

Parish Council Minutes
January 12, 2021

In attendance: Amber Hendricks, 9:30 rep, President; Peggy Shouse, 9:30 rep, Vice-President; John Moore, Education & Enrichment Committee; Anne Freeburger, Corporator; Jim Casey, Church Reform Committee; Dennis McMullin, Facilities Committee; Audrey Rogers, Liturgy Committee; Peggy Meyer, Social Action Committee; Corinne Agren-Barnes, 9:30 rep; Fr. Ray Chase, pastor; Colleen McCahill, pastoral associate.

The meeting was conducted via Zoom and opened with prayer at 6:10.

Committee reports and concerns:

Education and Enrichment: John reported that the E & E committee will be co-ordinating 3 programs during Lent: Feb. 24, introductory program on Contemplative Prayer; March 10, update on the homeless situation around St. Vincent; March 20, retreat led by Fr. Joe Muth.

Facilities: Denny reported that a contractor has been chosen for re-doing the sacristy ceiling. Chandeliers for the sacristy were purchased at Second Chance. The fire extinguishers and appropriate signage have been installed.

Liturgy: Audrey reported that the next liturgy planning meeting is not for several days (Jan 15) and that they will be finalizing liturgies for Lent and Holy Week.

Social Action: Attendance at Friday night dinners has dropped dramatically. The series of conversations on racism (We Have a Dream) continues once a month. The February session will be on the 2nd Wednesday because of Ash Wednesday.

Church Reform: Jim reported that the next meeting will be January 25. They are working on the questions from the town meeting.

New Business: Amber suggested that since we are at the beginning of a new calendar year and near the beginning of the liturgical year, it is a good time to stand back and examine our situation. She asked us to consider and discuss a series of questions:

How are we going forward through the rest of the pandemic? Afterward?

When we can gather in person, do we want to continue Zoom for Liturgy? For meetings?

Which of the changes imposed by the pandemic are temporary and which likely to be permanent? Will we return to pre-Covid numbers?

Discussion indicated that people experience both positive and negative effects from remote liturgies and meetings. Some people had deeper spiritual intimacy because of the lack of distraction. Others feel serious loss because of not being together. Liturgies will probably

continue to be streamed. Meetings may be both in-person and Zoom, or sometimes only one of these. Someone pointed out the inability to have personal exchanges in Zoom meetings due to the audio constraints of the program. Zoom meetings do reduce the carbon footprint and are sometimes more convenient. People living at a distance can join in via streaming or Zoom. The Scripture study group had an increase in participation because of not having to drive downtown at night.

How do we reach out to those living at a distance? How do we involve them?

Colleen reported that we do have some measures: YouTube provides some statistics. Committee attendance and participation is increased. We will post information on YouTube to allow them to reach our website and/or our newsletter listing other opportunities for involvement.

How do we determine/measure parish engagement?

What have we lost in terms of service, especially in regard to our mission statement?

Contributions are down. There has been drastic curtailment of services to the homeless, the Friday night dinners, and The Resource Exchange moves/furnishings.

Discussion continued until time for adjournment. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Attachments:

Minutes submitted by various committees.

Education and Enrichment Committee

MINUTES: December 20, 2020

1. Attendance: John, Barbara, Phil, Carol, Peggy M, Liz, Jack, Anne, Rita, Denny, Peggy S, and Rosemary

2. Lent Program

A. Ideas: Change and anchors to deal with it; Speaker from SURJ; Contemplative Prayer; Catholic Social Teaching. We have two Wednesdays as We Have Dream will take one.

Decisions: Week 1: Date Feb 24: Contemplative Prayer: An Anchor in a Changing Sea

Week 2: Mar 10: CST and the Status and Healthcare for the ST.V Homeless:

Our Anchor in these Changing Times

Assignments: Determining dates: John

Speakers/Leaders for week 1: Phil

Speakers for Week 2: Peggy S. and Jack

B. Half Day Retreat

Jack will contact Fr. Joe Muth regarding doing the retreat planned for last year on Zoom.

3. Anne Gibson Report

The massive task of producing a Christmas Pageant has been accomplished. We will probably need a code to view it.

Religious Education packets are still being sent monthly to 22 children. They include Magnifikids, CST activities, Seasonal activities. They have been well received by parents.

