



Conference News and Notes
for Wednesday, March 8, 2023
Sent to all Vincentians & Staff

Vincentian Reflection for the Third Sunday of Lent
March 12, 2023

Gospel: (John 4:5-42) Jesus came to a town of Samaria ...Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ...The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? ...Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."...Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."..."My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to finish His work."

Reflection: Thirst is a metaphor for conversion. It captures the dynamic of encountering Christ, hearing his voice, seeing our lives for what they are, and then turning to Christ who is the source of our thirst. Christ is the "gift of God" who gives us the "living water" of his own preaching, dying, and rising. All we need do is drink deeply and we, too, will never thirst again. It is then that we will be able to say with Jesus, "My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to finish His work." (*Living Liturgy*, p.72)

Vincentian Meditation: "A sure way for a Christian to grow rapidly in holiness is a conscientious effort to carry out God's will in all circumstances....Each one should show a great eagerness in that sort of openness to God's will which Christ and the saints developed so carefully." St. Vincent de Paul

Vincent always discerned every action carefully to be sure that it was rooted in God's will. He studied the Gospels, asked for advice, and prayed for God's light and strength.

**Do we do the same, personally and in unity as Conference members?
What is your sense of God's will - today, in the midst of our Lenten journey - as a Vincentian?**

+++++

Your Vincentian Services team wishes you and those you love best a blessed Lenten season. We are eager to support your Conference, your good works, & you in this first Lent of our *Beacons of Light* journey.

Your Formation and Training Opportunities & Tips

Vincentian Retreat 2023



Beauty of the Home Visit

Saturday, March 11
8 AM to Noon
St. Francis Xavier Parish

Key Speaker: Tim Williams, SVDP National Formation Director

Our Annual Vincentian Retreat is this Saturday!

Last Call – Register Today! Our Annual Vincentian Retreat, led by Tim Williams – SVDP National Formation Director (back by popular demand; some of you will recall Tim facilitated an engaging retreat for us last year), will truly refresh our own Vincentian calling and the way we see the **Home Visit this Saturday, 3/11, 8am-noon at St. Xavier (downtown)**. Whether you make home visits yourself, or you have another role in your Conference, this retreat promises an opportunity to truly appreciate our Vincentian heritage, hear and feel the impact of the Home Visit on our fellow Vincentians, see the face of Christ in one another, and prayerfully discern how relevant the Home Visit is today.

Great News: We still have space for you. Signup Today, using this link:

<https://form.jotform.com/230394151480047>

Registrations are due by tomorrow (Thursday, 3/9), 4pm!

Downtown parking concerns? We have a parking guide available to show you cost-effective parking locations in the area - just click here:

<https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Annual-Vincentian-Retreat-instructions-2023.pdf>. And you can carpool with fellow Vincentians and deepen your friendship!

+++++

Our Annual Conference Presidents Meeting:

This year's Conference Presidents Meeting will be **Saturday, April 29, 9:30am - 1pm, at St. Cecilia** in Oakley. **If you are a Conference President, please save this date** as a registration link will be coming to you shortly from your Vincentian Support team. Please make sure your Conference's voice is heard and represented...and you seize this opportunity to share perspective with your fellow Conference Presidents.

+++++

Please watch for a **Conferences Communication Guide** available on the Members page of our website. This guide summarizes insight on communicating, increasing awareness, and nurturing participation in our mission within your parish as harvested from our *Growing Conferences Through Communication* workshop co-facilitated last week.

+++++

***Changes Happening Now to SNAP Benefits:
Anticipating the Impact Upon our Neighbors - and our Food Assistance***

During the COVID pandemic, neighbors receiving SNAP benefits had a second emergency allotment benefit loaded on their card, subsidized by COVID funding. This federal emergency funding is about to expire. **Beginning this month (March 2023)**, neighbors will only receive the amount of their first benefit. This comes at a time when our food pantry network is already experiencing far greater demand relative to prior quarter or prior year, and food inflation is the highest it has been since 1979.

