

Parish Council Meeting Minutes 12/14/2021

In attendance via Zoom: Jim Casey, Joan Fulton, Amber Hendricks, Audrey Rogers, Fr. Ray Chase, Peggy Meyer, Denny McMullin, Rita McMullin, Geri Sicola, Mark Palmer, Colleen McCahill, Ned Banks, Anne Freeburger, Jeri DeLambo, Peggy Shouse, Al Reichelt, Graham Yearley, Lindsay Dierkes

Amber opened the meeting at 6:07 p.m. with prayer and the reading of the parish mission statement and the sacred purpose statement.

I. Updates from staff and committees

- a.** This section of the meeting was intentionally kept short in order to hold a discussion about the purpose, opportunities, challenges, and changes facing the council. Minutes from committee meeting are attached as usual, but updates were limited to pressing matters.
- b.** Committee on Church Reform (CCR)
 - i.** Jim Casey and Amber Hendricks told the council that a small group of staff and CCR members has met with the consultant from Global Learning Partners twice.
 - ii.** It was decided at the last council meeting that the CCR would take a leading role in guiding this process during the first phase, coinciding with the gathering of information for the synod. It is unclear who will take the leadership beyond the first phase.
 - iii.** Jim asks specifically that we choose a “point person” to be the primary contact for the Global Learning Partners. We need this person as soon as possible, given that small group sessions are planned for January.
 - iv.** Amber enumerated the responsibilities that this “point person” would have: awareness of the timeline and tasks as outlined in the scope of work, foreseeing which steps of the process will require communication between

the parish and Global Learning Partner or among parishioners, and following up on communications so that all parties stay on schedule.

- v. Valerie Rolandelli and Eileen Zerhusen, both members of the council subcommittee who wrote the scope of work, were mentioned as possible candidates to fill this role. However, neither was present and council members believe they may have conflicts which would prevent them from filling this role.
- vi. In order to move forward with this meeting, Audrey Rogers suggests that names of candidates for the role of “point person” be forwarded to Jim.

II. Discussion regarding purpose and reform of parish council

- a. Before discussing issues with the group, Amber asked the council to spend a few minutes thinking or writing in response to the following questions:
 - i. What is your experience of the council?
 - ii. What is something the council did in your time as a member that you are proud of?
 - iii. What is frustrating?
 - iv. What opportunities or challenges does the council face?
- b. Audrey Rogers shared this quote from C.S. Lewis: “It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for a bird to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.”
- c. Issues that were discussed
 - i. Loss of a sense of ownership (within the council and the parish at large)
 - ii. Transparency (financial and otherwise). Many parishioners do not really know what the council is doing or even the purpose of the council.
 - iii. Confusion about the job description of a council member
 - iv. Council members lack a specific constituency.
 - v. Recruiting future leadership
 - vi. Many Catholic churches have minimal lay involvement in governance. How can the St. Vincent’s way of doing things be transmitted to parishioners with little prior experience of it?

- vii.** Meeting the need for spiritual nourishment, both a necessity on its own and a necessity for people to feel like they can take on leadership roles
- viii.** Meeting the needs of families with young children and young adults
- ix.** How is the vitality of the parish linked to St. Vincent's being a home to people who have not felt at home elsewhere?
- x.** The importance of person-to-person interactions in welcoming new parishioners and helping people to find ministries within our community where their talents will be useful.
- xi.** Grief over loss of parishioners and the reasons some have left.
- xii.** Culture of complacency, lack of focus on outcomes
- xiii.** Interest in event(s) where parishioners can share their ways of prayer
- xiv.** Working by consensus: It can be difficult. Is "consensus" really even what we do?

d. Immediate actions for council

- i.** Amber will call a meeting in the coming weeks to discuss some of the specific suggestions, including having council members after Mass to seek input, sharing the council agenda during announcements, putting council member contact information in the bulletin/weekly email, etc.
- e.** Fr. Ray cautioned that, while it is important to implement some the piecemeal changes, let us not forget the breadth of this discussion nor ignore the deeper issues.

III. The meeting was closed with a few minutes of personal reflection and the praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Minutes for the Social Action Committee Meeting November 8, 2021

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

Next meeting date: January 10, 2022, 2:30pm (Monday)

Prayer: Peggy M facilitated, and Pat began with a prayer about beauty from the Women in Ministry retreat.

