

Parish Council Meeting
March 21, 2023

In Attendance: Jeri Delambo, Anne Freeburger, Mary Hennigan, Ray Bahr, Anne Maura English, Joan Fulton, Lindsay Dierkes, Jim Casey, Geri Sicola, Catherine Mundy, Barbara Bowles, Ray Heil, Aidan Helie, Fr. Ray Chase, Mark Palmer, Gerry Fialkowski, Colleen McCahill, Graham Yearley, Mary Catherine Bunting

Absent: Craig Thornton, Denny McMullin

Meeting opened with prayer.

Pastor and Pastoral Associate

Fr. Ray:

Request to ArchBalt facilities for authorization to repair louvers and bell tower has been approved via email. The request was to replace it with aluminum; Colleen will contact CHAP for permission to use aluminum.

Regarding the Interparish Loan Fund: Everything is secure and there is no need for any concern due to recent banking system upsets.

Mark has dutifully sent out an announcement about working on the FY24 budget. Council should be prepared to examine and approve in time for the new fiscal year.

Regarding the report on sexual abuse with the ArchBalt of Baltimore: Fr. Ray is writing something to present to the parish community to prepare us for this report and hopefully to move us forward in a positive direction. Jim added to this that the report will likely come out before the next PC meeting. The Committee on Church Reform suggests there be an organized response ready for those who are impacted or have questions/responses/secondary and tertiary trauma. Fr. Ray says professionals are needed for any who are traumatized or who have been victims of sexual abuse. He offers one way to prepare people is to suggest they not read it if they are likely to be traumatized, and to have support ready if they are triggered by the report and subsequent commentaries. Jim says the Church Reform Committee will move forward with some kind of group to lead preparation.

Parish Council Retreat Decisions Follow-Up

4 Priorities:

- Update constitution and create by-laws
 - Working group volunteers: Jim Casey, Mary Hennigan, Graham Yearley, Barbara Bowles, Colleen McCahill
 - It was pointed out that several areas needing attention in the constitution and by-laws were not decided at the retreat. The working group will need to have a process for bringing options for decisions to the PC as they work through them.

- Group will meet to discuss the scope of work and examine priorities and what they are able to commit to doing. There are likely to be several other areas needing change in the Constitution that were not the top priorities during the retreat. These should be identified by the working group. PC would like a schedule of expected outcomes from this group about what they will address. Deadline: May 9
- Strategic Plan Process
 - Prepare Scope Of Work (SOW), Recruit Project Manager, Recruit Working Group
 - PC initiation of planning begins May 9. Everybody needs to give thought and provide ideas to outline the SOW. Thoughts should be sent to Geri the week before the next PC meeting.

April Meeting Date: Council also agreed to move PC **April date to 18th** so that it is not the Tuesday after Easter.

- Question Box
 - Appoint a person to organize a question box in the gathering space in order to collect parishioner input and organize for PC consideration.
 - Kate Volpe offered to work on this.
- Mission & Vision Momentum
 - Ask Liturgy and Education & Enrichment committees to consider how to keep the vision/mission momentum
 - Geri will take care of this.

Update on the Richard Lawrence endowment

Ray Bahr shared the report. Currently, 88 students are receiving funds from the endowment. Ray also suggests we report back to donors that their offerings continue to serve the community. Geri questioned whether we could get information about renewal retention of the students who receive these awards since they are required to apply every year. Fr. Ray asked if the fund is still open for donations. Background on the endowment as well as the newest report will be made available to the parish.

No new committee updates. Individual committee meeting notes in appendix.

Parish Council Elections

Election Organizer: Lindsay Dierkes

Chief Election Officer: TBD

There are currently 10 elected PC reps. (It was decided last year for Peggy Shouse and Craig Thornton to remain on for another year.) Lindsay queried if, since the Constitution stipulates 8, PC wishes to revert to 8 or continue with 10. Council moved to proceed with the current 10. Discussion followed about how to formally include and run elections with Saturday night Mass attendees; no clear resolution was determined as of yet.

Gerri S., Lindsay, Joan Fulton, and Jim Casey are finishing their 1st terms and need to decide whether they wish to run again. They would need to be reelected to serve a second term, but not another nomination. Peggy Shouse and Craig Thornton are rotating off. Therefore, there are a total of 6 openings, 4 of whom can be reelected.

