

**Parish Council Meeting
June 13, 2023**

Attendance: Joan Fulton, John Gontrum, Leah Mank, Audrey Rogers, Mary Hennigan, Kate Volpe, Kevin O'Reilly, Anne Freeburger, Lindsay Dierkes, Charles Chapman, Geri Sicola, Catherine Mundy, Mark Palmer, Anne Maura English, Fr. Ray Chase, Graham Yearley, Mary Catherine Bunting, Jill Huppert

Absences: Peggy Shouse, Jim Casey, and Ray Heil
Graham Yearley opened with prayer.

May Parish Council meeting minutes were approved.

Pastor & Pastoral Associate:

Fr. Ray Chase: Every parish is assessed a tax—the catehedralicium—against all income except for restricted funds. We pay a hefty tax and are able to keep up with payments—they assist with the function of the Catholic Center and support other parishes in non-financially stable straits. We were recently bequeathed \$251,000, which is currently accounted as unrestricted funds. Fr. Ray has tried once already to request a tax exemption; the 2nd exemption request has also been denied (with the understanding that recently there had been an adjustment in the percentage charged for the cathedraticum which in fact was in our favor).

BRIDGE came for their convention; they had hoped for 400 people but only received 70. Forthcoming decisions on which issues will be taken up will be shared in the bulletin, etc. (Peggy M. later shared that BRIDGE did decide on youth concerns, housing, and water improvement.) About 12-15 different churches were represented. Colleen added that they were pleased that St. Vincent Parish could host.

No new items as Fr. Ray has been absent for a week, plus in isolation due to Covid-19.

Colleen: Few updates. (Colleen is suffering from Covid-19.)

There is to be a gathering at Cathedral of Mary our Queen at the end of June 27th, Tuesday, about Seek the City. The nature of the gathering is still unknown, but the hope is that it will be large. Fr. Ray added that it will be a paraliturgical celebration of many cultures. Mary H. adds that they are asking for reservations.

Committee Updates:

Finance: Mark shared the operating budget worksheet. Some takeaways: \$22,000 surplus is assumed in the current fiscal year (so total revenues are greater than total expenditures). Settlement of a \$251,000 bequest came in May and so will go to the Interparish Loan Fund (IPLF). Included in restricted donations is the \$55,000 we will get as rebate from the Annual Archbishop's Appeal, but how that is allocated needs to be decided for 2024 expenses (this year it supports city education). Total revenue projected for next year is \$959,739.

On the expense side, we expect the cathedraticum to be approximately \$115K unless Fr. Ray is successful with our request for exemption (as previously noted). It also assumes the undertaking of the bell tower work at \$184K. Total expenditures are placed around \$937,780.

The charitable budget is kept separate from the operating budget (it is also in a separate bank account). The Ukraine and Afghan line would be considered non-operational as the funds will be diminished by the 2024 fiscal year.

Peggy inquired where the \$300 line for the Friday night dinners comes from; Colleen said she would investigate.

Geri asked for a motion to approve the budget. Motion was made, seconded and the budget was approved.

Peace and Social Justice: Peggy M. brought some Pride Month events to our attention.

Please see appendix for individual committee meeting minutes.

Constitution Working Group:

Mary shared that the group is working article by article on the constitution and they will present a draft at the next meeting or the one after that (once Jim Casey has returned and recovered from his trip). It will not yet include the by-laws.

Strategic Planning Process:

Audrey was invited to share her knowledge about our previous strategic planning process and the framework and resources of the National Leadership Roundtable for Church Management. Geri requested this so that Council might make some decisions about what would be best for the parish before creating a Request for Proposal (RFP) from potential consultants that would help us with the process. One critical point Audrey raised during her presentation is that when the last SP was done, parishioners were attending church; now we have a unique “congregation”. The SP did not go forward then, but can do so now. After abbreviating the last SP process and findings, Audrey examined what should be considered in an RFP: main tasks would be planning, logistics, and analytics. Audrey thinks planning and logistics could be done by a volunteer project director from the community, but that an external contractual analyst would be needed for analytics of data and information collected.

In response to Fr. Ray’s observation, Audrey agreed that there was a 2013 deficiency and that things like the synodal prayer prompts—gospel-linked notations to our mission statement to stay focused and discern that way—are needed.

Catherine M. added that the SP is the road map guiding us from vision and mission statements to implementation and that those need to be included.

Mary H. mentioned how pleased she is to see the attention on the need for better management of analytical data through a consultant.

