

St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore
Parish Council Minutes
December 10, 2024

Attendees: Corinne Agren-Barnes, Barbara Bowles, Jim Casey, Fr. Ray Chase, John Gontrum, Mary Hennigan, Leah Mank, Colleen McCahill, Dan McCarthy, Ted Miles, Kevin O'Reilly, Mark Palmer, Bob Reuter, Graham Yearly

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

Catherine Mundy, via phone, offered a reflection to begin the meeting. This included a reading from Jeremiah 29:11-14 and a reminder to breathe in prayer and breathe out healing, to breathe in love and breathe out peace, to breathe in hope and to breathe out justice.

The minutes for the November 12, 2024, meeting were approved.

The agenda for this evening's meeting was approved.

Parish Council Business

Dan reported that the Governance Committee members are Dan McCarthy, Catherine Mundy, and Leah Mank. The Parish Engagement Committee members are Dan McCarthy, Corinne Agren-Barnes, and Kevin O'Reilly.

Hearing no objections and having no other nominees, Barbara Bowles is now the Secretary.

Parishioner Feedback

There was some discussion that many parishioners remain jumpy about the Seek the City process. There will be an update on this later in this meeting.

The microphone problems during Mass are continuing. This is even though the technicians checked for issues and found none. The microphones worked perfectly on Saturday but not on Sunday. The technicians will come again in hopes of resolving the problems.

Parish Report from Colleen and Fr. Ray

There were three solid applicants for the Communications position. Three interviews occurred. A hiring decision will be made soon.

Colleen and Fr. Ray have been considering bringing back a second liturgy on Sunday. Since COVID there has been only the 10:00 am Mass. In a simplified form our Masses can be thought of as a contemplative Mass at 5:00 pm on Saturday and a contemporary Mass at 10:00am on Sunday. A classic Mass would be the style for this additional liturgy. Much discussion ensued. The highlights are to change the 10 am back to 9:30; to stay with 10 am but begin the additional Mass at 11:30 or the original 11:45; a classic Mass as a part of our radical inclusivity so as to not just sustain but to grow; liturgy theme, prayer of the faithful, etc would be the same across all three Masses; get the opinion of parishioners; consult with our new Director of Family Ministry as well as our Music Director. There would be a trial period of 5 – 6 months to begin on February 2, 2025.

Finance Committee

Mark reported that a check was sent to St. Francis Academy for student support.

Offertory for first quarter of FY 2025, July 1 to September 30, has decreased by a couple of thousand dollars as compared to the same period last year. Actual amount received is \$49,000 for general offertory plus \$58,000 for restricted donations.

The attendance average has increased from 144 to 183 during the same period.

The committee will transfer some funds to the interparish loan fund.

Last FY \$300,000 was invested in the Christian Brothers Investment Fund. This was a successful investment as the amount is now \$340,000. This builds up reserves for future maintenance and emergencies. More funds may be invested in the Christian Brothers Investment Fund.

Expenses for administrative, utilities, Archdiocesan cathedraticum tax continue as anticipated.

Expenses for the facilitator for the interparish discussions with St. Leo's have been higher than anticipated.

Facilities Committee – St. Vincent's signs on the corners of the property have been paid for and installed.

Repairs and support for the dip in the church floor where the traffic cone is set is in the estimate stage.

The pending repairs will be more complicated than originally thought.

Church Reform Committee – Members are involved in both worldwide and local church situations.

Education and Enrichment Committee - Rita McMullin and Barbara Bowles are the new co-chairs.

The spring retreat is scheduled for May 30, 31, and June 1 at Priest Field Retreat Center near Charlestown, WV. This is about 80 miles from Baltimore. It will be somewhat more expensive than our previous location. It has reliable Wi-Fi and more comfortable sleeping accommodations.

There are two book possibilities for Lenten discussion and one for personal meditation.

There may be a Lent half day retreat.

Seek the City Internal Task Force

Three broad categories to be addressed are

Retention & Evangelization

Live Our Mission

To be radically inclusive

The scope of work will follow the synodal process. The committee is looking for ideas for each category. The immediate tasks are to discern concrete action steps to include people from St. V's local geographic area. An observation of committee members is that foundational committees and other ministries have had little in the way of leadership changes. It is the chronic problem of needing new blood to re-invigorate our common purposes. We are asked to reflect on these ideas and send any thoughts or questions to the committee. Committee members will be contacting various ministries and foundational committees to see how they can address these questions. Their next meeting is January 7, 2025.

Seek the City Interparish Committee

The committee which includes St. Leo, St. Vincent and the Archdiocese, is planning to launch its first parish-wide activity January 26, 2025, at 9 am. All members of both parishes will be invited to a Mass to be celebrated at St. Mary's Seminary. There is plenty of parking and childcare will be available. Following the Mass there will be an Appreciative Inquiry exercise to learn what parishioners feel is working at their parish and that should be carried forward in any new design.

John explained the Appreciative Inquiry Stages and what happens in the different stages.

Both a member from St. Leo's and Mary Hennigan are developing a rough draft of a workplan outlining the steps required for the Appreciative Inquiry process. There will be routine and regular communication to both parishes. This will be exactly the same for each parish so there will be no confusion amongst us. With this structure in place the process will proceed in a positive manner.

Questions were raised on making sure there is notification to the parishes about the Mass at St. Mary's in a timely manner. Ahead of any flyer, Mary will put out an announcement in This Week @ St. V.

Ideas for Inviting Others into Our Tent

Dan McCarthy began this discussion with the idea of doubling the size of the parish. St.'s is a vibrant community that could evangelize individually and in "marketing" aspects of our community. E.g. Alive ministry, increased number of children to attract families, lay reflections, social ministry, engage people in the geographic area. Some general discussion ensued. Individual invitations to friends is one way to attract new people. Lessons and Carols on January 11 is a great opportunity. Dan will write his ideas to go in the weekly newsletter.

Discussion About Meeting Format

Next meeting will be all ZOOM. The group did discuss the need to do hybrid meetings, Zoom and in-person, once equipment is installed and we have had training.

Action Items

1. The proposed 11:45 Mass – Dan will talk to Lindsey about possible children's liturgy at that Mass; Colleen will speak to Sherri about music at the proposed Mass.
2. Notification to Parish about the January 26 event – Mary will write up a summary of the Parish Council meeting highlighting the event and asking people to mark their calendar to save the date.
3. The next meeting, January 14, 2025, will be held on ZOOM only.

With the saying of the Lord's Prayer the meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.