



# Vision In Action - VIA

Meeting held Feb. 14, 2009

**Vision In Action**  
improving St. Therese Parish  
via

- Hands-on involvement
- Stewardship of time, talent & treasure
- Listening and doing

**Next meeting:**  
**March 14 8:00 a.m.**

Attending: Andy Somers, Bert & Mary Wiegand, Bill Kime, Dick Schreiter, Doug Maki, Ellen Visser, Greg & Jean Pethan, James Zimmer, Nancy Bourassa, Sara Buscher.

**1. Opening prayer** was said by Bill Kime.

**2. Phone tree system** - Bill, Greg, Sara

The purpose of this meeting was to see a demonstration of The Phone Tree - an automated phone calling program that we think might be a good idea for St. Therese Parish to purchase.

~ Comment by Ellen as the internet was pulled up: The opening page of our new website is up: [www.communityofsttherese.com](http://www.communityofsttherese.com). – though we think “.org” may be more appropriate, and are

looking into changing that. Also, no response so far to the bulletin notice about contacting Ellen with comments about the website (and the idea that we would ask them to join a Communications committee.) ~

The VIA committee went to the website: <http://www.phonetree.com/faithbased/index.html> and watched several demos.

Background: this program was developed by two men for use by their church. You set up a database of your members/groups, then record your message, then the two are merged when needed and a phone message, email message or text message is sent to each person in the group. There are options to “Press 1 if you can help with this project” or “Let us know how many from your family will be attending this event”, etc.

Cost is about \$1600 for the system, with 90 days free support.

Greg Pethan contacted several parishes who bought, and are using this system. All said they were very happy with it, none had to upgrade any equipment to make it compatible. One said they have had no further costs to using this since they installed it 5 years ago. One said they use it every day.

Concerns:

- A. How to pay for it? Our job to fundraise?
- B. Need a small group to work on this project; should we take this on, or send it to Parish Council?
- C. Who's the “owner” of this, who will set up and maintain the database, upgrade as needed, etc.?
- D. We need the office staff to get excited about this, as they are the logical ones to use and maintain the system.
- E. Are there other options? Competitors to this?
- F. VIA could offer to help with the training.
- G. We need to stress that this is a way to do more with less effort, not an attempt to load the office down with more work.

We need to get a Communications committee together. Our job as VIA is to strategize, then get others involved. We should not/cannot do all these things ourselves. We had previously mentioned that we need a Communications committee to help with the bulletin and website; this would also come under that heading. Question of how to get members for it; maybe make an announcement from the pulpit? Or have someone who is passionate about Communications get up on Sunday and make a pitch. Question: would they report to VIA or to Parish Council?

Then we would need a small subcommittee of Communications to take on this project and complete it. That would include more investigation, funding options, purchasing, training, initial set up, etc. We would hope that it could be done with 4-6 people in a few months; then that subcommittee would dissolve.

Priorities are:

1. Need to look at competitive products. Bert volunteered to do this and bring back a PowerPoint report at our next meeting. (Initial cost, maintenance costs, resources.)
2. Then present this to Fr. Bill with a recommendation to buy.
3. If he OK's then make presentations to parish/staff/committees on how this works.

This would be added on to the system we already have – not replace it. The replacement of the phone system is a separate issue we are also looking at. The question came up again about the diocesan software that we will need to implement in the next couple of years: will that database be compatible with Phone Tree, or would we have to redo it again when that new system comes in?

### **3. Terry Thorne to speak to us at our next meeting on March 14 – Doug**

Terry Thorne, a former Catholic, helped Appleton Alliance Church build to the size they now are. They learned a lot as they expanded and grew, and Terry would be happy to share some of the lessons they learned along the way.

We want to invite others to listen to Terry with us: Parish Council, Finance Council, Hispanic Council, office staff. We will ask Fr. Bill to do the inviting as those groups meet between now and March 14th.

On March 14 we will have a short meeting of the VIA group first, from 8:00-9:00 in the office conference room, then have Terry and the rest join us from 9-11:30 in the Family Room.

Doug asked if we have any specific points we'd like Terry to talk about when he comes.

Ideas:

How to be more welcoming

How to get people energized and motivated

Communications

How to sustain groups: pick/train/monitor

How did they grow so tremendously?

### **4. Phone System follow up – Sara, James**

Bill's comment: we need to do an A4 on this: current state, future state, etc.

Sara passed around a paper detailing what we'd like the future state of communications to look like –bulletin, newsletter, announcements, etc. This came from the 9/27 minutes

She also detailed the current state of the phone system, listing its deficiencies and what we'd like the system to be able to do "future state"). Sara has been told by Barb Miller that we don't have the extensions / mailboxes necessary to do some of the things on Sara's list.

James looked at the box in the lower level and knows the number of incoming lines, etc. He will investigate and see if we can add extensions and mailboxes with the current set up. We also need to know if The Phone Tree can be incorporated into our current system or if rewiring/changes would be needed.

We probably need to redefine our "future state" expectations very clearly.

### **5. Parish Revitalization meeting on March 19.**

Patrick is planning to attend the day session in Green Bay. There is also an evening session from 6:30-8:30 at St. John's in Little Chute. Pre-register at: <http://gbdioc.org/pdf/SandPS/EveningwithLeisaAnslinger0319flier.pdf> Cost is \$5.00

### **6. Next meeting: March 14, beginning at 8:00 a.m.**

### **7. Meeting adjourned at 9:32**

*Minutes taken by Ellen Vissers*

**On the back burner:** (did not come up at this meeting)  
Elder Care - Patrick  
Opening greeting when dialing office to give Spanish option  
(Did this happen?) - Carlos, Barb  
Expanded bulletin - Ellen  
Power point projector - Patrick, Carlos  
Community Foundation Matching Day - did Fr. send letter to  
them with our concerns?  
New website - Ellen  
Communications Survey - Dick, Doug, Pethans

Other "parking lot" items????

**Projects accomplished:**

1. Office survey; several recommendations implemented
2. Pilot of communications survey was completed
3. Sign out front w/Mass times - delegated to Bus.  
Administrator
4. Stewardship survey - handed to Parish Council for  
Stewardship committee to handle
5. Comm. Foundation Matching Day - communications went  
out, \$10,000 was raised for parish
6. We officially have a name and logo: Vision In Action / VIA

**Vision In Action** committee members:

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