Lindsay D. questioned how we commit to this and actually see change rather than witnessing failure of implementation. Fr. Ray said it might be useful if the 2013 committee could comment on what failed in implementation. Catherine M. added that the implementation requires its own work once the SP is in place—or ownership, as Mary H. said, probably mostly by the council or an implementation subcouncil so that continuity remains despite changes in council. Anne Maura expressed concern to make sure this remains an opportunity for us to grow spiritually as a community that supports each other.

In response to Geri's question about how this aligns with Seek the City, Fr. Ray shared that Bishop Bruce thinks St. Vincent could play a larger evangelical role beyond our parish boundaries—perhaps to Harbor East, Fells Point, and Canton.

Geri suggested we put this back on the agenda for the next meeting to decide how to move forward.

New Items:

Reflection on Parish Retreat: Anne Maura shared that this was seemingly one of the most powerful retreats we've had. They discussed gifts and what each person had to offer (we have all the gifts we need!) as well as forgiveness. Anne Maura suggested perhaps we have a reconciliation as a parish to make sure each person is heard, even those who are “younger” or with less institutional memory. Lindsay added that the idea that most struck her was “we are stronger in diversity as long as we have dialogue”—something we need to continue working on.

We are hosting a Discerning Deacons multi-parish liturgy on July 3.

Community Feedback: A number of parishioners have offered feedback about liturgy planners going on too long at both the opening and the petitions. Anne Maura says she'll bring it to the Liturgy Committee though they are already aware and it continues to be an issue despite reminders and guidelines.

Goodbye and Hello!

Fr. Ray offered a blessing on Joan F. and other leaving members of council (who were not present at tonight's meeting) as well as a blessing for the new members.

Current elected council members: John Gontrum, Kate Volpe, Leah Mank, Mary Hennigan, Geri Sicola, Kevin O'Reilly, Catherine Mundy, Aidan Helie, Lindsay Dierkes, and Jill Huppert

Following the departure of leaving members, corporators, and committee chairs from the meeting, council members voted on members for office. The results were as follows:

Remaining as President: Geri Sicola

Remaining as Vice President: Lindsay Dierkes

Remaining as Secretary: Kate Volpe

Minutes for Peace and Justice Committee Meeting May 22, 2023

A video meeting using Zoom began at 7:05pm. Attending: Mary Catherine Bunting, Maureen Daly, Chuck Frascati, Peggy Meyer, and Jack Schmidt. Mary Catherine opened with the acknowledgement of the land's previous ownership by the Piscataway tribe and Maureen facilitated.

Next meeting: July 24, 2023, 7:00pm. Chuck will facilitate.

We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism: Peggy said that the presentation by Matthew Taylor on May 17 was excellent. It was about Christian Nationalism. She said that she tried to send the live-stream to the group, but she marked it as "private" at the wish of Dr. Taylor and some people could not open it. Peggy then changed it to "unlisted" and people could open it. She was then sent a message from YouTube saying they were taking it down because the video violated their guidelines, but Peggy could appeal the decision. She read the guidelines and thought that it did not violate them, so she appealed. (Appeal successful and they put it back up on YouTube.)

Maureen questioned whether the presentation was really about racism. Peggy responded that she thought it was connected with racism since parts of Christian Nationalism intersect directly with White Nationalism and White Nationalism is a big part of Christian Nationalism. Even though the topic was more directly devoted to Christian Nationalism, the presentation was deep, foreboding, and impactful and all who attended were glad to have heard it. Peggy said that she had the links to the other podcasts that Dr. Taylor referenced, and she would be sending them out to the members of We Have a Dream.

Peggy said the June 21 meeting will continue a discussion of Dr. Taylor's presentation as well as a discussion of a presentation (sponsored by Catholic Charities) entitled A Community Conversation with Dr. Greer Gordon: "Journey to Social Justice: A Call to Action," which numerous parishioners attended on April 20 at Nativity Parish and at a church in South Baltimore.

Immigration: no report.

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore (SURJ): no report.

Peace Walk: Peggy stated that the last peace walk was on March 27, the same date and time as our last Peace and Justice meeting. She also stated that the Fabian that we prayed for at mass and who was killed at the T-Mobile Store in Canton was the brother of Carlos Sanchez from South Baltimore Community Land Trust (SBCLT). He has appeared several times at St. Vincent's during SBCLT events. Peggy attended the wake/funeral service for Fabian.

