



WORD



SACRAMENT



SERVICE

St. Vincent de Paul Parish 2021-2022 Annual Report

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PARISH STAFF

Rev. Ray Chase, Pastor
 Colleen McCahill, Pastoral Associate
 Bridgid Casson, Administrative Assistant
 Barbara Hodnett, Director of Records and Sacred Vessels
 Anne Gibson, Minister of Education to Children
 Sherry Du, Minister of Music
 Tony Lassiter, Facilities Superintendent
 Aubree Barr, Outreach Coordinator/Jesuit Volunteer

PARISH COUNCIL

Amber Hendricks, Council President
 Geri Sicola, Council Vice President
 Lindsay Dierkes, Council Secretary
 Anne Freeberger, Corporator
 Graham Yearly, Corporator
 Ned Banks, Representative
 Joan Fulton, Representative
 Craig Horton, Representative
 Peggy Shouse, Representative
 Jim Casey, Representative, Committee on Church Reform
 Audrey Rogers, Pat Ball, Al Reichelt, Liturgy Committee
 John Moore, Education and Enrichment
 Dennis McMullin, Facilities Committee
 Mark Palmer, Finance Committee
 Peggy Meyer, Social Action Committee

Overview

The past year has been a time of reflection, joy, and discernment for our community. The Parish saw a great opportunity in the Pope's invitation to participate in a global Synod. We also felt it important following a time of such radical change for our parish, to take stock of who we are as a community and who we want to become.

Synod

Much of the parish's love and efforts over the past year were directed into St. Vincent's Synodal Process.

Toward the beginning of the 2021 Parish Council Year, Amber Hendricks, as Parish Council President, presented a proposal that the parish would benefit from undergoing a process of self-reflection and discernment called "Finding Our Why". The parish had been in a time of transition due to COVID, changing leadership, and an aging demographic. It seemed that the Parish could benefit from going through a process to more clearly define our identity and purpose with the ultimate goal of "finding the people who are looking for us".

In September of 2021, Pope Francis announced that the global synod would have not only a diocesan component, but that every parish was to go through their own intraparish synodal process. This represented important news for St. Vincent's as our own Committee on Church Reform, which was formed after the 2018 Child Sexual Abuse report was released in Pennsylvania, was already focused on what a synodal process might mean for the larger church.

Conversation began regarding whether or not the parish, "Finding Our Why" process, and the St. Vincent's Synodal Process could and/or should be joined together in some way. The Parish Council felt the Synodal Process should ultimately be owned by the Committee on Church Reform due to their readiness and pre-existing wealth of knowledge regarding synods.

The Consultant Search Subcommittee for the "Finding Our Why" process, consisting of Amber Hendricks, Valerie Rolandelli, Eileen Zerhusen, Geri Sicola, and Lindsay Dierkes worked to identify potential consultants. Valerie Rolandelli and Eileen Zerhusen drafted the initial scope of work for the consultants. Jim Casey, in his role as Chair of the Committee on Church Reform joined the rest of the subcommittee as the Scope of Work was finalized and ultimately presented it to the Committee on Church Reform.

The Committee on Church Reform then engaged in its own synodal-like process of listening and sharing differing ideas to determine whether or not it would make sense to use the consultant hired for the purpose of the "Finding Our Why" process to combine the initial stage of the parish's listening process with the parish's synodal process. After much discussion, this combination of the two processes was the agreed-upon course.

Our parish synodal process was overseen with much love and attention by Audrey Rogers, who acted as St. Vincent's Project Manager; Jim Casey, Chair of the Committee on Church Reform;

Amber Hendricks, President of Parish Council and a member of the Committee on Church Reform; Colleen McCahill, Pastoral Associate; Fr. Ray Chase, Pastor; and later an editorial board consisting of the above and joined by Lindsay Dierkes, Parish Council Secretary; Pat Ball, member of Committee on Church Reform; Mary Hennigan, parish member; and Ray Heil, member of Committee on Church Reform. Updates were provided to the Committee on Church Reform as well as the Parish Council.

Our work partnered us with the Global Learning Partners, the consultants who were ultimately selected, to conduct listening sessions by means of Prayer Prompts which parish members were invited to prayerfully read and respond to, a survey, and focus groups which particularly listened to those from the LGBTQ+ community, people of color, people no longer in attendance at the parish, young adults, and young families with small children. Focus groups were also conducted with the general population of the parish regardless of inclusion in special listening sessions. Special efforts were made to hear from the homeless population, adult children of parishioners who do not attend St. Vincent's, and children who do attend St. Vincent's. Individual listening sessions were provided upon request. Thirty-two volunteers were trained by Global Learning Partners and assisted in these efforts.

As these processes were under-way, the editorial committee met and discerned themes:

- The Call to a Gospel-Inspired Inclusiveness
- The Call to Servant Leadership
- The Call to Authenticity and Humility
- The Call to be a Synodal Church

The editorial committee worked together to listen via sifting through all of the documentation from all of the different listening efforts in order to arrive at these themes and worked to appropriately include parishioners' statements in their own words to be shared via the Synodal Report with the archdiocese. The Parish's Synodal report was a labor of love born from the hopes and hard work of the entire parish, and we cannot thank enough each individual who participated. It was submitted to the Archdiocese after final revisions were made following a Town Hall which invited feedback on the draft from the parish as a whole.

Parish Council

In addition to the synodal process, much of the Council's work together this year involved discerning what it means to be a parish Council. In December, as efforts were underway to begin the Parish Synodal Process, the Parish Council considered the following questions:

- What is your experience of the Council?
- What is something the Council did in your time as a member that you are proud of?
- What is frustrating?
- What opportunities or challenges does the Council face?