4. New Business

None

5. Date of next meeting

January 11, 2021, 6:30 PM

Education and Enrichment Committee MINUTES: January 11, 2021

1. **Attendance:** Fr. Ray, Jack, Barbara, Phil, Carol, Rosemary, Anne, and John

2. **Lent Program**
 - A. Feb 24: Contemplative Prayer: An Anchor in a Time of Change: See Attached Plan: Phil Report:
 - B. March 10: CST and the Status and Healthcare of the St. V Homeless: Our Anchor in These Changing Times Tabled: Jack , Barbara, and Peggy S. will confer and suggest plan.
 - C. Half Day Retreat- Fr Muth has agreed and it will be on Saturday March 20 10:00-12:00 Jack will finalize details with Fr. Muth.

3. **Anne Gibson Report:** Christmas Pageant went well. Monthly packets continue to go home. Planning ahead for a hopefully full week of Vacation Bible School with an Olympics based theme.

4. **New Business:** The topic of capital punishment and what we might do to help end it was discussed. Given the abolition in Maryland and The Biden opposition, there seems to be little that we can do. We are open to further discussion.

5. **Date of next meeting**

Sunday February 7, 2:00 PM I promise we will be done before the Super Bowl!!

Parking Lot: Magnets Stickers, Slogans

St. Vincent's Green Team Meeting
ZOOM Meeting
November 11, 2020

Revised 11/16/20

Attendees: Peggy Meyer, Mary Catherine Bunting, Bethany Gregg, Brigid Casson, Louise Gregg, Rita McMullin, Kathy Younkin

OLD BUSINESS

Wheelabrator/ Bresco contract results: Baltimore City renewed for 10 years with Wheelabrator to spend \$45 million on environmental upgrades. (This is instead of the \$95 million proposed.) Baltimore County signed up for a 5 year contract.

Baltimore City MTA

GOOD NEWS! Bethany reported that the letter she signed (as St V rep) in September against proposed cuts to bus service, worked and the cuts were rescinded.

Zero waste effort:

New Products in Sustainable packaging. Rita has tried toothpaste in a pill, shampoo/ conditioner in a bar, 7th Generation laundry detergent in cardboard container. Sue has used an Etee chewable toothpaste that she liked. Check if it contains fluoride. Rita also likes her Marley Monsters cotton bowl covers with drawstrings; interior top is polyurethane, but if you keep them a long time it's okay.

Canada plans to ban single-use plastics nationally -- checkout bags, straws, stir sticks, six-pack rings, cutlery and even foodware made from hard-to-recycle plastics -- by the end of 2021.

Covid-19 is not helping with the goal of less single-use plastic

Paper shopping bags for Nathan to pack SNAP groceries. Nathan says he has plenty of paper bags, and inserts them in plastic bags with handles, of which he needs more. Peggy will talk to Nathan about stopping the use of the plastic and just putting the paper bags in people's carts. Follow-up: After the meeting Peggy discussed this with Nathan and they came up with options.

Zero-waste Cleaning — here is yet another set of solutions to whip up to clean your house:
<https://medium.com/@zerowasteclub/zero-waste-cleaning-guide-for-your-whole-home-f99c2608f7e0>

RECYCLING

Brigid has concerns that people are turned off from recycling because of reports about its ineffectiveness. Baltimore County seems to be finding ways to do it better. Visit the Baltimore County website.

After the last meeting, Bethany sent Colleen info to put in the eNewsletter about where city residents can take their recycling items while the City DPW is not picking up, but it didn't get in. Bethany will send to Colleen again and add the Baltimore County recycling link.

Mary Catherine recommended a group, **Green America**, which sponsors the following two programs.

Donation Nation. They collect unwanted reusable items and redistribute to those in need and to GoodWill, Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity. Among other things they take appliances, office furniture, batteries. See the Green America website. Peggy added that if you have the household items or the furniture that TRE needs, think of TRE first!!

Veteran Compost. Collects acceptable waste from restaurants, residences and commercial buildings. Sells resulting compost to farmers. Provides job opportunities to veterans. Go to the Green America website.

Mary Catherine told us that **Green America** does a great job of getting after large companies for lagging in environmental issues. For example, Amazon was performing poorly with regards to dirty energy and also worker exploitation. After Green America's actions, Amazon has improved a bit on the environment side but not much with the workers. You can check out the whole story on line. Green America also provides a list of places to do on-line shopping that are environmentally friendly.

NEW BUSINESS

LEGISLATION

Maryland General Assembly

Since no special session was added, the next legislative session will run Jan-April 2021. There will be many new bills on new issues (health inequities, education challenges, racial injustice, policing).

What St V's can do:

****Prior to our meeting, Bethany emailed us info to ask legislators to oppose the Eastern Shore pipelines, and to urge Gov. Hogan to take Executive Action to provide Covid-19

protections for MD farms and seafood & poultry workers. Included in her plea were specific email instructions and phone call instructions, with suggested wording. Very easy to follow. This may be a great way to get more of the congregation involved. Send them explicit instructions on what to do.