The current Secretary is in charge of ballots and obtaining/distributing background information. The Chief Teller is not to be on the current council.

Meeting adjourned with prayer.

Report of the Committee on Church Reform for the March 21, 2023 Parish Council Meeting

Our committee met on February 20, 2023 and again on March 20, 2023.

February 20, 2023:

- I. The majority of the meeting concerned the North American Continental Synod Response to the Working Document for the Continental Stage.

There were 15 regional delegations from dioceses in the United States and Canada. A 16th delegation had representatives from religious orders and Catholic organizations which were not supervised by dioceses. Audrey Rogers participated in this 16th delegation. Discerning Deacons also participated in the 16th delegation. Pat Ball was not part of the Discerning Deacons representatives but she was in contact with them. Sue Rovnak was a representative for the Archdiocese of Baltimore delegation.

After the 16 delegations met, a group was formed to digest the comments and recommendations from the 16 delegations and to distill them into a report to be submitted to Rome as the North American response to the working document. This group met in Orlando Florida from February 14-17, 2023. The group consisted of 8 bishops, 2 women religious, 2 priests, 3 woman members of the laity, and 2 men members of the laity.

80% of the dioceses from Canada and the United States participated in the North American Continental Synod. 26% of the representatives were from Canada and 74% were from the U.S.A. Absent the bishops, slightly more than half of the representatives were women and slightly less than half were men. That balance shifted when the bishops were included.

Bishop Lewendowski was the bishop representing Baltimore. There was disappointment that the bishops met separately from the other delegates. Sue Rovnak reported that Bishop Lewendowski was pleased with the Baltimore delegation.

Audrey and Sue described the process followed by the individual groups. The responses were recorded and processed by staff members of the USCCB. There will not be any follow-up after the information is given to the group drafting the continental synod report.

We were disturbed to learn that the information from the 16th delegation was not going to be used. The persons from that delegation wondered why they were gathered together if the information wasn't going to be used.

- II. Pat Ball announced that the education and enrichment committee was hosting a presentation on the Working Document for the Continental Stage at St. Vincent's on March 15.
- III. St. Vincent's will host the July 3 St. Phoebe celebration via zoom. Discerning Deacons has scheduled celebrations for the 3rd day of each month. Different parishes will host these monthly celebrations.

March 20, 2023 meeting:

- I. We thanked Pat Ball for her presentation on the Continental Synod. Pat was encouraged by how the people who attended, whether live or on live stream, were deeply engaged. She particularly enjoyed the descriptions people gave of what their tents would look like.
- II. We discussed the suggestion Discerning Deacons made that women preach on St. Phoebe's day, September 3, 2023. While St. Vincent's is accustomed to women preaching, it is rare in other parishes. There was discussion as to whether visiting woman preachers would allow others to attempt to preach themselves. Alternatively, would it be better to encourage women to preach in their own parishes without needing to have outsiders preach first. In any event, all agreed that training is very important. It would be a setback if the first woman preacher did a poor job. Colleen noted that canon law permitted lay preaching by lay men and lay women. The only canonical prescription is that the presiders at a mass give the homily after the Gospel. Other preachers could preach at other times.

Sue reported that Bishop Lewendowski had raised the question of women preaching, but he didn't draw any interest in the topic. Sue also suggested that we raise the topic whenever possible when speaking to priests and parishioners from other parishes. It is important to spark interest. As an aside, Sue said we should talk about the synod as often as possible with people from other parishes.

- III.** The committee spent a great deal of time talking about preparing for the release of the Attorney General's report on cases of sex abuse and the associated cover-up in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The judge in the case has approved the release of a redacted version of the report. It is unclear when the report will be released, but the best guess is that it will be in the next two or three weeks. It is possible the report will be released during Holy Week. Fr. Chase has already begun to prepare the congregation by making suggestions about a context for reading the report. Other committee members suggested that anger and outrage need to be expressed before people can move to healing and forgiveness. Most acknowledged that everyone grieves in her own way so a one size fits all approach doesn't work. Most felt that parishioners should be given an opportunity to express their feelings. Suggestions included soliciting people to write about their reactions, holding town hall style meetings and holding small group meetings. The committee felt that it was a good idea for me (Jim Casey) to raise the issue at the upcoming parish council meeting. Since the report will likely be released before the April parish council meeting, some plan for dealing with it should be made in the interim.

