



Conference News and Notes
for Wednesday, December 15, 2021
Sent to all Vincentians & Staff

Vincentian Reflection for The Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 19, 2021

Gospel: (Luke 1:39-45) Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Reflection: The gospel for this Fourth Sunday of Advent presents us with the meeting of two pregnant women, one older but no wiser about such things than the other quite young mother-to-be, for this was the first child for both. Such a meeting! The infant in Elizabeth's womb gave a mighty kick when Mary greeted her, and Elizabeth recognized the baby of Mary's womb as her Lord. Jesus, the Son of God Most High, became incarnate - took on human flesh - as a necessary step to salvation. Jesus's body was "prepared" as the fruit of Mary's womb. He came to "do God's will." Mary believed and it was fulfilled. She didn't count the cost. Neither can we. (*Living Liturgy*, p.18)

Vincentian Meditation: The mystery of the Incarnation was the permanent inspiration of St. Vincent's life. It must be ours, too. We shall only fully see Christ in the poor when we have fully seen God in Christ. That is why all that we do and say will have meaning only if it is born of our relationship with Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man. What we bring to the poor must be more than a program for the betterment of their material and economic condition. We must bring something of the peace, the joy and the spiritual freedom which we ourselves have experienced from being present to Jesus Christ through prayer and the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance. I hope that through giving some time this Christmas to the poor and lonely - often a listening heart is of more value than money - you will have enriched the lives of some of those millions of people who have so much less to eat than we have, and so much less to live for. (McCullen, *Deep Down Things*, p.49-50)

How are we sharing peace and joy with those among us experiencing need this Advent?

Formation & Training Opportunities

We are hiring for the new, full-time position of Formation and Service Learning Director. This position will be responsible for advancing St. Vincent de Paul's mission through the development and facilitation of formation and training content and events for Vincentians, staff, retreatants, and volunteers as well as offering strategic oversight of the Service Learning program, made up of the Ozanam Center for Service Learning and the Vincentian Volunteers of Cincinnati programs. The Formation and Service Learning

Director values and models Vincentian spirituality, friendship and service and acts as a spiritual animator for the District Council. Learn more at <https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/about-us/employment-opportunities/> .

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This is today (Wed, 12/15), facilitated by Sunnie Johnson-Lain. For your convenience, you can RSVP this morning via this link: Ozanam@SVDPCincinnati.org .

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Our Formation Committee is reviewing 2021 activity and your feedback as we refine a relevant, compelling schedule of 2022 offerings which we expect to release yet this month.

Thank You, St. Bartholomew Conference, for Hosting Our Christmas Meeting



We assembled Tues evening, 12/7, 168 guests strong, to share Advent anticipation as we are *United in Hope*. This was our largest gathering since the March, 2020, arrival of COVID. Thanks to all who came together and contributed to an evening of faith, friendship, service, & joy. *Silent Night* was simply beautiful.

Your Opportunity to Shop Angel Toys for Your Neighbors

We have hosted 3 Angel Toy events in our NOC for neighbors selected from among our 2021 Holiday Programs applicants.

As in prior years, we are offering our Conferences the opportunity to shop the remaining toys & gifts for your neighbors. 8 Conferences shopped yesterday (Tues, 12/14) and 4 are currently scheduled to shop today. **Your Conference can still reserve a 1 hour shopping window, 9am - 7pm, for up to 4 Vincentians, by contacting Tom Roberts at troberts@svdpcincinnati.org or 513.345.4910.** Once you are confirmed, you will be provided with an extremely brief info sheet which must be completed for each family for which you shop.

We have been blessed with a tremendous supply of toys, games, puzzles, and other gifts...and many attractive items still await selection for Christmas morning.

Our Council's Christmas Food Distribution is Happening Now

Neighbors from throughout Hamilton County can stop by our Neyer Outreach Center (1146 Bank St) during operating hours (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm, this Sat 8am-noon) to pick up a box of Christmas food - ham, fresh produce, and other fixings for a Christmas feast at home. Available while supplies last. One meal per household; neighbor should bring photo ID.

It's Coats Season!



Share the warmth **DONATE A COAT TODAY!**

Visit [SVDPCincinnati.org/coats](https://svdpcincinnati.org/coats)
for drop-off locations.

Winter Coat Distributions

Our 3 distribution events were a tremendous success with over 1,750 neighbors now enjoying the warmth of a new coat.

As of this past Mon, 12/13, **neighbors who have not received a coat from us this year may now come to our Neyer Outreach Center (NOC, 1146 Bank St) and request a coat; they will be given a voucher which they can redeem for a coat at any of our SVDP thrift stores.**

Eligibility information:

- Open to all residents of Hamilton County.
- Neighbors must bring their photo ID and an ID for all household members who will be receiving a coat (even if they're not present). Limit of one coat per person.