Beyond the Boundaries (BtB): Mary Catherine reminded us that members of BtB are going to city hall this Thursday afternoon (May 25) at 4:15pm for a rally and press conference on the issue of inclusionary housing. Maureen will be speaking at the rally. Peggy asked if there was any movement on the bill for inclusionary housing and Chuck said that the next council meeting is June 12 and Odette is trying to get City Council President Mosby to schedule a vote on the

bill for that meeting. Odette feels that she has 8 votes but would like 11 to make the bill veto-proof. There is some thought that the Mayor may veto the bill. Maureen said that in her remarks she intends to take a moral approach to the issue and leave the legal arguments to the lawyers. She said other cities have had success mandating inclusionary housing so why can't it be done in Baltimore. Another part of the issue to stress is that the city has already budgeted \$39 million in assistance for new construction with all of it for luxury housing. Maureen reminded everyone that the bill was now 43 pages long due to amendments and now must be reworked through a procedural process to get it to the core issues.

Maureen again reminded us that Thursday's city council meeting is Taxpayers' Night where anyone can comment about the city's budget. She said the city council now has expanded powers over the budget as was voted in last year. We need to take the tact of asking for budgeted money for inclusionary housing.

Peggy reported that Bob Rueter had been in the gathering space after several Sunday masses seeking signatures on a petition to adopt an amendment to the Baltimore City Charter that would allow for the creation of a Baltimore Regional Transportation Authority. She thought he was having success based on the signed sheets she saw.

Maureen suggested that once the inclusionary housing issue is settled, BtB as well as St. Vincent's should consider working on the issue in Baltimore County that pertains to mixed use development around the light rail stations. There has been a big fight around the Lutherville-Timonium station. The idea is to reconfigure the shopping area to include new housing, shopping, and some parking. Maureen mentioned that we could make use of the 25 organizations that are members of the coalition that Odette has gathered for the inclusionary housing to work on other issues.

San Juan de Limay: Maureen said that the only communication she has had with San Juan de Limay was from a priest (formerly located there but now in northern Virginia) who contacted Maureen's brother (Father Daly) to ask Father Daly to get in touch with Maureen who was then to contact the church in Limay. Maureen has not done that. She asked if the committee still wanted to keep in touch with the parish and Barbara Larcom. Even if we wanted to send money to the parish, it is problematic. She mentioned that through the parish we used to get in touch with the bishop of Esteli who is now in prison. Mary Catherine will get in touch with Barbara Larcom to find out additional information.

Maryland Catholic Labor Network: Maureen said that she had a planning retreat on Saturday (May 20) and attended that retreat as well as St. Vincent's retreat. There is a core group of excellent activists. She said the Archdiocese of Washington DC has created an Office of Social Concerns and the leader attended the planning retreat along with a representative from a non-profit organization called In Solidarity. The plan, supported by Bishop Lewandowski, is to have a pre-Labor Day luncheon with priests, deacons, and others to talk about homilies for the Sunday near Labor Day. Last Year's luncheon was excellent and attracted about 20 clergy. The members at the meeting suggested that the Washington DC Archdiocese also hold such a luncheon, but they determined not to have a luncheon before Labor Day but have an event around St. Joseph the worker in 2024. Maureen said that Clayton Sinyai (former national executive director), Nancy Conrad, Terry Callahan, Ward Morrow, and Father Ty Hullinger were

at the planning retreat. Chuck Hendricks of St. Vincent's was scheduled to be there but was in California and his flight back was cancelled.

Pope Francis has appointed a new Spanish-speaking bishop-elect for the Archdiocese of Washington DC. His name is Evelio Menjivar-Ayala. He is very interested in labor rights. Interestingly, he came to the US under DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). Maureen hopes that Bishop Evelio would join in the pre-Labor Day luncheon.

As an aside, Maureen mentioned that Father Ty is getting a new parish, Transfiguration, on west Hamburg Street. He had been the pastor of 5 churches for the past 16 years.

New Business

Global Peace Foundation (GPF): Peggy talked about this new initiative. It is a worldwide organization that tries to help when issues divide a community such as the racial divide in our major cities. They would like to do something about these issues in Baltimore and have asked St. Vincent's to be a stakeholder. Peggy and Casey first met with them and then they met with Father Ray, Peggy, and Chuck. GPF joined with Project Pneuma which was formed after Freddie Gray and joins students from the 4th through 8th grades with police recruits to develop relationships. Peggy talked with the Founder and Executive Director and scheduled a meeting for Father Ray with him. Peggy said she is not the most qualified representative to work with this group but if no one volunteers, she will. Peggy thinks it would be a good thing for St. Vincent's since we would be the only Catholic church among the stakeholders. If Father agrees, they will take it to Parish Council.