City Springs: Peggy C commented that our community outreach has been excellent by reporting that there are now 8 tutors associated with St. Vincent's (6 parishioners and 2 non-parishioners from Roland Park Presbyterian who joined after hearing about the program from our TRE contacts). Peggy M mentioned that Liz Hasan is tutoring 2 days a week. Peggy M stated that she and Sue Woodman are concerned about all the food thrown away from the school provided lunches. She and Sue are going to collect the food in their classes and make it available to our other church food programs. Sue cleared this with the principal.

Peggy asked if anyone knew which high schools City Springs' graduates usually attended. No one knew but Peggy C will ask Joe if he knows.

TRE: Peggy C reported that she attended a Catholic Charities lunch and learn session on the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg shelter and was impressed by the many services that it provides (even though they have been closed since April 2020 with no word on anticipated re-opening).

She mentioned that we are having trouble getting clients. Kelsey is pushing the case managers to get more clients. Three moves were scheduled for November but the third was cancelled since we did not have a client. We hope to have clients for 2 moves in December. There are several reasons for a lack of clients. FEMA pays for hotels and other providers manage the clients. For example, Catholic Charities manages the Holiday Inn Express near the casino. The providers help the hotel guests get permanent housing, but HCH is not a provider, so we do not have access to those clients. Another reason is that the new apartment building at 410 Eutaw Street houses 20 HCH clients but the units are furnished. It is not known when FEMA payments will stop but it is likely that when they do, some clients in hotels will seek housing through HCH and need furniture and home goods.

There was a discussion about the use of cardboard boxes instead of the plastic bins for distributing home goods. Originally, at the start of the pandemic, the cardboard boxes were meant to stay at a client's home to limit the amount of contact. Now some boxes are being returned to church after the moves. Pat said that the plastic bins are generally easier to pack but we still have about 25 boxes to use. It was decided to use up the cardboard boxes and leave them with the clients if the clients have access to

recycling services. A return to the plastic bins will be discussed again at the next meeting.

She also mentioned that we need lamps. If anyone goes to Goodwill, Value Village, or similar places, please look to purchase lamps. (Tuesdays are senior days at Goodwill with a 10 percent discount for seniors.) As a rule of thumb, \$14 or \$15 is an acceptable price for a lamp in good condition with a shade.

Peggy C welcomed a new member, Mike Jenkins, to the move-in team. He is also helping Joe with pickups. He is the newest member of the Jenkins family joining Mary Jenkins and Joe McFadden, Mary's brother-in-law. She also said that Joe and his crew were doing 1 pickup in November and 1 in December and Audrey was now taking bookings for January.

Financially, Peggy M confirmed to Peggy C that the TRE account had \$40,254 and that the ES account had \$13,000. Peggy M mentioned that our monthly bill for four rental storage units is \$1,561.

Men's Program: Marcia said that she, Gail, Sue, and Aubree were going to meet for lunch tomorrow to discuss the program. We now spend about \$21 per person to provide a tee shirt, underwear, socks, and a pair of jeans. Marcia said we need to consider doing some tracking of our distributions because we are doing the program twice a month instead of once. Nathan had started keeping a list, but we are not sure if Aubree has access to that. With distribution twice a month, some clients are getting 2 jeans each month and probably selling some. Jack said that we distributed the clothing from the door on the Fallsway side last Tuesday and it went well. Marcia will report on the discussion at the next meeting.

Peggy C said that Roland Park Presbyterian (contact is Mary Carey) wanted to help our men's program. Marcia is going to send an email with specifics to Peggy C to forward to her.

Breaking Bread with the Hungry: Peggy M said that Father Ray has been in contact with the Archdiocesan risk evaluator and with the local police about Friday security issues. He is going to talk about security issues at tomorrow's parish council meeting. Peggy M will report on that at the next meeting. She also said we are still serving fewer clients than our normal in-house meals with a high of 67.

Monday Food Program: Peggy M noted that Our Lady of the Fields continues to provide bags for those who come without a residence and therefore not eligible for the food pantry. Some of these are also given out at the rectory door. She mentioned that a new pastor has been appointed for OLF and that some of our former volunteers have left OLF. We are waiting to hear if any changes will affect our programs.