Winter Coat Drives & Donations

Your Conference is invited to join us in collecting coats for our annual coat drive! This year's drive runs now through January 30, and you are welcome to facilitate your drive anytime within this time frame.

To schedule a coat barrel drop-off, please [click here](#) and follow the prompts – being sure to indicate your delivery address and how many barrels you are requesting. If there isn't a timeframe listed that works with your availability/schedule, please reach out to Renee Berlon at rberlon@SVDPCincinnati.org so alternative arrangements can be made. You are also welcomed and encouraged to use your own containers for collection – large bins and boxes work well.

Once you are ready for a pick-up, you may use the same link to schedule.

More information about this year's drive (including some responses to general FAQs) can be found here: [SVDPCincinnati.org/coats](https://svdpcincinnati.org/coats) .

SVDP Apparel & Specialty Items

Just in time for the holiday season, our SVDP Apparel Site is up and running. Have fun exploring all the SVDP clothing options that come in both women and men sizes and in a variety of colors. There's also a "Specialty Items" section with hats, scarves, totes, and insulated tumblers. Ordered items can be delivered to your home for an additional delivery charge, or picked up for free at U Sports (7751 Five Mile Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45230). Visit this SVDP Apparel Site at <https://svdpcincinnati.itemorder.com/> . Happy shopping!

Archdiocese of Cincinnati Beacons of Light Initiative

Our Archdiocese released the revised Families of Parishes configuration on Sunday, 12/5; multiple changes were integrated. Your Conference can expect info & guidance from your Conferences Support team in the coming week. We encourage you to stay current on *Beacons of Light* developments at BeaconsAOC.org .

COVID Vaccine & Booster Available now in Our Charitable Pharmacy

Our Charitable Pharmacy is now able to provide J&J COVID vaccine - as initial treatment or as a booster - for Ohio residents. In accordance with the FDA and CDC guidelines, a second dose of J&J COVID vaccine is recommended for those who received the first J&J dose over two months ago. The J&J vaccine can also be used as a booster for those who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over six months ago and are age 65 or older or

work/live in a high-risk environment. Vincentians and neighbors alike can utilize either location of our Charitable Pharmacy for vaccination without an appointment. Please be sure to bring your vaccination card with you so the pharmacist can add documentation of the booster.

Our CMS Movement Accelerates...Are You Onboard?

The number of our Conferences utilizing CMS is increasing. If you are not utilizing CMS currently, we strongly recommend that you onboard as soon as possible. The web-based version of CMS is a significant improvement from the previous desktop version. It is quicker, more reliable, and supports multiple devices. Additionally, you'll see improved turnaround on financial closing; quicker access to all neighbor data throughout our district; better reporting availability for your Conference meetings; and a secure location for all of your data going forward historically. There is also the capability to load some past neighbor data that you may wish to retain and have available to you. The feedback from Conferences who have onboarded since the arrival of the new version has been overwhelmingly positive. There is no better time than the present to onboard to CMS.

CMS help sessions are available by appointment. Please contact John Wessel, your Resource Analyst, at Jwessel@svdpcincinnati.org or 513.562.1823 to schedule a session, which can be for groups or individuals.

CMS training videos are located on our svdpcincinnati.org website, accessed via the Members tab, or just use this link:

<https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/cms-support-page/>

If prompted for a password, use the word "member", all lower case and without the quotation marks.

More Resources for our Conferences and Neighbors

Conference Assistance Fund (CAF)

We extended \$53,118 in CAF assistance in October and \$64,678 in November. December activity through Mon, 12/13:

- You've submitted 51 fresh applications
- We've approved 59 applications
- We have 31 applications in process toward approval

Please note that November's pace of application submissions & approvals exceeded our budgetary provisions of \$60,000 per month. We were able to roll forward underextended October provisions to cover the overage. We encourage you to fully consider our neighbor's situation and other resources which could be deployed as you discern a request for CAF assistance.

Margaret Rahn & our wonderful volunteers (now an even dozen) are intently processing and approving applications. We are eager to welcome our new full-time Conferences Support Coordinator, Olivia Scheper, on Mon, 1/3/2022.

Our volunteers are a vital blessing. Please consider volunteering on-site at our Neyer Outreach Center to help us process CAF applications and to join in other forms of support of Conferences work. You can learn more by contacting Tom at troberts@svdpcincinnati.org, Margaret at mrahn@svdpcincinnati.org, or Alec Jewell, Volunteer Manager, at ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org.

