



**Conference News and Notes**  
**for Wednesday, March 22, 2023**  
**Sent to all Vincentians & Staff**

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***Vincentian Reflection for the Fifth Sunday of Lent***  
***March 26, 2023***

**Gospel: (John 11:1-45)** So Jesus came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to Him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when He had said this, He cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go." Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what He had done began to believe in Him.

**Reflection:** Jesus promises Martha (and us) that whoever "lives and believes in me will never die." The amazing fact of our living the dying and rising of the paschal mystery is that we already share in this eternal life. We readily see the dying in our everyday lives - the pain, suffering, death, sinfulness, self-emptying, discipline, giving up our wills. This gospel challenges us to see and believe equally signs of the grace of new life - glory, joy, peace, forgiveness, mercy, trust, kindness. Living the paschal mystery draws us to see these dyings and risings as two aspects of the same mystery. The *already* of eternal life is God's grace *already* working in our lives. (*Living Liturgy*, p. 80)

**Vincentian Meditation:** "Five years ago Thou didst bring me back almost from death, and was not this delay granted me to do penance and become better? Ah! The prayers that were sent up to Thee then were heard. Why should those that are being offered now, and in so far greater number, on my behalf, be lost? Perhaps Thou wilt answer them, Lord, in another way. Thou wilt give me courage, resignation, peace of soul, and those ineffable consolations that accompany Thy real presence." Bl. Frederic Ozanam (Ramson, *Praying with Frederic*, pp. 108-109)

**How has God answered your prayers with His grace?  
Having recognized His grace, how do you extend this grace to neighbors, friends,  
family, and even those you find toughest to love?**

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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.

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***Your Formation and Training Opportunities & Tips***

**Conference Presidents Meeting** – Our Annual Conference Presidents Meeting will be **Saturday, April 29, at St. Cecilia (Oakley), 9:30am - 1pm**. Registration information has been sent to all Conference Presidents as of this past Sunday afternoon. Conference Presidents: If you did not receive the email and link to register, please contact Chris Kelley directly to signup. If you are unable to participate, please arrange a (1) designee to ensure your Conference is represented. We are eager to have each of our Conferences present - so we can collectively benefit from your/our full range of

perspective and key take-aways can be relayed to your membership! Our agenda and supporting materials will be forwarded as we approach our meeting date.

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**Ozanam Orientation** – Our next Ozanam Orientation will be a two-part session (*requiring attendance at both sessions*) on consecutive **Tuesday evenings, April 25 and May 2, 5:30 - 8:30pm, at St. John the Baptist (Dry Ridge)** – cohosted by our St. John the Baptist (Dry Ridge) and Corpus Christi/St. John Neumann Conferences (Family of Parishes SW-6). We highly encourage all new - and seasoned - Vincentians to invest a few hours reflecting more deeply upon our shared Vincentian identity, better understand some of the tools available for our encounters with neighbors, and have an opportunity to better strengthen relationships with others around our district. It is required of all members to be taken at least once, and particular insights have been added to better understand how we live out our Vincentian life in the Cincinnati district. To register for this Ozanam Orientation, [please follow this link](#) or contact Chris Kelley to register.

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Chris Kelley, our Formation and Service Learning Director, can be reached at 513.345.1767 or [ckelley@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:ckelley@svdpcincinnati.org).

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### ***Emergency Rental Assistance 2 (ERA2) is Again Available!***

We've received a funding allocation from the City of Cincinnati to once again partner to assist neighbors with their rent and utility arrearages through the ERA2 program. This funding is similar to the previous round; please note these parameters:

- We have begun accepting applications and will continue to do so until 6/13/23, or when our allocation is completely extended
- We have maximum available funds of \$200,000 to be extended through your/our Conferences
- We will only be able to assist neighbors who rent within the City of Cincinnati
- Eligible neighbors will be able to receive up to 15 months of rent and utility arrearages
- Our neighbor must have been impacted in some capacity by COVID
- We are recommending that neighbors with a minimum of \$1,000 in arrearages should apply for this funding; any lesser amounts would likely be good candidates for CAF, assuming the neighbor is eligible
- Assistance can only apply to balances accrued after March 13, 2020

More details can be found in the email sent to Conference Presidents last Friday, March 17. Applications and supporting documentation can be found within the members' area of our SVDP website. Please feel free to reach out to Alec (513.345.4983 or [ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org)) or Olivia (513.345.4986 or [oscheper@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:oscheper@svdpcincinnati.org)) of your Vincentian Services Team with questions.

So far, we've received 3 applications, all of which are in various processing stages. We look forward to assisting your neighbors & you, once again, through this funding source. We hope that every minute invested with our neighbors will be fruitful and every dime uplifting.

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### ***Spring has Sprung***



Spring officially arrived on Monday! Days are getting longer; the time change is delivering lighter evenings; and, yes, our Lenten journey will soon bring us to the joy & hope of Easter. God's blessings abound!

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### ***Speaking of Spring & Easter...***

Anticipating Holy Week adjustments:

- Our Neyer Outreach Center (NOC) and Liz Carter Center (LCC) will be closed for Good Friday (4/7) & Easter Sunday (4/9); and open on normal schedule on Holy Saturday (4/8)
- Our SVDP Thrift Stores will maintain normal hours throughout the week, including Good Friday, then will be closed on Easter Sunday

**Our SVDP Thrift Stores** are generating record shopping traffic and producing ever-growing sales volume. This subsidizes many forms of assistance we extend, in addition to empowering our ability to write and redeem vouchers for our neighbors. The arrival of spring stimulates clothing shopping...and in order to put smiles on our value-minded shoppers' faces & give them the opportunity to freshen up...