Green Team: Kathy said that the archbishop answered the letter written by Ray asking for the archbishop's leadership in developing and implementing an action plan on critical climate issues ("Laudato Si Action Plan"). The archbishop said that he would like to start such an initiative, but the Archdiocese is very busy with the Synodal process, developing various initiatives to combat racism and reorganizing the former evangelization department. He said he hoped to do the action plan in the future. One question that Kathy asked is "would it be that difficult to start?" Some other cities and dioceses already have their own plans. Why not piggyback on those and adapt them for Baltimore? Peggy M and Kathy thought that the green team could discuss the need for action on the climate when giving our feedback during the synodal process. Peggy M thanked Ray for writing the letter.

Kathy mentioned that Odette Ramos is going to sponsor a city council bill entitled "The Deconstruction or Rebuild Act" whereby demolition of houses would be done in such a way that retains useable parts for use in other houses. She would like our support. We will discuss it after the bill is introduced.

Mitten Tree: Peggy M talked to the principal at City Springs, and she supports the donation of gloves, hats, and mittens. Therefore, we will have the mitten tree again this year.

Peace & Justice: Jack mentioned that Maureen Daly has been working closely with the Maryland Catholic Labor Network, the local affiliate of the national group. She is on the Steering Committee. We should support the Merriweather Lakehouse Hotel Workers. This hotel was formerly the Sheraton Hotel in Columbia. The workers were laid off through no fault of their own at the start of the pandemic. The hotel plans to open under its new name and refuses to recall workers who have served the hotel for decades. The workers have not received any recompense even though the hotel received money from the Paycheck Protection Program, a program which was backed by the Small Business Administration and provided loans to help businesses keep their workforce employed during the Covid crisis. Maureen said that there was an effort being made to influence organizations (such as Loyola University) that may use the Merriweather Hotel for conferences or similar events to use other locations. Many of us have signed on to their petitions. Also, Maureen said that she had a luncheon with Unite Here, the union representing hotel and restaurant employees.

Jack said the committee also discussed the administration's terrible "unchristian" decision to send Haitians back to their country especially considering the many misfortunes they have recently experienced (an earthquake, a hurricane, an assassination, gang kidnappings etc.). **Let's make sure we all give that feedback to the administration.**

Mass for 6 Black Candidates for Sainthood: Peggy M said that she and other parishioners attended the mass for the 6 black candidates for sainthood on November 1. She mentioned that Bishop Lewandowski did a wonderful job and that there were

large portraits of the candidates displayed in St. Anne's Church. She also said that she had received more than 70 letters signed by parishioners in support of the canonization and she had additional copies if anyone on the committee wanted to share them with other groups.

Afghan refugees: Peggy C stated that she wants the Social Action Committee to have oversight responsibility for the issue of caring for Afghan refugees. **All members wholeheartedly agreed.** Peggy C is the leader of the five-member group closely working on this cause for St. Vincent's. Other members include Mary Hennigan, Pat Ball, Caroline Umana and Lena Denis (a new parishioner). (More may be needed later). Peggy C said there are five Diocesan churches involved with the other four being St. Ignatius, St. Anthony, St. Matthew, and Nativity. Under the overall umbrella of Catholic Charities, the Diocese is expecting to care for 25 individuals or couples (families without children). Some refugees are expected to arrive in December and will initially be housed in My Sister's Place Lodge on Mulberry Street. The next goal then will be to get them housed hopefully in areas where there are current Afghan communities, Placement will be followed by help with jobs, Medicaid, food stamps, ESL classes (English as a Second Language) and other programs. Peggy C is not sure how many refugees will be assigned to St. Vincent's but "there is a lot of work to be done." She is aware that Catholic Charities is trying to raise funds to support these initiatives. Peggy C also requested Peggy M to ask the parish council at tomorrow's meeting what financial support the parish might contribute.

Craft fair: Peggy C mentioned that Pat is heading up the craft fair this coming Sunday, November 14 after the 10 AM mass. Pat mentioned that Angie and Steve McDaniel will also be there will honey products.

Gift boxes for seafarers: Kathy said she would request boxes for seafarers and provide a list of desired contents in the enewsletter of November 21. Pick up dates for the boxes will be December 5 and December 12.

Racial Justice: We Have a Dream: Peggy M said that she and Skipp are making progress trying to narrow the scope for the group's future activities. She is waiting for information which she will distribute to the group before the next meeting on November 17.

Mother Mary Lange school: Ray has talked to Skipp who is on the board of the school. The board has met and Skipp was pleased with the group. Ray mentioned that he heard the school was "fully subscribed" meaning that there are about 500 students at the school.