Rahe Beds Fund & Program

Neighbors now take their bed vouchers to the Clothing and Home Resource Center in our Liz Carter Center to be redeemed. Please make sure your neighbors are aware of this change. We expect to extend our full monthly provision of Rahe Beds assistance in December. December vouchers are being mailed, based upon your requests submitted by Monday, 12/6. We will notify you if we have additional beds to extend in December. You can contact Gabby with any questions at rahebedfund@svdpcincinnati.org.

Our SVDP Thrift Stores' leadership has advised that our supply chain has sufficiently stabilized to once again offer your Conference the opportunity to purchase (the same Rahe) beds for neighbors outside the Rahe Beds Program. Pricing has been updated due

to market forces. For more info or to purchase, contact Dave Chidlow, Stores Retail Resource Manager, at dchidlow@svdpcincinnati.org or 513.853.1002. Your purchased beds will be picked up at our Clothing and Home Resource Center within our Liz Carter Center.

We still have a limited number of pack 'n' plays available for neighbors with children too young for beds (under age two). These do not count against the limit of two Rahe beds per household per lifetime. If you have a neighbor who is in need of a pack 'n' play, please contact Gabby. Please note that these are available while supplies last, so please wait until you have confirmation from Gabby before telling the neighbor we'll be able to assist them. If we have pack 'n' plays available, Gabby will make arrangements with either you or the neighbor to pick up the item from the NOC.

Education Center Within Our Neyer Outreach Center

Our NOC Education Center is available for neighbors to use during our operating hours: Monday - Friday, 8am - 4pm, and Saturday, 8am - noon. If neighbors need a little help with the technology, we have a volunteer available on Wednesdays, 11am - 2pm. If you're a Vincentian with computer knowledge you'd like to share, please reach out to Alec Jewell, Volunteer Manager, at ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org.

City of Cincinnati's Eviction Prevention Initiative (EPI)

We have extended our collaboration on this initiative and we are actively accepting and processing applications for this assistance from eligible City of Cincinnati residents in Conference footprints.

Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF)

Our Social Services team is once again extending assistance with rent and utilities through the TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families) program. This program, through at least June 2022, will pay for up to four months' rent for neighbors who meet the following criteria:

- Hamilton County residents
- US citizen or qualified non-citizen
- Has custody of at least one minor child and/or at least six months pregnant
- At risk of homelessness
- Have a household income that is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (currently \$53,000/year for a family of four)

If you are serving a neighbor who meets these criteria, please encourage them to call our Help Line at 513.421.0602 and leave a message. A member of our Social Services team will return their call as soon as possible.

Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW)

GCWW has partnered with Promise Network, Inc (PromisePay) to provide an easy way to set up payment plans for past due charges.

For answers to Frequently Asked Questions, [click here](#).

If you need additional materials or information, please contact GCWW at GCWWCares@gcww.cincinnati-oh.gov.

Duke Energy

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 currently available Monday through Friday, 7:30am - 5:30pm.

Seasonal developments:

- The Winter Reconnect Order went into effect on 10/18 and runs through 4/15/2022
- The HEAP Winter Crisis Program began on 11/1/2021
- Find more info at energyhelp.ohio.gov
- Energy costs have soared; Duke is providing a toolkit to assist customers in dealing with this current cost reality; watch for more info

City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County COVID Assistance

There is still a huge sum of COVID federal economic recovery & relief emergency funding available in our area. If you encounter a neighbor who has experienced financial hardship due to COVID, please refer them to <https://513relief.org>.

Tip: The Hamilton County 513 Relief Bus (the Hamilton County Equity and Resources Mobile Tech Bus) travels throughout Hamilton County to bring resources directly to those who need it most. Google 513 relief bus to find a schedule of dates, destinations & times.

Cincinnati Eye Institute Foundation Vision Clinic in our Neyer Outreach Center

The Vision Clinic operates **by appointment** on certain Thursdays as designated by CEIF.

Great news! Our Vision Clinic will be open, 8:30am - 3pm, all 4 Thursdays in

January, 2022. 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.

Our Holidays Schedule

Please note our Neyer Outreach Center's - and your Conferences Support Team's - special holidays arrangements:

- Christmas Eve, Fri, 12/24 - close @ noon
- Christmas Day, Sat, 12/25 - Mon, 12/27 - closed
- Tues, 12/28 - Thurs, 12/30 - open normal hours, 8am-4:30pm
- New Year's Eve, Fri, 12/31 - Sun, 1/2/2022 - closed
- Mon, 1/3/2022 - reopen for normal hours

We wish all of our neighbors & Vincentians a blessed, safe holidays season and a healthy, fulfilling 2022.

Call to Prayer

**As we prepare for Christmas we pray for those who live in doubt,
may our lives be a sign of faith.**

**We pray for those who live in fear and oppression,
may our lives be a sign of hope.**

**We pray for those who do not experience God's love,
may our lives be a sign of charity.**

Amen.

STAY CONNECTED