Every household that receives SNAP benefits will be affected. The minimum reduction amount is \$95, and many families will see a significantly higher reduction (depending on whether they were receiving the maximum benefit amount prior to COVID). In addition, many households did not send in their proof of deductions (such as rent, childcare, etc) during the emergency allotment period. Please share this information with neighbors and help them plan for the reduction of benefits. Ask them whether they've submitted proof of deductions to JFS, and encourage them to use the Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal to do so. If they need assistance using the portal, they can reach out to a certified SNAP benefit assister at the Freestore Food Bank, 513.381.7627. Click [here](#) for a flyer with additional resources.

The Center for Community Solutions recently hosted a webinar entitled, "Helping Ohioans Prepare for the end of SNAP Emergency Allotments". You can find a recording of this webinar [here](#) . It is a little over an hour long and well worth the time if you're looking for a better understanding of these upcoming changes and how our neighbors will be affected.

And So Your Conference has this Opportunity for Action:



***Council-Wide Food & Personal Care Drive to Fuel our Pantries Network
Are You In?***

We have experienced a record-breaking year in our network of food pantries, with more people turning to us for help than ever before. And with SNAP benefits poised for a reduction beginning this month (see above), we anticipate even greater need among our neighbors.

Please accept this invitation - Would you and your Conference consider assisting us in fighting food insecurity by hosting a food or hygiene drive this season? If your Conference has a food pantry within our network, all items collected would stay within your pantry. If your Conference does not have a food pantry, all items will go toward stocking the shelves within the Catino Choice Food Pantry in our Neyer Outreach Center (NOC). We will provide the needed materials to help make your drive a success, such as collection barrels and promotional material. If this interests you and your Conference, please [click here](#) to sign up and join fellow Conferences throughout our Council. You can reach out to drives@svdpcincinnati.org with any questions or concerns.

On behalf of your/our neighbors, thank you!

The Latest from our Becky Catino Women's Stability, Employment, and Empowerment Program



Round table discussions recently kicked off for our Becky Catino Women's Stability, Employment, and Empowerment Program. The first-round table discussion featured the topic of how social justice affects us in the workplace and along our career pathways. Participants used a Social Justice Compass to explore what causes motivate them the most. The program is always looking for people to help with the monthly events for our current participants. If you want to know more, please contact Tara at catino@svdpcincinnati.org.

Medicaid Unwinding - New Developments - How You Can Help

We have recently highlighted impending changes in the administration of Medicaid. Our State of Ohio has announced an aggressive timeline beginning this April - next month! - with rolling Medicaid cancellations on May 1, June 1, & July 1. It is vital that our neighbors currently on Medicaid benefits act now to address their medical coverage needs. Please see and share our flyer available at this link:

<https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Medicaid-Flyer.pdf>

Our Thrift Stores Are Humming and You Can Help Keep Them This Way!

Just in case you haven't seen or heard: Our thrift stores are generating sales at a record pace...and honoring more vouchers for our neighbors. So this is great news for at least 4 good reasons:

- Our neighbors experiencing need in this current inflationary economy are receiving welcome relief as they redeem the vouchers you are writing
- Our thrift stores are delivering much-needed value for their/our customers
- Our thrift stores are gainfully employing more good people intent on supporting themselves and their loved ones
- Our thrift stores are generating the financial means that subsidize other forms of assistance you/we extend each day

So now our thrift stores need our in-kind donations to keep their racks stocked!

Specifically, our thrift stores are appealing for clothing, shoes, and household goods.

How about a little (early) spring cleaning to give your idle items a new home with someone who will put them to good use?

How about a Bundle Sunday in your parish?

Know a Neighbor Who Could Use a Motorized Hospital Bed?

Vincentian Sharon Weckel of Our Lord Christ the King Conference (Mt Lookout) has nurtured a loving friendship with a resident at Marjorie P Lee Retirement Community on Shaw Ave in Hyde Park. This resident personally owns a high-quality, motorized hospital bed which she would like to donate to a neighbor as she transitions to deeper care at this facility. Please understand that this bed would need to be disassembled and transported to its new "home". If your Conference or you know of someone who would value the blessing of this bed, please contact Sharon Weckel at 513.235.1706 or sweckel223@gmail.com . Please, only Vincentians should use this personal contact info. We extend our deep gratitude to Sharon & the members of Our Lord Christ the King Conference for their Eucharistic Ministry, their care for our neighbors, and sharing this opportunity with their fellow Vincentians.

