, paper, single-use products, beverage containers, or food service products) fiscally responsible for collecting, managing, and recycling or composting the products. The Green Team will follow this legislation for the committee.
- Peggy M. mentioned that the team was working on a different emphasis for recycling that they will present to the community in the near future. All the racial disparity points out a greater need to address the environment. She watched a webinar on July 20 and another on July 23 by the Environmental Defense Fund: Health Disparities and Race. We can't let up!

Racial Justice:

- Peggy stated that she has been having ongoing conversations with Skipp and Pam Sanders about racial issues and how the parish might address those issues. Skipp and Pam stated that the emphasis should be that white people need to be educated rather than thinking in terms of fixing a problem. Skipp and Pam thought that they and their son and daughter-in-law would be willing to participate in group discussions that spanned over several weeks. Skipp presented these ideas to Father Ray and he and Peggy are now waiting to hear from him. What can we do to decrease racism?
- Chuck mentioned that BtB would like to go to 150 churches in the Archdiocese to discuss racial justice issues.
- Joe asked what it would take to establish a Racial Justice Circle here at St. Vincent's. He raised an interesting point when noting that during the effort to consolidate parishes several years ago, we were talked about in reference to St. Ignatius or St. Leo's but not St. Francis Xavier Church (1501 E. Oliver St.) which is only 1.4 miles from us. Since it is a predominantly African American church, it may have been a great fit.
- Ray mentioned the need for reparations. Since African Americans have been systematically and intentionally denied the opportunity to create wealth through education, jobs and home ownership, reparations would be a good place to start.

- Peggy M. stated that United Way through Target was making tablets and books available to schools and children in poorer communities. You can also adopt a student to get internet to the student's home. She was going to share the computer reference with the committee. Following the meeting, Peggy M. sent an email providing this information.
- Efforts with TRE and tutoring are positive actions.
- Pat mentioned that Jackie Jones from St. Vincent's provided good information on these topics.
- We know we need to focus on Housing, Education, Jobs and Personal Connections.
- Following the meeting, Peggy M. sent an email stating that the parish council approved a banner for the church that reads: "Racism Defiles the Image of God, Black Lives Matter."

JVC: Peggy M. stated that Nathan might spend part of his time during the coming year helping at the Franciscan Center.

The Zoom meeting ended at 11:40.
Respectfully submitted by Jack Schmidt

St. Vincent de Paul Parish Report of the Committee on Church Reform August 7, 2020

The Committee on Church Reform met on August 5, 2020. The Bwatch group met on July 11, 2020. That group is working on vision and mission statements which are modified versions of the vision and mission statements contained in the proposed constitution for this committee. Al Reichalt reports a great deal of publicity nationally for Watch. Bwatch is a member organization of Watch.

We reviewed Vatican documents on how abuse complaints are to be handled by bishops, diocesan synods, and parish reform.¹ The Vatican released the instruction on parish reform on July 20, 2020. The committee will give it more attention at its next meeting. Pat Ball has provided the committee with information about an ongoing synod in the Minneapolis/St. Paul diocese. Investigating a synod for our Archdiocese is a priority for the committee.

Submitted by Jim Casey

¹ *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Vademecum, Instruction on Diocesan Synods, and Instruction: "The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church" of the Congregation for the Clergy.*

Peace and Justice Committee Minutes for June 22, 2020

A video meeting using Zoom began at 7:00 PM. Attending: Barbara Bowles, Mary Catherine Bunting, Maureen Daly, Chuck Frascati, Peggy Meyer, Jack Schmidt, Giuliana Valencia-Banks and Sue Woodman. Mary Catherine facilitated and opened with a prayer by Chris Saade.

Next meeting: August 24, 2020, 7:00 PM, Maureen will facilitate.