Minutes for the Social Action Committee Meeting March 20, 2023

Attendees on zoom: Joe and Peggy Cronyn, Pat Frascati, Ray Heil, Marcia Metzler, Peggy Meyer, Jack Schmidt, and Kathy Younkin.

Next meeting date: Monday May 15, 2023, 9:30am Please note new time.

The meeting started at 10:10am. Peggy M facilitated and started with a prayer.

Breaking Bread with the Hungry: Jack reported that the dinners are going well. We have some problems estimating the number of clients, but everyone has a meal and sometimes there are leftovers. Peggy M said that we have had enough volunteers and that she receives weekly inquiries about helping out. Some of the new volunteers have been excellent workers, such as Rachel.

City Springs Elementary/Middle School: Joe said that things are going well and there is not much new information to report. Since Peggy M and Kathy are not available for the April date for the professional development meeting, Joe is going to meet with school officials to see if the meeting could be rescheduled for May 2. Joe emphasized how important the professional development meetings are for all 12 volunteers. The topic of the next meeting is restorative justice.

Monday Food Program: Peggy M said that the program has been going well. Hurl Waldman is handling today's program without Casey who is returning from a weekend out of town.

Green Team: Kathy stated that the green team has been monitoring 10 environmental bills recommended by Catholics for Our Common Home. She said that it appears that half of the bills will move forward out of committees and head for a floor vote.

Kathy also mentioned that the green team is presenting the movie Virginia's Calling this Sunday (March 26) from 11:30 to 12:30 followed by a discussion. The movie is about a woman who did not believe in climate change until it affected her personally. There will be coffee and a breakfast bar and bags emphasizing recycling will be given out. The green team has made posters for the event and will add similar items that the children made at church yesterday.

Peace and Justice Subcommittee: We will attach next Monday's (March 27) Peace and Justice minutes. Peggy M mentioned that Bob Rueter has joined the subcommittee. She also said that she has been responding to requests from Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) to sign petitions on various proposed bills now before the General Assembly. Peggy M said that she is willing to forward such requests to other members of the committee who might also be interested in supporting these bills.

The Resource Exchange (TRE): Peggy C stated that TRE has a new contact at Health Care for the Homeless, Nat Patrini. She said that he is 22 or 23 years old, from Pittsburgh, and is very

organized and energetic and attended a recent move. The next pick-up at Charlestown is May 6. Peggy C said that TRE is very short on dressers and asked the committee to keep an eye open for them. Marcia said that a neighbor who is reorganizing potentially has several dressers. On a recent move with Kathy, Marcia mentioned that she talked with the client and that the lady had been a previous recipient of TRE's program in 2013 and how much the program meant to her at the time. Marcia also told us about the new building where the move occurred called Renaissance Row. There are 84 units with excellent new features (like large bathrooms) and the units are available based on various levels of income.

Peggy C mentioned that the pick-up team helped a parishioner get ready for a move to an assisted living facility soon. In the interim, they moved a bed and TV from an upper floor to the main floor.

Pat said that TRE is in need of pots, pans, and skillets and asked the committee to keep an eye open for them. She previously purchased them at IKEA, but prices have recently skyrocketed.

Afghan families: Peggy C said that helping the Afghan family continues to be a work in progress. She said there is a slight problem with transparency since Joe and Peggy C's Afghan family does things along with their related family members (sponsored by Nativity Church) without letting Joe and Peggy C know at the time. Peggy C said that Jeanette at Nativity has the same experience. Giuliana Valencia-Bank (Jules), who works for the county, has been instrumental in helping each family member to get an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) which is necessary to get a social security number and to file income taxes.

Peggy C pointed out that the family's take-home income is \$2,000 a month and rent is \$1,800. They get food from a variety of programs (Student Support Network, local churches, etc.) and Peggy C and Joe help with food in any way they can. The father drives an old car, and the family has given up cable, much to the dismay of the younger children who miss the cartoons. Every effort is being made to help the father get a higher paying job and one that is closer to home, but his lack of English has been a serious impediment. The two older boys, whose English is good, are trying to find jobs to supplement the income.