Possibly start a campaign for sign-up to receive notification of bills needing support.

Refer to the Faith and ADVOCACY section of these minutes.

Current Environmental Legislation

1. Climate Solutions Act.

Fosters stiffer emissions reduction targets including new goals for state electric vehicles, zero emissions for public buildings, planting more trees, rooftop solar requirements and a healthy soil program. Use the following link to read more:

<https://ccanactionfund.org/media/GGRA-Fact-Sheet-February.pdf>

2. Public Service Commission Climate Test — This legislation directs the PSC to consider climate change in its regulation of the electricity sector, based upon the best available scientific information recognized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as part of the state's efforts to achieve its climate goals. In particular, the legislation will require the PSC to consider climate impacts when reviewing applications for electricity generating facilities, and when it approves the sites for new facilities. State agencies similarly would need to consider climate impacts when providing input to the PSC regarding applications for facilities.

Introduced Feb 2020 as SB656 HB531. Passed in the Senate.

3. MD Transit Safety & Investment Act. The Transit Safety and Investment Act will add an additional \$132 million a year over the next four years into the MTA to be spent on critical maintenance. This bill was introduced this session by Team 46 Delegate Brooke Lierman and backed by the new Annapolis Transit Caucus. HB368 2020

4. Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI) . A regional effort of states from Maine to Virginia, including DC, to put a cap on transportation emissions. The TCI plan would essentially raise the cost of gasoline by imposing an emissions cap and forcing gasoline distributors to purchase carbon allowances at auction. The funds raised from the cap and trade program will be distributed to participating states to invest in mass transit, electric vehicles and potentially reduce vehicle usage by increasing the cost of driving in an effort to combat climate change.

5. Transportation Carbon Reduction Fund HB1526. Associated with TCI. Sets up a workgroup and lockbox to manage the funds built as a result of TCI tax.

6. **Coal Phase Out:** phase out coal burning plants in Maryland and support affected workers. SB887 HB1545.

*****After our meeting, Bethany forwarded the good news from David Smedick, Sierra Club, about 2 MD coal burning plants, Brandon Shores and H.A.Wagner, ending coal burning by 2025. In the works is a plan to stop all MD coal burning by 2030.

7. Let's not forget the two efforts to help the bees. By the next legislative session we need to support overturning Gov. Hogan's veto of the anti-Chlorpyrifos bill and support the federal Save America's Pollinators Act (Rep. Blumenauer) –to ban neonicotinoids.

Environmental Justice Seminar

Faith and ADVOCACY

Peggy relayed information from the 5-session Environmental Justice Training Program, particularly Brooke Harper's talk on Faith and Advocacy. Brooke expressed thanks to the faith communities, an effective resource in advocating for social justice. She said that this is the way your faith can be lived out. Brooke represents 350.org.

Ways for congregations to help:

- participate in Climate in the Pulpit.
- offer meeting space to communal activities.
- participate in Ecumenical Advocacy Days (e.g. Apr 24-27 2020 in DC).
- hold classes about environmental and climate issues.
- host film screenings.
- email advocacy; legislators track the number of people and orgs who write in; Brooke recommends including your own personal message.
- phone call advocacy; 15-20 calls makes them pay attention.
- attend lobby meetings.

Peggy also brought up the Seminar on MD's environmental justice bills introduced in the 2020 session. HB1206 was an attempt at a cumulative impact bill regarding clean energy and energy efficiency. The purpose was to require the MDE (Md dept of environment) to designate certain communities as disadvantaged communities by examining the cumulative impact on those communities. HB689 was to revise the MEPA (Md environmental policy act) to be more consistent with the national NEPA. Neither bill, introduced in Feb 2020, got past their first reading. Both need to be introduced.

The seminar's speaker said the most effective way to promote environmental rights for the disadvantaged, that will be permanent, is by passing the Md Constitutional Equal Rights amendment. (After the meeting Mary Catherine sent the video of this seminar.)

Next Green Team Meeting -- Wednesday January 13, 2021 7:00pm

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.

Peace and Justice Committee Minutes for December 7, 2020

A video meeting using Zoom began at 7:05 PM. Attending: Barbara Bowles, Mary Catherine Bunting, Maureen Daly, Chuck Frascati, Peggy Meyer, Dennis Moore, Jack Schmidt, and Sue Woodman. Dennis facilitated and Peggy opened with a prayer.

Next meeting: February 8, 2021, 7:00 PM, Giuliana Valencia-Banks will facilitate.