Beacons of Light Progress

You can find our Archdiocese's February 2023 *Beacons of Light* Parish Vitality 6 Month Report, and other *Beacons of Light* resources, by exploring at this link:

[Beacons of Light](#) .

+++++

Our Conference Presidents and our Vincentian Services team are actively engaging in each of the 24 Families of Parishes within our District Council's Hamilton County footprint and we have now begun meeting with our Pastors in these Families of Parishes. Our goal is to further nurture our collaboration in *Beacons of Light* in each of the respective Families. The Pastors' response thus far has been extremely supportive of our mission and our good works. **We are Love in Action!**

+++++

Our Cincinnati District Council's Vincentian membership roster is growing - which is to say **we have Conferences who are actively and successfully attracting new members** to their Conference and this Vincentian vocation. Is your Conference welcoming new members? You can do this!

+++++

Do you have *Beacons of Light* progress to share from your Conference & Family of Parishes? We'd love to hear and share in this *Conference News and Notes* each week. You might just inspire others as we seize this opportunity to advance how we live our Vincentian vocation, engage our neighbors, transform our community, and evolve our Archdiocese. Please contact Tom Roberts at troberts@svdpcincinnati.org or 513.345.4910.

CMS Tips, Tricks, & Transformations

CMS is accessible from your web browser, using <https://cincinnati.cmssvdp.org> and nothing else.

+++++

The recording of our last CMS Open Q&A session (Thursday, 3/2/2023) is now available in the CMS Webinars section of the [CMS Support Page](#) on our website.

+++++

Reminder – Please address your case data corrections for SVDP store vouchers and resolve any open/abandoned cases.

+++++

Our St Margaret of Cortona/St John Conference (Madisonville) is poised to train & implement CMS - another step closer to full utilization & data unity in our Cincinnati District Council.

+++++

CMS Statistics are available for you under the members area of our SVDP-Cincinnati website. Direct link to the page is <https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/conferences-members/member-support/> ; then scroll down and click on “CMS Statistics – Conferences”. If you are not familiar with accessing and navigating the SVDP website, please contact your Conferences Support Team.

Free Income Tax Preparation Services Available

It is tax filing season. And for many of our neighbors feeling the financial squeeze, a tax refund is at least a short-term solution within their reach...sometimes with a little help. **Free Tax Prep**, an initiative of United Way of Greater Cincinnati funded by the IRS, provides free (federal & state) income tax preparation and filing services for low to moderate income neighbors residing in our Greater Cincinnati area. These same services are available to neighbors on fixed incomes, neighbors with disabilities, and those with limited English language abilities. To learn more, explore United Way's webpage by clicking [here](#) , or calling United Way of Greater Cincinnati's 211 helpline or 513.762.7900. Please also note that United Way is seeking volunteers to help provide this service. More information about volunteering is available at this link to their [website](#) page.

More Resources for our Conferences and Neighbors

Conference Assistance Fund (CAF)

Our February activity:

- We received **182** fresh applications
- We approved **167** applications, fully extended our February CAF funding provisions of approx \$75,000 (including carryover); **4** were declined and **6** withdrawn

Our March activity (1 week in):

- We've received **49** fresh applications
- We've approved **41** applications; **1** has been withdrawn and **0** declined
- We have **28** applications currently in process

You can check on the status of CAF applications you have submitted by going to the Member Support and Forms page of our SVDP-Cincinnati website and clicking on CAF Application Status, or use this link:

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoibjQyZDg5NmMtNWQ1ZC00OTAyLWlwYmUtZTA2NGMwZmZmNmZiliwidCI6ImY2NWUwODUxLTYxM2QtNDEzNS05ZTE2LTUwOWFkYThjMDY2YiJ9> .