Peggy C and Joe attended a townhall meeting with county executive Olszewski held at the Timonium Fairgrounds. Joe spoke and advocated for more direct services for new Americans in the county.

The committee continues to show admiration and gratitude to Peggy C and Joe for their continued loving effort in helping the Afghan family in every way.

We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism: On February 15, Meleny Thomas gave an excellent update about South Baltimore Community Land Trust's (SBCLT's) current activities. The March 15 meeting was skipped in order to accommodate a presentation on "Enlarge the Space of Your Tent," the working document for the Continental Stage of Synod 2021-2024. For the April meeting, Peggy M said that plans are being considered for an activity at SBCLT. She also mentioned that she was going to recommend A Community Conversation with Dr. Greer Gordon: "Journey to Social Justice: A Call to Action," on April 20 from 6:00 to 8:00pm. Advocacy for this program is being led by Nativity Church through Catholic Charities and is available at Nativity and multiple other locations. She will try to remember to send out the email with info for April. For the May 17 meeting, Peggy M stated that Matthew Taylor will be the guest speaker.

He is a scholar at the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies and has written an article on Christian Nationalism in Religious Dispatches. Peggy M pointed out that Audrey Rogers recommended him after reading the article.

Peggy M said that a check for \$40,000 was given to SBCLT from our Racial Equity Fund for the deconstruction of 5 properties.

New Business

The Richard Lawrence Family of Endowment Funds: Ray has written a report about these funds and shared some of the information with the committee. He also intends to give a report to the parish council tomorrow night. He also said the report was available to committee members. The funds (more than \$6 million) mainly deal with school endowments. During the last year, the fund has distributed \$271,000 to 88 students in Archdiocesan schools with an average scholarship of \$3,360. Of the 88 scholarships, 43 were for students at Mother Mary Lange School. All of the students previously from St. James and John School received financial aid to attend other Archdiocesan schools. Ray believes the financial aid will continue into perpetuity. Joe asked what the criteria were for distributing the funds. Ray is going to follow-up on the procedures, but believes it is a combination of East Baltimore zip codes, income qualifications, and input from the Archdiocesan Education Office.

Extreme Disappointment Regarding the Cancellation of a Workshop at the Social Ministry Convocation: Peggy C expressed outrage over the cancellation of the workshop entitled Come and Listen: Transgender Catholic Families and Individuals Share Their Experiences Living in a Catholic Parish. And she asked what, if anything, we could do in response to this outrageous action.

By way of background, the workshop was cancelled one day prior to the Convocation in response to a purported threatened protest by a local anti-transgender group. Our committee discussed this at length, and it should be noted that all members shared Peggy C's sense of outrage. Why Outrage? So many reasons. First of all, the workshop was simply a way for people to share their difficult stories – stories that should be told and heard to help all of us learn about our differences. The fact that we cannot even discuss an issue such as this is unbelievable. The theme for the Convocation was Dream Big, Dream Together, quoting the words of Pope Francis. We guess the message really is that we cannot dream together on all issues. Second, we wondered whether the Convocation gave in too easily to a purported threat. Very little information was available about the threat and knowing all too well the possible danger of hate groups, perhaps the Convocation made the right call. But who actually made the call? Was any alternative even considered? There is something to be said of not giving in to terrorists of any kind. The terrorists' success here will only further embolden them. In a related topic, how can we expect the Archdiocese to have success in its Seek the City outreach when not all voices are being heard?

What, if anything, can or should St. Vincent's parish do in response to this event? Our parish is very open and pro-active in dealing with LGBT+ issues. One thought is that a group of city churches that are also open and pro-active could jointly sponsor a night to address these issues. Since we have the ALIVE (Affirming the LGBT+ community in an Inclusive, Valuing

Environment) committee, we asked Kathy, who is on the committee, to bring this issue before them and consider what actions we could take.

Seek the City: Peggy C asked if Ray could give a synopsis of the parish's meeting with the Seek the City representatives. Ray and Peggy M said attendees were divided into smaller groups and each group had several representatives from the Archdiocese that asked questions. They mainly wanted to hear about our parish in terms of ministries, spiritual life, liturgies, and data about mass attendance and other sacramental programs. Bishop Lewandowski said that the initiative was not about closing churches. Ray said that it was made known that there are 62 parishes in the Archdiocese with approximately 4,500 "practicing Catholics," a number far lower than in years past.