Immigration:

- Giuliana reported that on June 18, 2020, the Supreme Court blocked the Trump administration's efforts to abolish DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), a program which has protected more than 700,000 immigrants from deportation. The court did not rule on the legality of the program but only on the administrative manner by which the administration attempted to abolish the program.
- Giuliana also reported that on June 22, 2020, Trump issued an executive order which suspended employment visas until 2021. Beginning on June 24, the United States will now suspend the coveted H-1B for highly skilled workers. The order also suspends new applicants on the H-4 visa, for spouses of H-1B holders, and prevents multinational companies from moving their employees to US offices through the L visas. Also, the order suspends immigration under the J-1 visa for educational and cultural exchanges and temporary workers in non-agricultural industries on H-2B visas. The order will not affect those who are already in the US on H-1B and other visas or those who are outside the country but already have valid visas. It also provides for exemptions for health-care workers as well as those who work in the food supply chain. It does not affect people who already have valid visas or green cards nor people applying for green cards or temporary visas from inside the U.S.
- Maureen told us about the availability of funds from a program entitled "Pandemic-EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer)" whereby Covid-19 funds given to the Maryland Department of Human Services provides food benefits to children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-priced meals at school due to the virus. All children eligible for free or reduced-price

meals as well as all children attending a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school regardless of citizenship are eligible for this program. Households will receive \$370.50 per eligible child starting in June-July 2020. Benefits are available at any store that accepts SNAP (but families are not required to be receiving SNAP). Households should contact their child's school for more information.

- Giuliana mentioned that she thought that Joseph Edlow, the Deputy Director for Policy in the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Division of Homeland Security and his staff were sitting on new applications since some applications were taking 9 months or longer to adjudicate.
- Maureen announced that Father Bruce Lewindowski, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Highlandtown, was appointed as auxiliary bishop by Pope Francis. He will remain pastor of Sacred Heart.
- Giuliana reported that during the week of June 15, 2020, the Esperanza Center for the first time provided food and cleaning supplies to 20 families who had been tested for Covid-19. It was an effort to limit the number of people who must leave their homes during the pandemic particularly those who may have been exposed.
- Giuliana is keeping her fingers crossed that the Esperanza Center will reopen in October 2020 at its previous original location.
- Peggy said she received a thank you note from Assisi House for the \$2,000 donation.

Racial Justice Issues:

- Giuliana mentioned that she thought the program "Honest Conversations on Immigration" as provided by the Latino Racial Justice Circle could possibly provide a format for talking about racial issues. This program consists of 3 mediated discussion sessions (1 ½ to 2 hours each) involving immigrants and non-immigrants who have some reservations about immigration policies. The mediated sessions are directed by a professor from UMBC. The committee acknowledged that this was a possibility along with the program on immigration which would be done separately.
- Peggy stated that she has been having ongoing conversations with Skipp and Pam Sanders about racial issues and how the parish might address those issues. Skipp and Pam stated that the emphasis should be that white people need to be educated rather than thinking in terms of fixing a problem. Skipp and Pam thought that they and their son and daughter-in-law would be willing to participate in group discussions that spanned over

several weeks. Peggy and Skipp are going to meet with Father Ray to discuss possible things to do and Peggy will report back.

- Skipp made an interesting point by saying that his son and daughter-in-law prefer the term “black” to “African-American”. The committee recognized that this is an important inter-generational difference that should be noted.
- Some committee members participated in protests throughout the month, particularly on Juneteenth.
- Several committee members mentioned how excellent the Oprah program entitled “Where Do We Go from Here?” was. It aired on Discovery and OWN on June 9 and 10, 2020 and is now available on YouTube. Oprah discussed racial issues with Ava Duvernay, Stacey Abrams, David Oyelowo and others.
- Several committee members also talked about the Poor Peoples’ Campaign, a National Call for Moral Revival which was a virtual march on Washington, DC on June 20, 2020. The program was led by Reverend William Barber II and lasted about 3 ½ hours. There were a variety of speakers on issues dealing with poverty, housing, economic inequality and jobs. The committee members thought the program was excellent.
- Maureen mentioned the work of a group called 8CantWait.org. This is a national organization whose goal is to pressure police departments to make immediate changes. Their goals include the following elements:
 - 1 ban chokeholds and strangleholds
 - 2 require de-escalation
 - 3 require warning before shooting
 - 4 requires exhaust all alternatives before shooting
 - 5 duty to intervene
 - 6 ban shooting at moving vehicles
 - 7 require use of force continuum
 - 8 require comprehensive reporting
- Sue Woodman raised the question of why police always shoot to kill. The committee recognized that as being part of police training and briefly discussed whether there should be a different approach to training.
- The Archbishop and other faith leaders held a prayer service in our park on June 3. Attending from St. Vincent were: Father Ray, Colleen, Peggy, Jack and Janice Bonner, Audrey and John Rogers, Mark Palmer, Kevin O’Reilly and Dennis Moore.