**we very much need in-kind clothing donations** to keep this economical and ecological circle flowing.

- Do you have clothing items hanging idle which someone else would appreciate?
- Our Thrift Stores & donation boxes are conveniently located nearby.
- Could your Conference, parish, or Family of Parishes host a Bundle Sunday?
  - Could your school rally around a clothing drive?

Please connect with our eager Thrift Stores team at 513.421.CARE (2273).

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### ***The Latest From Our Becky Catino Women's Stability, Employment, and Empowerment Program***

The numbers are in! It's hard to believe, but the first participants in our Becky Catino Women's program have been working with us for nine months. The program measures progress in terms of overall stability such as housing, transportation, and food security. Of the women who have signed a service plan agreement with the program, 100% have stayed in the program or have completed the program meeting all their goals. Of the women who have been in the program for at least three months, we have seen an increase in their stability measures by 6%. Of those who have stayed in the program for at least six months, we have seen an increase in their stability measures by 9%. The program also tracks key measures such as transportation, credit understanding, banking, income, public benefit reliance, and employment. Of the women who have been in the program for three months, we have seen an increase in stability for those areas at 10%. For those in the program for at least six months, an increase of 14%. In short, this program is showing measurable success achieved by our neighbors.

If you would like to volunteer for this program or if you want to know more, please reach out to Program Manager Tara Kerrigan at [catino@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:catino@svdpcincinnati.org) .

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### ***Council-Wide Food & Personal Care Drive to Fuel our Pantries Network***



**Is Your Conference In?**

We welcome stories and pictures of your good works and valued harvest.

**Still Deciding?**

If this interests you and your Conference, please act quickly to swing into action. Please [click here](#) to sign up and join fellow Conferences throughout our Council...or reach out to [drives@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:drives@svdpcincinnati.org) with any questions or concerns.

**We CAN make a difference!**

**We CAN help nourish bodies & souls!**

**We are making a difference - On behalf of your/our neighbors, thank you!**

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**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>

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**Beacons of Light Progress**

Have you considered inviting fellow Vincentians within your Family of Parishes to join you at your parish's fish fry on 1 of the remaining Lenten Fridays? Better hurry. Good food for your body & soul and friendship await. Or just throw on your SVDP clothing and/or Vincentian badge and go alone - bet you'll strike up a conversation, share smiles, and eat well.

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**Tom Roberts, your Director of Conferences Engagement, would love to join you for a Conference meeting - or a joint meeting of the Conferences within your Family.**

You can reach out and invite him at 513.345.4910 or [troberts@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:troberts@svdpcincinnati.org).

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Our Conference Presidents and our Vincentian Services team are actively engaging in 23 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 latest progress update: **we have now met with 5 Family Pastors** - and each has voiced appreciation & support for our presence & good works. **Our latest meetings were with Fr Jamie @ St Cecilia, St Mary, & the Oratory of St John Vianney at St Anthony, including our St Margaret-St John Conference (S-9); and Fr Dan @ All Saints & St Vincent Ferrer (S-11).** Our goal is to further nurture our collaboration in *Beacons of Light* in each Family in Hamilton County. To-date, we've had just 2 Pastors decline (actually defer) our meeting invitation - each delivered the same message: he has complete trust we are well-representing our faith community...and to "keep doing what we're doing". **We are Love in Action!**

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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 - and the blend of experienced and fresh Vincentians is a key ingredient to a vibrant Conference providing fulfilling experience to members and richer engagement to our neighbors!

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Want to learn more about our Archdiocese's *Beacons of Light* initiative? Please explore this link: [Beacons of Light](#) .

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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](mailto:troberts@svdpcincinnati.org) or 513.345.4910.

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### ***CMS Tips, Tricks, & Transformations***

Short & simple this week: John Wessel, your/our Resource Analyst, is at your service - 513.562.1823 or [jwessel@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:jwessel@svdpcincinnati.org) .

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### ***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.

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### ***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 (3 weeks in):**

- We've received **102** fresh applications
- We've approved **108** applications; **3** have been withdrawn and **0** declined
- We have **24** 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.

**Thanks to augmented funding from our District Council, our CAF provisions are \$70,000/month for the remainder of this fiscal year (March - September), plus any twinning to CAF by Conferences sharing a resource surplus.**

Please contact Tom Roberts, 513.345.4910 or [troberts@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:troberts@svdpcincinnati.org) , or Alec Jewell, 513.345.4983 or [ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:ajewell@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?

### **Rahe Beds Fund & Program**

All March requests have been processed and mailed out or left at the NOC front desk. 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.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org) or 513.345.4983.**

### **Birth Certificates**

Our Neyer Outreach Center (NOC) team is 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 Vincentian Services team.

**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**

This greatly appreciated community resource extends 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 3/27 will be scheduling appointments for 4/3). **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](mailto: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](https://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](mailto: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 \(ohiohome.org\)](https://ohiohome.org)

### **Hamilton County COVID Assistance**

Our neighbors & you can still find info and resources at <https://513relief.org> . **Hamilton County has funding available 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: all day tomorrow (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.

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## *You are Both Thanked & Invited*

We thank you for your readership and we welcome your feedback to Tom Roberts at 513.345.4910 or [troberts@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:troberts@svdpcincinnati.org) . We are eager for your content, including pictures, to make this weekly connection all the more relevant and empowering for you!

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## *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.

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## *Our Call to Prayer*

**O God, you are the healer of souls, and so we pray:**

**When we are lonely,  
may we feel your presence.**

**When we are burdened by worries,  
may we be at peace in your love.**

**When we have sinned,**



may we know your forgiveness.  
Amen.

STAY CONNECTED



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

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