



The Society Scoop

Program Updates

Housing Assistance

In late January, the St. Louis Post Dispatch reported that St. Louis City and County landlords had filed nearly 5,000 evictions since the pandemic began. While some have been dismissed or settled, many are on hold waiting for the eviction moratorium issued by the CDC to expire on March 31, 2021. When that happens, there is concern that many of our Neighbors will be evicted.

Vincentians recognize the plight of our Neighbors and the lack of work due to the pandemic. Our foundation of faith, friendship, and service leads us to help Neighbors the best of our ability. Our Conferences are successfully assisting many with the support of twinning and help from District and Council. As we move forward and the pandemic continues, it is important that we continue to help each other, that we pray for each other and for our Neighbors.

When sending a request for rent to the Council Office, please:

- Email your request to RequestCouncilProgram@svdpstl.org
- Send clear copies of the Council Program Form, the signed lease, and W9
- Ask for a payment ledger when significant back rent is due
- Include the amount your Conference can contribute.

Remember, the Council Office can match the amount contributed and/or collected by your Conference.

Resource for Landlords: ERAP

The Missouri Emergency Rental Arrears Program (ERAP) provides financial support for landlords and renters who are struggling due to the COVID-19 emergency in the State of Missouri. The program will reimburse landlords for past due rent payments (rental arrears) for the period beginning April 1, 2020.

Applications must be completed and submitted by landlords in collaboration with their tenant. A one-time payment of up to six (6) months of rental arrears will be made to the landlord on the tenant's behalf. For eligibility guidelines and application information, visit: [Emergency Rental Arrears Program | Program Overview | MO Housing Resources](#)

Resource for Renters in the F, W, NW, and SE Districts

The State Assistance for Housing Relief program (SAFHR) provides rent and utility assistance for households who have been impacted by COVID-19. Eligible tenants can apply for financial assistance to be paid directly to their landlord or utility provider. Financial assistance includes rental arrears for the period beginning April 2020, up to 3 months of forward rent, and utility assistance for the period beginning April 2020. The tenant must not owe rental arrears beyond any requested rental arrears through this program in order to apply for forward rent assistance. In order to receive utility assistance, tenants must have an invoice from the utility provider to support the request. Total assistance any tenant receives through SAFHR cannot exceed 12 months of combined rent and utility assistance. Applications will open in February. For eligibility guidelines and more information, please visit: [State Assistance for Housing Relief | MO Housing Resources](#)

Rapid Rehousing Pilot

Our pilot program for rapid rehousing in St. Louis City and County began on January 11. For Conferences to refer Neighbors to the program, they were required to attend a training on the program. To date, we have held 5 trainings and over 130 Vincentians from over 70 Conferences have participated. We have had 4 referrals to date. We will continue to provide updates on our progress as we move forward.

Introducing Fr. Mark Pranaitis!

Please welcome the new spiritual director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis, Fr. Mark Pranaitis!

Father Mark. Pranaitis, C.M., PhD, was born and raised in New Jersey until his family moved to Lakewood, Colorado, in 1971. He



has been a Vincentian priest for 27 years. Prior to ordination, Mark sold telecom services for an IBM-owned company as well as residential real estate.

In the Vincentian tradition, Fr. Mark explores the mystery of the presence of Christ in those who live in poverty and builds bridges between them and those who do not live in poverty. He enjoys exploring how holiness is expressed in and through the normal routines of life and work.

When he is not at the office, Fr. Mark enjoys time at the gym, cycling, cooking, reading the great American authors, and old-fashioned letter-writing.

A Letter from Fr. Mark

The earth has grown cold. It is for us Catholics to revive the vital beat to restore it. It is for us to begin over again the great work of regeneration. Let us try to probe the wounds of suffering men and women and pour in oil, soothing their ears with words of consolation and peace.

--Frédéric Ozanam

Dear Vincentians,

During March and April 2020, when mask-wearing was new and I couldn't go the gym, I studied the 1918 pandemic. I wanted to learn how people managed on a day-to-day basis. We have computers, the internet, Netflix and YouTube. What did they do all day? Also, how did people's hearts change because of the suffering that surrounded them?

I never found a satisfactory answer to the first question. What I learned about the second disheartened me. If a person were charitably disposed to people living in poverty prior to the pandemic, it reinforced their belief. If they believed that poverty followed from sinfulness, laziness and a lack of moral character, they continued to believe that.

I found this stunning. People were suffering. Death was happening in one's house, next door, and down the block. How is it that hearts didn't change?

I feel the Spirit in Frédéric's word "regenerate." When this is over, what will Catholics, Vincentians build? Will it be a more loving world? Does the Gospel call us to anything less? What will that loving world look like?

Fr. Mark Pranaitis

From Elizabeth M. Barbieri, Board President



An Invitation

From Fr. Mark Pranaitis and Elizabeth Barbieri

**Please join us for a Vincentian Family Mass
Thursday, February 18, 2021
12:10 p.m.**

**St. Vincent de Paul Church
1408 S 10th St, St. Louis, MO 63104**

We look forward to welcoming you and
starting the New Year with a monthly Mass
for all Vincentians in the Archdiocese.

The church is very large to allow for a social
distancing capacity of 88 people.

Mass will also be available via streaming at
www.stvstl.org

Celebrant:

**Fr. Mark Pranaitis, CM
Spiritual Director of St. Vincent de Paul,
Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis**

Formation Events

Ozanam Orientation

Weds., March 10

1:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.

To be held virtually via Zoom.