Racism and Racial Justice Issues:

Peggy's and Skipp's "We Have a Dream" Initiative:

- At the October 21 zoom meeting, Peggy and Skipp covered white supremacy and provided definitions and background on many of the terms being used such as structural racism, systemic racism, etc.
- At the November 18 zoom meeting, Peggy and Skipp introduced Skipp's son, Justin Sanders and his daughter-in-law Jill Sanders. Justin thoroughly addressed the issue of structural racism and the levels of violence and hatred that are rampant in the white supremacist groups. Jill addressed police reform issues as well as racism. Peggy and Skipp circulated a petition to Senator Ferguson supporting local control of the Baltimore police department and elimination of the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBR) and asked the participants to sign it.
- The next meeting is scheduled for December 16 when Peggy and Skipp will introduce a group discussion led by Joe Cronyn and other members of his book club on the book "White Too Long." Peggy said she hoped that many parishioners will have already read the book by that time. Peggy also said that she and other members had also enjoyed a webinar with Robert Jones the author.

SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice):

- Peggy said that she received a heartfelt email from David Cramer expressing the condolences of SURJ on the death of Father Lawrence. The email recalled Father's influence on many social justice issues and stated that SURJ thought that our committee was doing a good job of carrying on Father's legacy.
- While St. Vincent's was holding a wake service for Father Lawrence in the church at 7:30 PM on December 4, SURJ was holding a memorial service for its founder, Betty Garman Robinson, who died on October 11. Maureen heard that the virtual memorial was attended by about 400 viewers. Dennis asked if Betty was a national or local figure and Maureen said she knew her and that she was active on both a national and local basis and in various organizations.
- SURJ sent thank-you emails to committee members and other St. Vincent's parishioners who signed a petition to Delegate Clippinger supporting the issue of local control of the Baltimore police department and the elimination of the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBR).
- Maureen thought that the committee should give priority to the LEOBR issue in its work for the next general assembly.
- With reference to the local control issue, Maureen asked about control of the city jail, which she heard was an issue. Jack said he would try to find out additional information. Jack looked back at his notes and it was Delegate Klippinger who mentioned that local control of the police department would mean that Baltimore City would be responsible for managing the jail. Currently, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, a state agency,

manages the jail. Another issue that was raised is insurance. Apparently, the city's insurance rate would be higher than what the state now pays.

- SURJ Baltimore asked its members to support SURJ DC during a rally against white supremacy on December 12 at Black Lives Matter Plaza in DC.
- SURJ is gearing up for the general assembly session in January (if held) and wants everyone to be aware of the need to respond to various issues as they go through the legislative process.

Immigration:

Giuliana could not be present for tonight's meeting but sent the following information.

- She especially thanked Peggy for attending the TPS Rally a few weeks ago, despite the cold and rain. In addition to Giuliana and Peggy, Bishop Lewandowsky was also present.
- **DACA:** A federal district court has ordered the Trump administration to reinstate the original 2012 DACA program. For the first time in years, initial DACA requests may be filed. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, or USCIS, is now accepting first-time DACA requests, renewals and advance parole applications based on the terms that existed prior to its attempted termination in 2017. There is a pending lawsuit in Texas that will be heard later this month that could cause trouble for DACA holders.
- **TPS:** Ongoing litigation continues to keep TPS in place for six countries. USCIS has issued a new Federal Register Notice, granting automatic extensions of TPS and employment authorization for TPS holders from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua and Sudan.
- Peggy mentioned that the money that the committee had sent to help immigrants was sent to an immigration group based at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church; to Father Lewandowski, before he was a bishop.

Black Lives Matter Rallies:

- The last in-person rally was held on November 7. The next rally was held virtually on November 21. Peggy mentioned that she has not been receiving emails about upcoming rallies from Ryan Sattler. Since most of the committee members are on Ryan's distribution list, Peggy asked Maureen to request that she and Jack be added to the distribution list.
- Mary Catherine said that Ryan hoped that a side benefit of the rallies was that members of different groups and organizations would get to know each other a little better.

Elections:

- Giuliana and Odette Ramos (St. Vincent's) led the "Get Out the Vote" march for Baltimore Women United on October 17. The march started at the federal courthouse and ended at city hall where there were speeches and singing. The march also was intended to remind people to call their Senators regarding the issue of not filling Ruth Bader Ginsberg's seat before the election. In addition to Giuliana and Odette, Peggy and Jack also marched.
- Dennis thanked Peggy, Mary Catherine, Giuliana and Chuck for manning telephone banks before the election.
- Mary Catherine is sending out 50 postcards to residents of Georgia for the runoff elections of two senators. Barbara also sent out 20 letters for Vote Forward, a non-partisan organization encouraging voting. Barbara sent out 80 letters before the general election.