Caw to Action: Peggy M mentioned that she participated in a United Way project with a Ravens' emphasis, hence the "Caw to Action." It was called a Kindness Day and it was held at the Transformation Center in Brooklyn. The group painted or colored positive messages on rocks that would be placed at various locations around

Brooklyn. She brought several with her to place around City Springs school. She thought this might be a good future project for Anne Gibson with the children.

Father Ray's award from Catholic Charities: Father Ray received the Monsignor Arthur F. Valenzano Joyful Servant Award for his wonderful efforts inspiring others and offering encouragement. The Catholic Charities article about Father Ray entitled "Honoring a Joyful and Justice-oriented Baltimore Pastor" is attached to these minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Schmidt

Honoring a joyful and justice-oriented Baltimore pastor

From the time Rev. Ray Chase started his ministry with Catholic Charities 43 years ago, his spirit of joy shone clearly, brightening the lives of those he served. This year, the pastor of Baltimore's St. Vincent De Paul parish was named the recipient of the Msgr. Arthur F. Valenzano Joyful Servant Award.



Commissioned to recognize a joyful life and spirit in service, the award honors the spirit of the late rector of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who served on the Catholic Charities Board of Trustees until his passing in 2015.

Catholic Charities Executive Director Bill McCarthy noted the similarities between

this year's recipient and the award's namesake.

"Fr. Ray is always offering some form of encouragement or gratitude to others," he said. "Just like Msgr. Art, he has been serving and giving to others for more than 40 years, seeing the dignity in every person. ... They both have given with a sense of optimism and joy, which is always welcomed by those that are often treated as if they are invisible to the world."

Living up to the challenge

Fr. Chase's faithful labor of love has made his parish, which sits at the foot of the I-83 expressway, a beacon of working for social and racial justice. He said he views the honor as a challenge to become even better at his work – for the sake of those around him.

"I have something to live up to, because Msgr. Art always wanted people to live more deeply," he said. "I believe his biggest desire for winners of this award would be to see it as a challenge for potential growth. It truly is a privilege to receive this award, and I hope I can be faithful to it."



Fr. Chase began his ministry with Catholic Charities of Baltimore 43 years ago. He started as a deacon at Gallagher Services, formerly known as the Gallagher Center, in 1978. After serving in many roles with Catholic Charities through the years, he is currently chaplain at the organization's Jenkins Senior Living Community, a campus hosting The Neighborhoods at St. Elizabeth Rehabilitation and Nursing

Center, Caritas House Assisted Living, St. Ann Adult Day program, and two senior apartment communities.

McCarthy said he has witnessed the ways in which Fr. Chase's approach matters to those around him.

"So many people give in a transactional manner, but Frs. Art and Chase give in a relational manner," he said. "These men both have truly lived our values and been truly joyful servants."

Fr. Chase is one of three exemplary area servants Catholic Charities is recognizing the week of November 8-12. The other two pillars of the community are: Johns Hopkins University graduate **Karen Sun**, who is being honored with the **Anne Lindsey Otenasek Youth Service Award** for her commitment to women and children experiencing homelessness and poverty in Baltimore; and **Geri Olsen**, who is receiving the **Distinguished Service Award** for her 27 years of service to the residents and staff of St. Vincent's Villa.

St. Vincent's Green Team Meeting
ZOOM
October 25, 2021

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

OLD BUSINESS

LSAP - Archbishop Letter on Laudato Si Action Plan.

Kathy received a response to the Green Team's early September letter asking the Archbishop to consider a Baltimore diocese action plan, to offer ways for parishioners and companies to take steps to enact the Pope's Laudato Si in specific real life actions. A scanned copy of his letter is attached to the minutes. The reply said that he would like to "launch a diocese-wide effort" but there were other projects in-progress that stood in the way, the top one being the synodal process.

Retention System: Follow-up on the sinking pavers in the parking lot.

Brigid relayed that the original work done under the pavers to protect the pipes was faulty. A new company was hired to dig up what was there and redo it. Our new facilities manager, Tony, was instrumental in how the remedial work should be done. It included installing plastic liners and all looks good. We asked about the added cost and Brigid said there was still some unused grant money, so that paid for the additional work. We still have the question of whether the Better Business Bureau should be contacted in regard to the original company's work.

Monthly Enews Schedule.