This resource is reserved for Vincentian members only; access to this resource can not be shared with neighbors, landlords, etc, under any circumstances.

Our March CAF provisions are \$60,000, pending any additions for twinning to CAF by Conferences sharing a resource surplus and any augmented funding from our Council.

Please contact Tom Roberts, 513.345.4910 or troberts@svdpcincinnati.org , for more info about twinning to our CAF.

We continue to encourage you to guide our neighbors to other publicly- & privately-funded resources available within our community...and to nurture relationships that extend well beyond immediate basic needs (material) assistance to provide lasting impact. Budgeting can be an eye-opening exercise that leads to changes to create a sustainable, livable new monthly model. How will our neighbor pay their rent, utilities, and other bills in the months to come?

Publicly-Funded Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA 2)

ERA 2, funded through the City of Cincinnati, was available for qualified/eligible tenant neighbors who reside within the City of Cincinnati. The City's funding was committed to us only through December, 2022. We (Conferences) processed and approved **132** ERA 2 applications (of 139 submitted) which resulted in **\$398,488** in assistance to our neighbors. Huge thanks to those Conferences and Vincentians who submitted ERA 2 applications...and to Olivia, Alec, Mary Reid, and our Finance team for turning these applications into assistance extended to our neighbors.

No new news yet...but there are rumblings that additional ERA funding could be in the works. Stay tuned.

Rahe Beds Fund & Program

We are currently processing all March bed requests received by 3/6. Due to the number of requests already received, we will not be able to extend additional vouchers this month. We will again accept five requests per Conference in April. Our online request form can be found [here](#). Each month, we will evaluate the number of vouchers we can extend based on the number of vouchers that have been redeemed. In recent months, we've been providing vouchers for significantly more beds than we have the budget to cover, due to low redemption rates. Now that our redemption rates are picking up, we need to pull back slightly the number of vouchers we extend. While fewer vouchers may seem like bad news, the reality is that **more neighbors are receiving beds than they were before.** February 2023 set a new record for number of beds distributed through the Rahe Fund, and we expect the new bed model will continue to keep distribution numbers high. You will notice that March vouchers will have slightly different voucher numbers than you're used to. This is an effort to standardize our reporting. Beginning March 1, all voucher numbers will be seven digits with the format FYB-XXXX. FY is the current fiscal year, B stands for bed, and the Xs will be a four-digit number (for example, 23B-0001). Please be sure you're recording the voucher number exactly when entering the assistance in CMS. Updated instructions can be found in the Bed Fund Conference Guide in the members section of the website.

If your Conference is considering purchasing beds to extend as assistance, you can get info, including current pricing, or purchase by contacting Dave Chidlow, Stores Retail Resource Manager, at dchidlow@svdpcincinnati.org or 513.853.1002. Your purchased beds will be picked up at our Clothing & Home Resource Center (CHRC) within our Liz Carter Center (LCC), 1125 Bank St. - the same place our Rahe bed vouchers are redeemed. **Please be aware that the bed purchase pricing has changed with our new bed vendor.**

A limited number of cribs and pack 'n' plays are available for neighbors with children younger than two. They can be requested by emailing rahebedfund@svdpcincinnati.org with the neighbor's name, date of birth, and address.

Metro Bus Passes (Everybody Rides Metro)

Your Conference has access to Metro single-day bus passes to be extended to neighbors for use for any of 3 defined purposes:

1. Commute to/from new employment
2. Commute to/from our Bank St services hub or other community social services
3. Commute to/from medical appointments

Please understand that these passes are sourced through the Everybody Rides Metro program and our Council is required to comply with the above-referenced usages and submit reports of passes distributed. Please also understand that your Conference will need to record bus passes extended in CMS for the neighbors receiving this assistance. Our Bus Pass Guidelines sheet for Conferences is available to you on the Members Support page of our website <https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/conferences-members/member-support/>

or use this link to go directly to this document:

<https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Bus-Tickets-Policy.pdf>

If your Conference wants to learn more about this program or request passes, please contact Alec Jewell, Vincentian Support Manager, at ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org or 513.345.4983.

