

**Pastoral Council Meeting
January 20, 2009**

AGENDA

Reading/Prayer/Intentions Janice 7:00 – 7:15

November Meeting Minutes reviewal all 7:15

Strategic Planning Update – Norm 7:15 – 7:30

Caroling Event Recap – Ann 7:30 – 7:40

Review Recruitment Process for new members – Marci 7:40 – 7:55

Review and update Pastoral Council Bylaws – Norm 7:55 – 8:05

Initiate plans for September Pastoral Council Retreat – Janice 8:05 – 8:15

Review suggestion - conference calls at council mtgs – Marci 8:15 – 8:25

Pastor's report – Fr. Jack 8:25

Closing prayer.

Dorothy Stevenson

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Sent: Sunday, January 18, 2009 11:30 PM
Subject: Caroling wrap-up

Marci, Dave and I met Tuesday night (Jan 13) to review the Christmas caroling event. Janice, Don and Tom were not able to be at the meeting. I also had a phone discussion with Norm to get his feedback. I left a message for Margaret, but have not heard back from her as of yet. Everyone had similar comments. Janice, Don and Tom, if you have add'l comments to add, let me know. Dorothy, please add a copy of this email to the minutes for the next meeting. I plan to talk briefly about the caroling event at the meeting Tuesday night, but the detail are as follows:

The overall consensus was that the event was a success in regards to the goal... to give the parish the opportunity to reach out to our homebound members during the Christmas season. We had a great turnout, about 50 persons. Feedback from both the parishoners doing the caroling and from those being visited was very positive. It was perceived as a very meaningful event that engaged all ages.

Getting around to the homes in groups went well. Nice job on the directions Tom. In fact, more homes could have been visited. We had scheduled each of the 4 groups to visit 3 homes. A few persons canceled at the last minute. Each group could have done maybe one or two more homes.

The area that could have been improved upon was the fellowship afterward. A large part of this was due to the fact that Janice was sick, which of course happens. In the future we need to have more persons involved in the set-up and execution of the fellowship afterward for just such a reason. There was confusion around the pizza ordering/paying and scrambling to set-up the cafeteria. All agreed more volunteers to stay back and help with set-up would have remedied the situation. Also, the possibility of adding some opportunities for sharing to the fellowship afterward was discussed, such as having parishioners share their thoughts/feelings about the evening or in general to share fond Christmas traditions/memories, etc.

Date/Time It was agreed that this or any other pastoral council event in the future needs to have more than just 4 of the members in attendance. This needs to be considered before picking the date. Doing a future caroling event during the day light hours would be very helpful for driving in groups and getting around on icy roads/sidewalks. Marci's group had one lady slip and fall. This also brings up the issue of having liability waivers signed in the future.

We need to enlist more volunteers earlier in the process. More help is needed.

During the send off after mass, it was agreed that time as a group to sing and warm up our voices should be added, followed by a prayer/blessing before going out.

Given the unique scope of this event, it went well. We know now what works and what needs to be improved. Thank you to each of you who gave of your own talents to make this a special evening!

Ann

Pastoral Council Minutes—St. Vincent de Paul
January 20, 2009

Members present: Ann Bergman, Janice Gabrick, Fr. Jack Long, Adrianna Matzke, Tom McMullen, Norm Olson, Don Ritter, and Marci Siers. Members absent: David Duffy, Rose Kahnke, and Fr. Mark Wehmann. Guest: Nancy Moorman. Recorder: Dorothy Stevenson.

Prayer: Janice led the Bible reading, and prayers for intentions followed. Marci will do the reading in February.

Administration: The minutes of the November meeting were approved as written.

Agenda Items:

- **Strategic Planning Update.** Nancy gave a synopsis of the committee's work so far on Critical Issues and handed out a detailed update covering the issues which have been developed, as well as a tentative timetable for the balance of the Committee's work. (Copies of her reports are attached to the original copy of these minutes.) Discussion followed on the issues they have defined, as well as on others that might be added. **Nancy asked for feedback from Council members on the report no later than January 28, 2009.** Staff will also be asked for feedback.

The sub-teams working on the three aspects of the study (Core Values, Mission and Vision, and Structure) expect to have drafts finalized by February 25. The drafts will be ready for Council and staff review prior to Town Hall meetings, which are tentatively scheduled for March 8 and 10. Other Town Hall meetings are tentatively set for May 31 and June 3, and they will be followed by a review process with staff, Pastoral Council and Fr. Long. A final report to the Council is expected to be ready on June 24, 2009.