Lamenting false news: Mary Catherine mentioned that, in cities where refugees were bussed by southern governors, housing was found for them. However, conservative stations were publishing stories that veterans were being displaced for the refugees. In some cases, homeless people were dressed as veterans to authenticate the story. Veterans in the area denied that such displacements occurred.

The meeting ended at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted, Jack Schmidt

Minutes for the Social Action Committee Meeting May 15, 2023

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

Next meeting date: Monday July 17, 2023, 9:30am

The meeting started at 9:35am. Peggy M facilitated and Peggy C offered a prayer entitled “the New Serenity Prayer” by James Martin, SJ.

Breaking Bread with the Hungry: Jack reported that the dinners are going well. He said that the picnics in the park will start on June 2, and we will offer hot dogs and hamburgers most of the time. Once in a while, we will provide fried chicken from the Pierpoint restaurant in Fells Point. Jack later mentioned that we will use a paid professional cook for the hot dogs and hamburgers which should provide us with coverage in case of questions involving our ability to cook on the premises. He will be paid by Our Lady of the Fields.

The question came up about whether we use Emergency Services’ (ES) money for Friday meals. Peggy M responded that expenses are borne by Our Lady of the Fields for the food served and the cost of security. St. Vincent’s expense is for upkeep of the building, electric etc. and parishioners contribute to OLF for food items served. Peggy M invited committee members to volunteer and to ask friends to volunteer noting the general hours are 3:30 to 7:00pm with the core hours of 4 to 6pm. Current volunteers generally show up at various times throughout these periods.

City Springs Elementary/Middle School: Joe said that the school year is winding down. One of the last major events is attendance at the Orioles-Los Angeles Angels’ game on Thursday May 18 when the teachers walk with the children to Camden Yards. The time commitment is approximately 9am to 2pm with the game scheduled to start at 12:35pm. WJZ-TV will provide the children with a weather-related lesson before the game and then the children are seated in the upper deck.

Joe mentioned that the professional development meeting of several weeks ago dealt with the issue of restorative justice and was excellent. Peggy M and Kathy concurred. Joe said that restorative justice is one of the bedrock principles of the school and the meeting clearly brought out the need to respect everyone and to talk through issues of disagreement rather than resorting to violence. Joe intends to send out a recruitment letter soon seeking additional volunteers from among St. Vincent’s parishioners.

Monday Food Program: Peggy M said that the program is running smoothly. Casey and Hurl Waldman continue to do a great job. Our Lady of the Fields continues to supply food bags for non-residents or homeless individuals who do not qualify for the regular program. As with other programs that use ES’ funds, higher costs have been having an impact. Peggy C asked if the food program will have access to fresh produce during the summer. Peggy M said that occasionally individuals like Mary Catherine Bunting bring produce items from their gardens but there is not a continuing main source for these items. The program does not purchase such items because user counts vary week by week and it is not known ahead of time how much would be needed. Also, quick spoilage is a main concern.

Green Team: Kathy stated that she attended a tree planting at Loch Raven Reservoir sponsored by Slow Foods Baltimore. Caroline Umana and Dennis Moore were also there. Kathy also said that Peggy M had recommended a movie entitled "Paris to Pittsburgh (the Climate for Change is Now)." Kathy thought that the green team had already presented it several years ago but that it would be worthwhile to view it again.

Kathy, Peggy M, and Ray emphasized that there are a lot of good things going on about environmental issues. Ray said that there is a program in Maryland to set aside 30% of the land for natural purposes by 2030 and the Biden administration has a similar national program to set aside 40% of the land for natural purposes by 2040. Ray also said that there were about 8 bills passed during this year's general assembly that will have a positive impact on the environment. (Contact Ray for a listing.) Peggy M heard a webinar stating that it is possible to have 100% of the state's energy needs provided by wind, solar, and geothermal by 2030. She also said that many national companies continue to pursue positive environmental goals even after Trump pulled the US out of the Paris Climate Accord.

Kathy asked if the posters that were created for earth day had been saved. Peggy M said that she saved them, and they are in the church's library. Peggy M mentioned that they contained a wealth of good information.

Mens' Clothing Program: Jack said that expenses have increased mainly due to buying more items (especially jeans) and giving out toiletry kits twice a month. Peggy M pointed out that we spend more on winter clothing items (hoodies, long underwear, hats, gloves, etc.) than other seasons. During June, July, and August, we are going to try giving out clothing on only one day per month instead of two and see what effect that has on traffic at the rectory door. Marcia has studied our expenses and found that they average about \$700 per month. (Mary Laukaitis is studying our toiletry costs.)