Beyond the Boundaries (BtB):

- Maureen said that the project of educating a larger group of people about BtB as well as racial justice issues was put off until perhaps lent 2021. It is going to be a three-part program with Father Lawrence's documentary being the first part. They plan to do a trial test first with a smaller group. Maureen noted that BtB has a mailing list of somewhere between 300 and 400 names.
- Mary Catherine stated that BtB is hosting a listen and learn session about racism and the catholic church with Sherita Thomas on December 17 from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Peggy said that that flows nicely from the discussion the night before at "We Have a Dream" zoom.
- On November 21, BtB and various organizations held a march dealing with housing issues that started at the shot tower and went to city hall. Brigid Casson, Mary Laukaitis and Maureen, Peggy, Sue and Jack from the committee participated. It is important to note that after the march, **we had 2 significant successes**. The mayor signed the bill that allowed our homeless neighbors to remain in hotels rather than being moved back to shelters which was to occur on December 1. The mayor also signed the bill providing public counsel to persons about to be evicted. Previously, it often happened that landlords had representation and the tenants did not.
- Maureen mentioned that BtB is also working on the LEOBR issue.

Pax Christi:

- Chuck reported that the regional office held their annual peace maker awards ceremony virtually. The ceremony offered a taped speech by Mary Robinson, the Irish peace advocate. Chuck said that there was a huge turnout (100 – 200) for the ceremony.
- Chuck also noted that the annual Advent vespers service was cancelled this year because of COVID.

BridgeMD:

- Maureen stated that BridgeMD is working on the same law enforcement issues that other organizations such as SURJ are promoting.
- Maureen said that BridgeMD authored the bill and is at the forefront in promoting the bill that will prevent minors from being questioned by police without a parent, guardian, or lawyer present. It also requires that parents and/or guardians be notified of a minor being picked up.

Limay, Nicaragua:

- They are celebrating their 35th anniversary of their association with our parish.
- They had flood damage from a recent hurricane which destroyed bridges and the current crop which would have been used to feed the people and bring in money from sales.
- Maureen stated that Limay is the number 1 location in sending people for college educations.
- For distribution of funds, Maureen will send the request to Peggy who will send a memo from the committee to Father Ray and Colleen.

ICJS: The Institute for Islamic, Christian, Jewish Studies (ICJS) sponsored "Imagining Justice in Baltimore," a four part online interreligious dialogue that covered October 8 through November 19. Mary Catherine attended the program which was a very long commitment and said she learned a few new things although nothing new about environmental issues.

I am Greta: Peggy and Mary Catherine said that they watched the documentary entitled “I am Greta” and that it was excellent and recommended that the committee members watch it. The documentary is now available only on Hulu.

South African Education Fund: Chuck said that the committee received Sylvia Eastman’s request for the annual donation to the South African Education Fund. Peggy will write a memo to Father Ray and Colleen requesting the funds (\$1,500).

Franca Muller Paz: Maureen mentioned Franca Muller Paz, a Green Party member, who lost in her bid to win the City Council seat from District 12 as someone who offers new ideas and energy. Ms. Paz is also a performing artist in the Creative Alliance.

Mary Pat Clark: Maureen mentioned that Mary Pat Clark retired from the city council and Odette Ramos won her seat. She turned 80 years old. She was very supportive of all issues that the committee is interested in (minimum wage, housing, workers’ rights, etc.). Peggy said that Mary Pat was active in climate issues also. Chuck stated that Mary Pat’s spouse (Joe Clark) was instrumental in immigration issues by opening up his properties to section 8. Dennis stated that he once worked for Mary Pat.

Budget: Peggy noted that our budget requested \$1,500 for the South African Education Fund, \$2,400 for Limay, Nicaragua (which is likely to go to CASA Baltimore-Limay), \$1,000 for travel to Limay (no travel this year because of COVID) and \$500 for membership in BridgeMD or BUILD.

Legislative Watch: Peggy asked Maureen to monitor legislation for the committee.

Coalition Building: Maureen stated that working with other organizations on their issues helps build coalitions and we can ask for their help on our issues. Peggy suggested that we get Black Lives Matter and other organizations to support the petition that we are circulating that would eliminate the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Right (LEOBR). Peggy will send the petition via a copy of an email to Maureen who will forward it to Ryan Sattler. Maureen thought that BridgeMD and BtB would also sign on.

We closed at 8:15 PM with a prayer led by Chuck.

Respectfully submitted by Jack Schmidt