- ***Caroling Event Recap:** Ann reported that the event drew about 50 volunteers and was very well received by the visited parishioners. Discussion of what was learned about how the event should be handled followed, and appreciation was expressed for the good work of the committee. There was general agreement that the event should be repeated next year.
- ***Recruitment Process for New Members:** It was decided that since there are presently eligible Council members who would like to serve a second term, there will be no openings to be filled by new members. Thus, no discernment process will be held this year. Jeff Bjustrom's resignation from the Council did open one spot, and former member Nancy Moorman agreed to take his place. She will also act as intermediary with the Strategic Planning Committee.
- **Update Council Bylaws:** Norm passed out copies of the current bylaws (copy attached to original copy of these minutes) and asked Council members to look them over with an eye to possible changes or improvements. **This will be an agenda item at the February meeting.**
- **September Pastoral Council Retreat:** Janice asked for ideas on what the theme for the retreat should be, and after discussion it was decided that the St. Paul would be the theme. Names of possible facilitators were discussed, and Janice will pursue that. She will also make arrangements at St Therese at Oxbow Lake, the same place as last year. The retreat will follow the same format as prior years, and the agreed upon date is Saturday, September 26, 2009.
- **Other:** The possibility having conference call telephone participation at meetings for a member who is out of town but wishes to participate was discussed. Norm will check on how it could be handled and what the cost would be.
- **Pastor's Report:** Kathleen O'Hara has been recognized as Principal of the Year for the North Central Region, which includes Minnesota and several other states. She and the other eleven recognized will be honored at a dinner, and one of them will be selected as the National Principal of the Year.

There will be a Wednesday evening mass at 7:00 p.m. during Lent.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with a prayer. *See corrections in February minutes.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Dorothy Stevenson

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Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2009 9:54 PM
Subject: O'Hara staff report

Here's the update from my meeting with Kathleen O'Hara...

The big event for December is Catholic Schools Week which runs January 25 - 31. Saint VDP school will be participating in many ways. There will be an open house at the school after all masses January 24 and 25th. School children will also be handing out bookmarks to all parishioners after masses that weekend. Two distinguished Saint VDP school grads will be speaking after mass that weekend, one after the 9:00 and the other after the 11:00. The speakers are a surprise. Wed, Jan 28 is grandparents day at school with coffee and cookies after the morning mass for the students and their grandparents. The students will also be celebrating with skating at Cheap Skate during that week. A family dance on Saturday night, Jan 31 wraps up the week.

The budgeting process is beginning for next school year. They are looking at needing to raise tuition, even though this is tough to do in the current economy. She mentioned there are more families in need of financial assistance this year and more kids praying for parents' jobs.

The Kindergarten classes have begun attending the Wednesday morning school masses. They switch off, every other week. This is the first year of 2 full day kindergartens, so now there is time in the day for mass attendance. It is going well.

In case you haven't heard, I also want to add that Kathleen is one of 12 principals from across the United States to receive the 2009 NCEA Distinguished Principal Award. As a school parent, I couldn't be more pleased with the Catholic education my kids are receiving. Kathleen's beautiful and gracious spirit certainly permeates the school!

See you on Tuesday.

Ann Bergmann

E-mail message checked by Spyware Doctor (6.0.0.386)
Database version: 5.11550
<http://www.pctools.com/en/spyware-doctor-antivirus/>

Date Presented: January 20, 2009

St. Vincent de Paul

Critical Issues

Introduction

Faith is about the meaning of life, including the secular dimension. To the extent our vision includes a reawakening of spiritual energy in those who feel less connected with organized faith, our work is to better understand their issues and concerns and what we might be able to do to help our parishioners integrate faith into their daily lives.

Toward this end, the strategic planning work, conducted by the SVDP Strategic Planning Task Group (SPTG) has included a parish survey (conducted May 2008), interviews with the parish staff, the Pastoral Council and parish ministries. We have conducted Town Hall meetings (in November 2008), inviting the parishioners to take part and provide feedback, opened the parish website up to receive parishioner feedback and have provided periodic bulletin and a newsletter update.

Attached is a culmination of the work analyzed thus far in the form of Critical Issues. The Critical Issues are in draft form until we hear feedback from all stakeholders who wish to and are able to provide it.

We may have one additional Critical Issue which is still taking time to be formulated, one on parishioner attendance, and/or non-attending parishioners.