Birth Certificates

Our Neyer Outreach Center team is once again assisting neighbors who are in need of a birth certificate. We have enhanced our process so that neighbors may request and receive a birth certificate on the same day. Neighbors should come to our NOC (1146 Bank St) and request the birth certificate. They will then be given documentation to take to Elm Street Clinic (1525 Elm St) where they may retrieve their birth certificate on the same day, or at their convenience. A limited number of birth certificates are available each week, and all birth certificate requests must be made in person.

Cooking Improv with La Soupe

Our partner La Soupe teams with our Catino Choice Pantry to present monthly Cooking Improv demonstrations in the Teaching Kitchen at our NOC. Instructors from La Soupe and volunteers engage participants on basic cooking principles and how to use what you

have to create delicious, nutritious meals. **All recipes are based off ingredients found daily in our Catino Choice Pantry. Neighbors are encouraged to sample the delicious dishes and discuss preparation and ingredients with our staff, volunteers, and resident La Soupe instructor, Chef Mona!**

These sessions are held on the first Wednesday of each month - which means **our next event is Wednesday, 4/5, 11am-1pm**. No pre-registration is required. Feel free to share this information with your neighbors.

Haircuts from the Heart in our NOC

This is a free haircut program, courtesy of our partner Franciscan Ministries. **Stylist Margarita is in our NOC every Monday, 9am-noon**, cutting hair in a room on the 2nd floor. Neighbors are accepted on a walk-in basis, and should sign in at our NOC reception desk upon arrival.

Education Center Within Our Neyer Outreach Center

Our NOC Education Center is available for our neighbors and Vincentians to use during our operating hours: Monday - Friday, 8am - 4pm, and Saturday, 8am - noon.

Language Service Available to our Conferences

A growing number of our Conferences are experiencing increased interactions with Latino members of our community...and are struggling to effectively communicate with neighbors who are most fluent or exclusively fluent in Spanish. We have contracted a dedicated language service to help you engage these neighbors in a welcoming, affirming manner. Any Conference member can download the "LanguageLine InSight" app on your smartphone, tablet, or computer at <https://insight.languageline.com/>. You simply need to use the Authentication Code **6NN692GLS2** the first time you login. Through this app you will have access to over 40 different languages, including Spanish, via an interpreter. You will have the option of either audio or visual (for those needing sign language); we strongly encourage using visual only when you must. **Please be efficient in your utilization as our Council pays by the minute for this service; and visual is nearly twice as expensive as audio. When you access the service, you will be asked for your name and department, you simply need to state your name, then "St Vincent de Paul Cincinnati Conferences", then your Conference name.** Be sure to only call through the app; you cannot use this service through a regular phone call.

Our Charitable Pharmacy, Social Services, and some Conferences are leveraging this tool to better engage our Latino neighbors.

If you have any questions or are having trouble accessing the service, please reach out to Alec or Olivia of your Conferences Support Team.

A final seed to plant: If your Conference is among those engaging more neighbors preferring or needing to communicate in Spanish, please consider this an opportunity to seek the addition of Spanish-speaking members. This could enhance your responsive communication and expand your Conference's perspective.

Christ Church Plumb Line

You've appreciated this community resource extending financial aid for qualified neighbors who are employed. Volunteers @ Christ Church are administering the Plumb Line on Mondays, 1-3pm, and scheduling in-person meetings for applicants for the following Monday (example: Volunteers in on 3/13 will be scheduling appointments for 3/20). **Please note: Since the volunteers @ Christ Church prefer to do an in-person interview with neighbors referred to them whenever possible, please be sure to tell the neighbor to expect Christ Church to reach out for an in-person interview when you are filling out a Plumb Line referral form with/for your neighbor.**

Olivia Scheper, our Conferences Support Coordinator, oscheper@svdpcincinnati.org or 513.345.4986, will continue to be your/our central contact point-person. **Plumb Line will only accept SVDP referrals from Olivia.**

Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW)

GCWW's **Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program** provides funds for assistance for eligible tenants residing in the City of Cincinnati. There are eligibility stipulations.