The meeting ended at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted, Jack Schmidt

St. Vincent's Green Team Meeting

March 6, 2023

Lower Classroom

Attendees: Bethany Gregg, Peggy Meyer, Pam Sanders, Rita McMullin, Jill Huppert, Mary Catherine Bunting, Louise Gregg, Brigid Casson, Kathy Younkin
Prayer – Rita.

OLD BUSINESS

2023 MD Legislative Session.

Bethany supplied the Newsletter post for a way for our parishioners to sign up online and support the bills listed below. On Sunday Feb 19 we also provided paper forms for sign-up. Bethany followed up and mailed support for those manual signups.

Our Supported Bills:

MD Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH):

- Transportation Equity Act HB9/SB19
- Clean Trucks Act HB230/SB224
- Energy Performance Targets and Low Income Housing Act HB169/SB144
- Energy Savings Act of 2023 HB904/SB689
- Reclaim Renewable Energy Act HB718/SB590
- Community Solar Pilot Program – Make Permanent Act HB908/SB613
- Promote Offshore Wind Energy Resources Act HB783/SB781
- Climate Resilience Via Green Stormwater Infrastructure Act
- Pesticide Registration - PFA's Testing – Requirements Act HB319/SB158
- MEPA50 – 50th Anniversary of the MD Environment Policy Act HJ1/SJ4
- Climate Equity Act
- Maryland the Beautiful Act HB631/SB470

Mary Catherine – writing our own congressman urging support for particular bills is also recommended.

Bethany – it's too soon to comment on results because many bills have not yet been scheduled for discussion.

Environment.

A "Zero-Waste" Manager has been hired for Baltimore DPW!

Rita - Baltimore County is having a sale of Rain Barrels and Compost receptacles at reduced price for anyone in Maryland until April 12. Advertise in eNewsletter.

"Virginia's Calling" screening. March 26 11:30-12:30 in Lower Classroom.

We will provide coffee (MC), tea (Rita), water (?), breakfast bars (Jill), oranges (Pam), grapes (Kathy). A "green" event with no utensils and with real plates and cups.

Movie is 30 minutes, followed by discussion. Rita will welcome and Peggy will lead discussion.

Peggy has wonderful reusable DPW Recycle Bags for distribution to the audience, along with a colorful paper handout (DPW) of what can and cannot be recycled.

Posters for the Gathering Space.

Team members will work on their environmental posters at home. The children's art will be available after the 3/19 Mass. During the week prior to March 26 we can display posters in the Gathering Space. Attach to glass doors, or to 5 available easels. Use painters tape for walls.

NEW BUSINESS

Climate Action Week Kit.

Items were distributed among the team.

Earth Day Mass. April 23.

Peggy will select the music. We will ask Liturgy Planner to suggest scripture for the care of creation. Brigid relayed that 2 trees on the property will be taken down and St V's is getting 2 new trees. These will be in pots at time of the mass and we hope to display them out front.

Social Ministry Convocation. Feb 25.

Kathy relayed information from the workshop by St John the Evangelist's Green Team. She will attach her notes in the email with these minutes. Also forwarded is an email from their team member, Kathleen Valdivia, with suggested discussions and their Power Point presentation.

Pollinator Garden. Investigate creating one in the Peace Garden at the end of the aviary.

Dave Arendt. Bio from LinkedIn: Climate, Environmental, and Social Justice advocate. Driving legislation at a local, state, and federal level to build a better world for everyone. Director of the Locust Point Community Garden in Baltimore.

Moira Bucciarelli suggested that he could talk to us about solar options, but he could also speak about other climate/ environment issues. One topic is "starve the incinerator." Invite him to meet with us at our next meeting.

Next Meeting date: Wednesday April 12 7pm - In-person at St Vs.

Green Team Goals:

Goal I (Participation in Legislative Sessions to protect the environment)

Goal II (Provide an annual opportunity for parishioners to participate in a direct environmental action.)

Goal III: Educate the parish on threats to our environment and what they can do to help.

Goal IV: Participate in Interfaith Power & Light's "Climate in the Pulpit"

Goal V: Promote and participate in other faith-based organizations' environmental activities.