The Council felt as though transparency was important, but often felt difficult to achieve due to COVID and other obstacles in terms of knowing the best ways to communicate with people. Members no longer had a specific constituency. Our St. Vincent's Culture can be difficult to explain and transmit to those who are unfamiliar with it. Representatives also expressed confusion about what their responsibilities were to the parish. This resulted in discussion as a smaller group of representatives about how to more clearly define some of these roles. While the Council is still in the process of making progress on these issues some things that have come out of these conversations have been representatives making themselves available to parishioners after mass and a parish Council orientation process that happened in May of this year for incoming representatives.

While the Council is still in the process of examining its larger relationship to itself and to the parish as a whole, we were excited to have a wealth of nominees for parish representative this year. Due to this, 2022 represents the first year we have returned to our normal Parish Council Election Process since the beginning of COVID, although we still have questions about how to best represent both Saturday and Sunday liturgies and how constituencies of the representatives can be defined.

Staff Transitions

This year represented many transitions for our Parish Staff.

Tony Lassiter joined our staff as full-time Facilities Superintendent in August 2021. Since assuming his role, Tony has advised our parish on the water-retention work that took place and may need repair, facilitated a resumption of our ability to recycle, and supported efforts on the roof and lighting projects. He serves as the staff representative to the Facility Committee.

We are saddened by the August 2022 death of Barbara Hodnett, who retired from her role as Director of Sacramental Records in June 2021, and continued to volunteer with us as long as she was able. Barbara's constant, gentle presence was part of the fabric of our community for almost 30 years. She will be deeply missed.

This year also brought the retirement of Joe Organ, his last day being the day of the celebration of our patron, St. Vincent de Paul. We were blessed to have Joe's talented musical direction and oversight for twenty-two years. After an extensive search for someone able to step into the role, we were happy to see Sherry Du accept the position and begin in late winter.

Teresa Guion, who was our parish cantor also stepped down to assume a role with the archdiocese in November of 2021.

So much transition serves as a reminder of what an impact our staff makes not only upon our experience of our building and our liturgies but also on us as individuals and a community. We are sad to say goodbye to those who have left our community this year, and we feel excited and blessed by those who have agreed to join us on our journey.

Finance

The parish's financial position remains solid. While offertory giving continues to be below historic levels, it has exceeded our budget expectations this year. At the end of last year, we were still determining what to do with the funds the parish has historically given to Ss. James and John school since it is closing. This year, the Council decided to give this money to Mother Mary Lange and City Springs Schools. We are unsure if this will continue next year, but felt that it was important to maintain continuity of giving to schools which serve primarily African-American students from low-income neighborhoods in Baltimore while we as a Parish determine how we should use these resources going forward.

	FY 2022 Operating	FY 2022 Non-operating
Total Revenues	\$942,014	\$68,000
Total Expenditures	\$665,964	

In November 2021, Chair of the Finance Committee, Mark Palmer, recognized a need to discuss cost of living adjustments due to inflation. The Council unanimously approved a 2.5% salary increase for staff, who had already received the 2% COLA adjustment in July 2021. As previously noted, our staff are integral to the functioning of our parish and of our community. It is important to our community that we value their work and make efforts to compensate them accordingly.

The parish continues to face expenses related to facility repair. Progress was made toward the initiation of the lighting project this year, although the beginning of the work was not fully underway at the end of the fiscal year. We are also aware of the possibility we need to seriously consider repairing the parish's roof, although this work would likely not begin until FY 2024. It is likely this work will require us to draw on funds from the historic trust, grants, our Inter-Parish Loan Fund balance, a capital campaign, or some combination of these.

Additional Items of Importance

In addition to the items called out above, there are many other events and people that have made the past year remarkable.

We were grateful that early in FY 2022, the staff of St. Vincent's reopened our church park.

The work of the Social Action Committee has been particularly generative over the past year. They have overseen a group made up of Peggy Cronyn, Mary Hennigan, Pat Ball, Caroline Umana, Lena Denis, and the assistance of others who have sponsored two families of Afghan refugees. The group pulled together in spite of fluid communication and direction and furnished two three apartments. Roland Park Presbyterian Church shared the cost.

Friday night dinners went through much transition this year with fluctuating attendance and concerns about security. The Council did voice its support for the group's continued ministry and several members stated how much the work of the Friday night dinners group meant to them. In June Father Ray announced he was planning to sign a contract with Blue Guard for additional security to support the group's efforts.

The Resource Exchange continues to do its outstanding work and has gained additional volunteers this year.

Finally, the *I Have a Dream* group hosted a Town Meeting with Bishop Lewandowski and representatives from the South Baltimore Community Land Trust in late June.

We celebrate with those in our community who have been celebrated! Father Ray was acknowledged this year for being joyful and justice-oriented when he was named the recipient of the Msgr. Arthur F. Valenzano Joyful Servant Award. Mary Catherine Bunting also received recognition as the 2022 Doris Johnson Community Award Winner by the archdiocesan Social Ministry Convocation. These acknowledgements make us feel joyful and proud of their recipients. They also remind us of how parishioners give not only to us, but to the community at large, working to make the world around St. Vincent's more reflective of the love of Christ.

Final Words

As I step down from my role as Parish Council President, I feel deep gratitude for this community and particularly all of those who worked for or participated in the synodal process. I am grateful to be a part of individuals with such rich spirituality who are willing to lovingly give to each other and to Godde. I look forward to seeing what Godde does with us next.

Respectfully Submitted to the Council and the Parish, September 2022
Amber Hendricks
Parish Council President 2021-22