Ray suggested that there should be someplace in the budget or elsewhere to create line items for men's program expenses and the Monday food program as parts of ES. Peggy M reminded the committee that there is still money in the ES account, but it is lower than normal. The balance in the account is available to anyone who wants to know simply by asking her.

Peace and Justice Subcommittee: We will attach next Monday's (May 22) Peace and Justice minutes. Peggy M mentioned that a number of St. V's parishioners continue to support the Inclusionary Housing Bill before the City Council by appearing at the meetings.

Global Peace Foundation (GPF): This organization goes worldwide to places where issues divide a community. For example, the racial divide in our major cities. They would like to do something about these issues in Baltimore and have asked St. Vincent's to be a stakeholder with them. Peggy M and Casey met with them followed by another meeting attended by Father Ray, Peggy M, and Chuck. Current stakeholders include an Imam from a Muslim community, a professor from Coppin State University, several obstetricians, the Center for Peace Building and Humanitarian Education, the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies (ICJS), a police officer, a University of Baltimore professor, and a representative from an international African group. GPF joined with Project Pneuma (Formed after Freddie Gray, it joins students from the 4th through 8th grades with police recruits to develop relationships.) Peggy M has talked with

the Founder and Executive Director and scheduled a meeting for Father with him. Peggy M said she is not the most qualified representative to work with this group but if no one volunteers, she will. Peggy M thinks it would be a good thing for St. Vincent's. If Father agrees, they will take it to Parish Council.

The Resource Exchange (TRE): Peggy C stated that everything that is purchased has gone up in cost. One positive note, however, is that year over year our storage costs have gone up only a little. The amount spent on beds has gone up a lot because of higher individual bed costs, the purchase of higher quality beds, and the fact that we are moving in more families. For one month, 13 beds were purchased. The cost of household items has gone up dramatically and we might be forced to cut back on some items. For example, bed bug covers for mattresses have gone up a lot and we have eliminated the bed bug covers for the box springs because they are no longer available. We received a large number of pots and pans from Linda and Paul Anderson from Broadmead. Pat said that Linda was able to get comforters for \$9, which is \$11 less than what we were paying previously. Peggy C said that the balance in our TRE account has not been this low for the last 6 or 7 years. Peggy C is in the process of negotiating the \$17,000 gift from the Kenneth S. Batty Charitable Trust. Along with Mary Catherine Bunting's gift of \$12,000 in December, our income is \$29,000. We spent \$56,000 last year so we need to make some drastic changes. TRE does not receive any money from St. Vincent's. For May, June, July, and August, we are doing 3 move-in days per month and one pick-up day per month. The units are filled with furniture, and, thanks to Audrey Rogers' hard work, Joe already has a full truckload scheduled for May 23 and June 13. Peggy C said she needs to get Nat Patrini to simplify communications. Recently, he sent out 3 different move-in spreadsheets with inconsistent locations resulting in the team going to the wrong address. For now, Peggy C said to coordinate locations with the truck's driver before leaving the units.

Afghan family: Peggy C said that helping the Afghan family continues to be a work in progress. She said that she had just found out that a group in Annapolis is also helping our family along with the Nativity Church group and us. The groups are adopting a strategy whereby the Afghan family's dependence upon them is decreasing. The main goal is to get the father motivated to learn English especially for access to a higher paying job. Other members of the family continue to make progress with English. The good news is that they are getting their green cards.

We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism: Peggy M invited the committee to this Wednesday's (May 17) presentation at 7:00pm in the undercroft by Matthew Taylor on Christian Nationalism. He is a scholar at the Institute for Islamic - Christian - Jewish Studies and has written an article on Christian Nationalism in Religious Dispatches. He is a professor at Loyola University Maryland. The presentation will also be live-streamed. The June 21st meeting will be on zoom, and we will discuss this presentation as well as A Community Conversation with Dr. Greer Gordon: "Journey to Social Justice: A Call to Action," which quite a few parishioners viewed at Nativity Church and at a church in South Baltimore. We will also be discussing an event held by the South Baltimore Community Land Trust.

Ray's Attendance at Parish Council Representing the Social Action Committee: Ray has been representing the Social Action Committee at the Parish Council each month. We submit the minutes from the meetings of the Social Action Committee, the Peace & Justice Committee and the Green Team and he depends on those minutes to describe the activities of those groups. However, he reminded the committee that if there are important issues that should be raised at the Parish Council to please let him know and he would be happy to address those issues during the Parish Council meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:40am.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Schmidt