Our team did a good job of submitting weekly posts on various environmental topics in the summer and through October 3rd. We are now switching to once per month. After this meeting I realized that we need a plan. We are holding off for now and will discuss new topics at our meeting on Dec 6.

The Rebuild Act . Bethany

This bill, also known as the Deconstruction Bill, is championed by Odette Ramos of the Baltimore City Council. The intent is to deconstruct abandoned buildings and reuse the resources to build back. It is not yet a bill, but they are inviting stakeholders to sign-on and to help with the bill writing. They want to assemble a group of developers and contractors who have buy-in for the project; they want to put the word out to attract those individuals. It was suggested to ask Tony at St V's if he would know some people, and also to advertise the bill in the eNewsletter.

Composting.

At our last meeting Jill asked about collecting **composting** trash after parish food events. Now that there are city composting sites open, maybe we can make an effort to collect the food scraps from large food events held in the undercroft and in the park. Mary Catherine made a good effort to do this at Joe Organ's retirement party in the

Undercroft. But a lot of people had already thrown away their trash. We probably need to take a more organized approach on this effort. To be discussed next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

COP26 – United Nations Conference of Parties -- Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. We will keep our eye on this important conference of world leaders and make note of new agreements.

Lawncare (environmental friendly). Kathy and Mary Catherine presented some lawn tips from the video “Saving the Earth One Lawn at a Time.”

“Rethinking Pandemic Prevention” – Youtube video. Peggy promoted this video which shows the need for a healthy eco-system to save our health and our planet. Animals driven from their habitat can contribute to a pandemic.

Tree Giveaway. Peggy.

One Water Partnership (Blue Water Baltimore is the technical partner) is currently giving away 1,000 trees to residents of Baltimore City and County.

Tree Plantings.

Let’s plan ahead and look for these on organizations’ calendars so we can drum up parishioner interest.

Baltimore City Plastic Bag Ban. Brigid.

The ban went into effect on Oct 1. Shoppers can buy a paper bag for \$.05.

Composting - South Baltimore Land Trust. This activist group has been in the news lately. Peggy went to their meeting where they were appealing for a better composting system in the Baltimore City, not in 10 years, but now!

GreenDrop. Mary Catherine promoted this organization that converts lightly used clothing and household items into critical funds for charities such as the Red Cross and Purple Heart.

Locations are at York Rd Plaza, Towson, Laurel and Essex. Rita added that old fabric can be taken to **Mom’s** where they chop it up a re-use it for insulation.

Cool white paint. Peggy promoted a new special white paint that is 98% effective at reflecting the sun’s heat, and can help cool our urban environment.

Flatware purchase. Peggy said that St V’s will purchase real flatware to use at church events rather than buy throwaway plastic or compostable ware. It can be cleaned in the

church's dishwasher. May purchase extra silverware bins to increase the amount of flatware that can be washed at once.

Next Green Team Meeting -- December 6, 7pm via ZOOM. Resume in-person in Spring.

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.

December 2021

Report of the Liturgy Committee to the Parish Council of St. Vincent de Paul Church

Our committee last met on November 13.

Day of the Dead

In our evaluation, Fr. Ray raised concern over the length of the service and we discussed specific ways to shorten the liturgy next year.

Year of the Eucharist: Past

We evaluated the liturgical community focus of the Year of the Eucharist; viz. Anne Maura's Zoom presentation and the use of the content provided to the liturgy planners.

Year of the Eucharist: Future

The Liturgy Committee has designated the period after Christmastide (1/23/22 to 2/27/22) for our focus on the Eucharist and Scripture. Anne Maura will write the theme for this period. Colleen and Al will present a primer on Luke's Gospel via Zoom on January 26. Dr. Tracey Radosevic, a biblical storyteller, will give a presentation on Luke's Gospel via Zoom on February 2.

The Committee has also designated the period after the Eastertide for the focus on our common priesthood and the Eucharist. We will develop this later.

Advent, Cycle C, and Christmas Liturgies

Since our community is without a music director and cantor at present, there would be no Lessons and Carols this year again; we also had to adapt the Advent Wreath ceremony. We finalized the number of liturgies for Christmas. Anne Maura presented the Advent Reconciliation Service on December 8.

Our next meeting is January 15, 2022 at which time we will plan Lent, Lenten Reconciliation, and Holy Week assignments. Ash Wednesday is March 2.

Respectfully submitted

Audrey Rogers