BRIDGE Maryland (Bridgemd.org):

- Maureen reported that Bridgemd held a prayer service and rally on June 12, 2020 which was attended by Police Commissioner Michael Harrison and approximately 50 to 75 people. Father Ray was one of the prayer leaders and Reverend Murray, Co-Chair of Bridgemd directly addressed Commissioner Harrison about the progress that the department was making in meeting the elements of the consent decree. Harrison promised a report to Bridgemd within 60 days. In addition to Father Ray, the following attended from St. Vincent's: Louise Gregg, Brian Martindale, Sue Woodman, Graham Yearley and Peggy, Maureen and Jack from the committee.
- Bridgemd and Beyond the Boundaries were circulating a petition to the Governor to use some of the Covid-19 funds to prevent evictions or to take other measures to forestall evictions.

San Juan de Limay: – Maureen reported that the trip that she and Tom Hyatt were planning to San Juan de Limay in July 2020 has been canceled. Maureen proposed that just for this year the \$2,400 pledged by the committee to the church in San Juan de Limay be given to Casa de Baltimore. The situation in San Juan is unstable and Casa has been doing many meaningful projects.

The Green Team:

- **Legislation: Governor's Veto of Ban on Pesticide Chlorpyrifos:** Maureen mentioned that Steve McDaniel was upset that Governor Hogan vetoed Senate Bill 300 which had passed both houses and would have banned the use of the pesticide chlorpyrifos by October 1, 2020 because of its serious impact on honeybees.
- Peggy and Sue Woodman stated that since the city's Department of Public Works was doing a "horrible" job on recycling, the Green Team was working on efforts to change parishioners' focus and mindset. Stay tuned for more information.
- Peggy reported that Ray Heil's most recent grant application for the park was not accepted.
- Mary Catherine and Peggy watched the webinar Environment America had on human rights called "Our Oceans" on June 15.

Pax Christi: - Chuck reported that Johnny Zokovitch, the new Executive Director of Pax Christi USA gave a speech explaining the organization's new emphasis in dealing with the evils of racism.

Beyond the Boundaries (BtB):

- Beyond the Boundaries and Bridgemd were circulating a petition to the Governor to use some of the Covid-19 funds to prevent evictions or to take other measures to forestall evictions.
- Some committee members participated in the 5/28 Zoom on affordable housing and in the 6/16 one on racial divide.

New Interim Director of the Office of Black Catholic Ministries: On June 5, 2020, Archbishop Lori announced the appointment of Mrs. Sherita Thomas as the new interim director for the Office of Black Catholic Ministries for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Sherita currently works for T. Rowe Price and is the former chairwoman of the archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministries board. She is the Global Associate Engagement Manager at T. Rowe Price where her experience includes key roles with the T. Rowe Price Foundation, Diversity and Inclusion, and Global Client and Investment Services.

Regional Transit Authority: Peggy stated that Bob Reuter was circulating a petition that would put the issue of Baltimore having its own Regional Transit Authority (not run by the state) on the November ballot. Committee members were asked to sign on.

Social Action Committee Notes:

The last video meeting of the committee was June 9, 2020 and the next meeting is a video meeting scheduled for July 21, 2020 at 10:30 AM. Peggy reported that \$794 was spent for the Monday Food Program. For additional information, please see attached minutes.

Video meeting ended at approximately 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jack Schmidt