Tenants must qualify by completing an online application at assistance.mygcww.org.

Renters can also call 513.591.7700 to receive assistance from the call center to complete an application. There is also a flexible payment plan through the PromisePay Portal.

GCWW customers can visit [GCWW.promise-pay.com](https://gcww.promise-pay.com) for details about the program and how to enroll. Renters not residing in Cincinnati city limits but living in Hamilton County can visit <https://erap.hcjfs.org/> for utility assistance. If you need additional materials or

information, please contact GCWW at GCWWCares@gcww.cincinnati-oh.gov .

Duke Energy

On 1/25/2023, Duke Energy sent a release to community service partners with links to a variety of resources to assist their customers struggling with winter energy costs. We forwarded this release to our Conference Presidents on Thursday, 1/26/2023.

You can also find info by going to the Duke Energy website, clicking on the Financial Help tab, and then clicking on Ohio.

Duke encourages us to follow our standard steps for processing pledges on customer accounts. For questions on accounts or pledges for neighbors requesting utility assistance, please contact Duke Energy's Centralized Agency Team at 800.241.3194. Advocates are available Monday through Friday, 7:30am - 5:30pm.

Should our neighbor / their customer not meet Duke's qualifications for assistance, please refer them to Duke's customer care organization at 800.544.6900 where they may find assistance through a flexible installment plan.

State of Ohio Program for Struggling Homeowners

Save the Dream Ohio helps eligible Ohio homeowners facing foreclosure and/or who cannot afford to pay their mortgage payments, utility payments or other related housing costs as a result of economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The state of Ohio was awarded \$280 million from the U.S. Department of Treasury through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for the program. Click here for more information:

[Save the Dream Ohio - Managed by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency \(ohiohome.org\)](http://ohiohome.org)

Hamilton County COVID Assistance

Our neighbors & you can still find info and resources at <https://513relief.org> . **Hamilton County has refreshed funding at Hamilton County Job & Family Services (JFS).**

Neighbors can apply at 513Relief.org on their mobile device or desktop. [The Hamilton County Rent and Utility Program's application](#) can be submitted on a smart phone.

Please note: this funding comes from the same federal pool as ERA and other COVID relief programs, so a neighbor who has previously exhausted their access to this pool will be ineligible. Please refer Hamilton County neighbors who you believe to be eligible.

Cincinnati Eye Institute Foundation (CEIF) Vision Clinic in our Neyer Outreach Center

The Vision Clinic operates **by appointment** on certain Monday mornings & Thursdays as designated by CEIF. **This Vision Clinic will be open on Thursdays only in March, as follows: the mornings of 3/9 (tomorrow), & 3/16; then all day on 3/23 & 3/30.** A limited number of walk-in exams can also be accommodated. To schedule an appointment, or to inquire for additional info, please call 513.207.6140.

You are Both Thanked & Invited

We thank you for your readership - 517 of you opened last week's edition; that's 55% of those who received it - and we welcome your feedback to Tom Roberts at 513.345.4910 or troberts@svdpcincinnati.org . We are eager for your content, including pictures, to make this weekly connection all the more relevant and empowering for you!

Our Mission

A network of neighbors, inspired by Gospel values, growing in holiness and building a more just world through personal relationships with and service to people in need.

Our Call to Prayer

Our Church constantly calls us to spiritual renewal, and so we pray:

**As we abandon ourselves to God's will,
Renew in us your Spirit, oh God.**

**As we allow prayer to change our lives,
Be present to us, oh God.
As we seek to know Christ ever more fully,
Transform us, oh God.
As we serve Christ faithfully in the person of the poor,
Strengthen us, oh God.
Amen.**

STAY CONNECTED



St. Vincent de Paul - Cincinnati | 1125 Bank Street, Cincinnati, OH 45214

[Unsubscribe kgallagher@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:kgallagher@svdpcincinnati.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by roberts@svdpcincinnati.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!