The SPTG would like to have Pastoral Council feedback on the Critical Issues on or before Wednesday, January 28, 2009. We are also asking the staff for feedback. Feedback can be sent to Norm Olafson via e-mail and this feedback can then be shared with the entire SPTG.

Core Values, Mission, Vision & Structure

Additional Work in Progress

Sub-teams of the SPTG have been split to work on:

Core Values (Steve Seibert, Bob Wenner & Andrew Rem),

Mission & Vision (Mike Steeves, Jackie Hildreth, Bob Dubiel & Jim Carney)

Structure (Norm Olafson, Harold Johnson & Jerry Roth.)

Drafts are expected to be completed & finalized by Feb. 25, & prepared to be presented to the parish at Town Hall meetings tentatively scheduled for Sun. Mar. 8 and Wed. Mar. 10, 2009. Prior to the Town Hall meetings we will have drafts for the Pastoral Council and staff to review. We plan to finalize the Core Values, Vision, Mission and Structure by Mar. 25, after incorporating staff, Pastoral Council and Fr. Long's comments and the Town Hall meeting results. Following that, the SPTG will work on Over Arching Goals beginning in April. We plan to have another set of Town Hall meetings which are tentatively scheduled for Sun., May 31, and Wed. June 3. After a review process with staff, Pastoral Council and Fr. Long, we expect to issue our final report to the Pastoral Council on June 24, 2009.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Following December 17, 2008 Strategic Planning meeting
(With bullet points added January 8, 2009)

YOUTH

We recognize the difficulty engaging our youth in ways that nourish their life-long faith development. The difficulties include competition for young people's time and attention, parental prioritization, faith foundation and lack of bonds with others in the church. Overcoming these challenges must include focusing special attention and energy on our youth.

- Parish Survey – Number 1 area for growth; 2nd top priority for the future; one of the top 5 strengths of the parish that should be built upon.
- November 2008 Town Hall Meetings – Youth seem to have a “lack of bond with others” in the parish.
- Star Tribune Nov. 9, 2008 article, “Here’s the steeple; open the door, and where are the young people?” by Jeff Strickler.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Our Parishioners have stated that one of our highest priorities is to enhance the existing Social Justice Program in order for us to become more like our patron, St. Vincent de Paul. We, as a parish, must articulate Jesus' message of our obligation as Catholics to minister to our neighbors. We must also provide our parishioners with a broader variety of opportunities and methods to serve our local community and the world.

- Source: Parish Survey – Question 5 – Top Three Priorities for the Future - Highest response
- Source: November 2008 Town Hall Meetings – Requests for greater variety of opportunities, opportunities for families, etc.
- Source: Interview and SWOC from Okey Anyanwu

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Building on our gifts as a large Parish, we want to be the best at attracting, welcoming, encouraging and engaging members to establish faith filled relationships within the St. Vincent de Paul community.

- Received most comments at November 2008 Town Hall meetings.
- “Large size of parish” and sense of anonymity and lack of connection prominent in Parish Survey.
- Engaging new members not seen as strength – based on Parish Survey and remarks by staff.
- Data showing percentages for parishioner involvement, parishioner giving and mass attendance indicates that improvements can be made.
- Parishioner relationship and engagement with the parish is weakening.

MINISTRY FOR ALL AGES

Our Catholic faith is a life-long journey. We as a Parish need to develop integrated programs that will nourish our life long faith development. These programs should provide a seamless transition throughout all the stages of our faith journey.

- Source: School SWOC Kathleen O'Hara - Further communication regarding curriculum would ensure greater consistency of what is taught and time spent on each subject.
- Source: Faith Formation SWOC - A large parish needs good coordination of new and existing programs.
- Source: Development SWOC - Lack of leadership and coordination to organize and execute focused development efforts.
- Source: November 2008 Town Hall Meeting - Ministries need to be linked to reinforce the Catholic Faith. Provide opportunities for faith development in coordination with other events.
- Source: Parish Survey - 30% of survey respondents noted Ministries/Programs for all ages as a weakness and almost 50% as a concern.

REINFORCING THE CATHOLIC FAITH

Catholics need to understand and be able to articulate our faith. This is an education and communication issue with an ideal outcome that all St. Vincent de Paul Church members would have a thorough understanding of, and appreciation for, Catholic life, culture, theology and tradition. This would enable us to grow in our own faith, providing us the ability to confidently pass on our faith to our children and share it with the broader community.