2021 Spring Assembly

Sat., April 24, 2021

9:00 a.m. - noon

To be held virtually via Zoom.

[Register Here](#)

[Register Here](#)

Lenten Retreat

You are cordially invited to join us for our Lenten retreat. The retreat will be held on Zoom on Saturday, February 20 from 9:00-11:00am. The retreat will provide opportunities to learn, reflect, share, and pray.

[Click Here to Register!](#)



We look forward to seeing you!

Here are a few Vincentian testimonials from our 2020 Advent Retreat:

“Excellent retreat!!! The pace was perfect and the presentations and discussions were uplifting and calming. Thank you so very much for the planning and work involved in bringing us together.”

“The retreat this morning was wonderful. The topics and presenters were wonderful. I really appreciate the time and thought that you and others have invested in this exceptional retreat. I am grateful.”

“Thank you so much for leading and coordinating the terrific retreat on Saturday! It was a great gift to me, and to many!”

Mission Moments

The Right Place at the Right Time

During a trip to the gas station, Varrietta Anthony from the Council Office overheard a Neighbor in Need. The gas station cashier was saying that she



didn't know how she would pay her electric bill, especially with her husband in the hospital. She was in tears—her husband had COVID and was on a ventilator. Varrietta asked for her contact information and said she would find someone to help in the St. Ann conference. They were able to help her utilities.

Varrietta ran into this woman on another occasion and asked how she was doing. Unfortunately, this Neighbor in Need lost her husband to COVID this past November. But, as she told Varrietta, “The day you came in here, I didn’t have hope. But I found hope in SVdP, even during a tragic experience.”

By God’s perfect timing, Varrietta and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul shined the light of hope into a life that had grown dark with hopelessness.

Thank you Vincentians for always being there for our Neighbors in Need.

Doll Makeovers Making a Difference

What can be done for the old, well-loved dolls that end up in the donation bin?

At the St. Charles location, Vincentian Jane Petzel found a way to give them a second chance.

Old dolls were often messy, with tangled hair and missing or mismatched clothes. Sometimes the only solution was to throw out the dolls—but Jane saw an opportunity. She cleans them, brushes them, tidies up their clothes, and then creates unique packaging for them, giving them names like “Lunch Date Barbie” or “Western Barbie.” The dolls are a hit, and fly off the shelves, usually going for \$5-12 per doll.



Giving these dolls a makeover is a great way to recycle them and give them another life – but it’s hard work to do alone. Jane’s husband, Mark Petzel, sees an opportunity for bringing outside volunteers into the mix for those conferences who don’t have store volunteers. Through a connection in St. Joe Cottleville, a troop of girl scouts helped clean and makeover the dolls, while Jane finished the packaging.

Mark suggests that outside volunteers—girl scouts or even senior ladies—could turn their volunteer hours into credits for the store that could be used to help our Neighbors in Need.

We could all benefit from Mark's ideas and Jane's creativity. Let's keep our eyes open for chances to use our unique gifts to help our Neighbors in Need.

Christ's Love in Cold Weather

With the weather getting colder and colder, there are lots of ways we can reach out to help our Neighbors in Need. Donations of coats and other winter clothing as well as financial donations to help pay heating bills can make an enormous difference this winter.

Taking care of our Neighbors in the winter has been a part of our mission since the Society began. When a young Frédéric Ozanam was asked to put his faith into action, he first did so by sharing his supply of firewood with a widow in need. And even in 2021, Vincentian Tony Aiello in the Lesterville area helps his community stave off the cold the same way: by running a firewood program. The St. Vincent Conference in Perryville and the Southeast District pay Tony for his help, allowing for folks in Lesterville to get their firewood for free. For many people in rural areas, firewood is still an essential resource.

Tony's work is proof that, if we keep our eyes open, we can find that serving our neighbors can be done in many surprising ways.



ServWare



Click the
image to
the right to
listen to

Vincentian Dave Schopp from St. Anselm Conference talk about how ServWare makes helping Neighbors in

Need more efficient!

For more information on getting
ServWare for your Conference, contact
Tom Matoushek at tomm@svdpstl.org



From the Voice of the Poor Committee

VOICE
of the POOR

Words to Live by From the Voice of the Poor Committee

“Unity is above all a gift, it is a grace to be requested through prayer. Each one of us needs it. In fact, we know that we are incapable of preserving unity even within ourselves... The root of so many divisions that surround us – between people, in families, in society, between nations and even between believers – it is inside us... Therefore, the solution to these divisions is not to oppose someone, because discord generates more discord. The true remedy begins by asking God for peace, reconciliation, unity.”

~ Pope Francis

Reminder... Rosary Tonight!



Join us --
SVdP St. Louis
Rosary Wednesday
8 p.m. tonight!
via Zoom.

[Click Here to Join](#)

Meeting ID: 989 8066 7271 **Passcode:** vincent
or dial in: (312) 626-6799

Keep in Your Prayers

Please Pray for The Sick:

Bob Hook
St. Anthony, High Ridge

Rosie Peebles
Florissant Thrift Store

Please Pray for The Deceased:

Wayne Beugg
St. Anselm

Al Book
Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Louis

Art Brinkmeyer
St. Martin of Tours

Mary Dekeuster
St. Robert Bellarmine

Mack Ford
*Former North Central District President
and former Conference President,
Sts. Teresa and Bridget*

John Mosher
St. Angela Merici

Mary Lou Schulte
Immaculate Conception, Old Monroe

To add a name to the list contact Steve
Rupp at steve@svdpstl.org
or (314) 881-6018



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul
St. Louis | [svdpstlouis.org]