- Parish survey, supported by demographic trends, indicates weakening of strong catholic identity, loss of parishioners to other religions, and lack of involvement of young people after confirmation. Supported by comments at November 2008 Town Hall meetings.
- Year after Year Faith Formation and School staff cite largest teaching issue as lack of knowledge and apparent support for the Catholic faith by parents. Supported by comments at November 2008 Town Hall meetings.
- Media, entertainment and scholarly depictions of the Catholic faith and Catholic Church are negative and critical; disproportionate to history and reality.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A strong parish requires strong leadership. This structure must incorporate pastor, staff and lay leadership. As God has entrusted each of us with gifts, we are called to use these talents to bring about the kingdom of God. The parish should provide a leadership structure and support program that encourages members to utilize their gifts as parish leaders.

- Source: Parish Survey – Question 4: Areas for Growth; Leadership/Management listed 3rd highest.
- Source: November 2008 Town Hall Feedback – Must develop lay leaders; need basic orientation, job descriptions, and training.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is a key success factor in parish operations and ministries. As a large parish, St. Vincent de Paul will need a comprehensive communication strategy to effectively link the parish, its ministries, the parishioners and local community. The parish presently has multiple communication methods, including the weekly bulletin, newsletters, and the parish website. As we move forward a strategy must be developed to achieve three key outcomes:

1. Define information to be shared with parishioners and other parish stakeholders.
 2. Develop, implement and evaluate collaborative methods to disseminate defined information.
 3. Develop, implement and evaluate formal and informal processes for gathering feedback from parishioners and other parish stakeholders.
- Source: SWOC Analyses from All Ministries - Second most cited weakness.
 - Source: November 2008 Town Hall meetings - Numerous references to both Weakness and Opportunity.
 - Source: Good business practices.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The most consistent and perhaps most important issue as voiced by clergy, Faith Formation and School staff, is that parents have not appropriated the Catholic faith for themselves, and are therefore not accepting their naturally influential role as primary model and educator of faith for their children. Sacraments are perceived by families more as cultural events, family expectations and milestones, rather than faith events to help the child grow closer to God and to help them through life. Children therefore do not consider their faith as important and integral to life. Parents drop their children at Faith Formation or pay for parochial school, but do not attend mass themselves. Confirmation by many parents and, therefore, their children, seems perceived as a graduation, and fundamentally a break from connection to the Church. Much of this issue seems affected by the busyness and materialism of everyday life causing faith practice and education to be low priorities. By lacking the will and sense of priority to bring faith into family life, parents more and more lack the confidence to do so. This effect is becoming deep and through generations. Any long term solution may very well require a rather profound change in perception – or a paradigm shift – in our Church, as well as with parents.

- Source: Faith Formation SWOC - There is a lack of family involvement, mass attendance, and commitment to faith formation on the part of a large number of parishioners. There is often poor parental follow through with the lesson review and prayer instruction.
- Source: November 2008 Town Hall Meeting – Frustration with parents – not a priority – don't attend worship.
- Source: Development SWOC – Knowledge and security in the Catholic Church is weakening. Providing support in new ways for people to feel renewed in worship and the sacraments, a stronger identity with the Catholic faith and St. Vincent's parish as a community, and drawing more parents into learning their faith so that they become primary teachers of their children, are all critical in this regard.
- Source: Parish Survey - 15% of Parish Survey respondents said making church home should be top 3 priorities for future.

GROWTH

Growth, in this case, pertains to growth in parishioners, which could have a cross impact on the number of masses, number of priests required, staff and ministries, school, facilities and finance. There are two sub-issues:

1. SVDP and neighboring parishes have had virtually no parishioner growth during the period 2001 through 2007. Is this a persistent trend into the future, and what is the cause?
2. If SVDP resumes parishioner growth commensurate with the increasing population growth, it will have a 4,579 mass attendance in 2010; 5,231 in 2015 and 5,991 in 2020.
 - Numerous references to single priest, parishioner growth, parishioner attendance, and facilities in parish survey and SWOCS.
 - Local cities demographic and planning data summarized by Andrew Rem.
 - Archdiocesan demographic analysis prepared by Team Works International, dated Aug. 4, 2008.
 - SVDP Parish Profile dated February 27, 2008.
 - Data on six neighboring parishes by Jim Lundholm (Archdiocese) dated Jan. 23, 2008.