
Christ the Savior Orthodox Church
Annual Parish Meeting
January 28, 2018

The meeting was opened with a prayer led by Fr. John at 10:51 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE:

- *Rector:* Fr. John Parsells
- *Clergy:* Dn. Steven Hall
- *Parish Council:* Deborah Wilson, *Senior Warden*, Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia, *Junior Warden*, Barbara Kaloroumakis, *Treasurer*, Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones, *Secretary*, Ginny Borodulia, Joanne Bushman, Nissa Nancy Hall, Cheryl Kokkinos, Patricia McAlpin, Daniel Moss, and Beth Dunbar.
- *Parish Members/Guests:* Mat. Emily Parsells, Tom & Georgianne Mathews, Jason Kratzer, Daniel Moss, Joanne Patrick, David McAlpin, Larry & Kimberly Perrone, Chad Fortin, Margaret Juliana LoGerfo, Roberta Dobronz, Darrell Wilson, Larry & Tara Casserly.

AGENDA:

1. Nomination of Secretary
2. Review of Previous Minutes
3. Report of the Rector
4. Report of the Senior Warden
5. Report of the Junior Warden
6. Report of the Treasurer
7. Report of the Auditors
8. Report on Stewardship
9. Proposed Financial Budget
10. Parish Council Membership Nominations
11. Special Business: Adoption of the New Parish By-Laws
12. Old and New Business

1. Nomination of Secretary

Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones volunteered to serve as Secretary for the Annual Parish Meeting.

Vote: All in favor

2. Review of Previous Minutes

The parish members reviewed the minutes of the Jan. 29, 2017 meeting.

Motion to accept the minutes: Darrell Wilson

Second: Joanne Patrick

Vote: All in favor

3. Report of the Rector

Fr. John presented the rector's report and highlighted the following information:

- *Metrics.* Fr. John pointed out that our parish's official census, which was submitted to the Diocese on Sept. 1, 2017, is 42 members. This census does not include children under 18. Fr. John also indicated that in 2017 we had one baptism and two chrismations.
- *New members.* Fr. John extended warm congratulations to Robin Adelaide Armstrong, Margaret Juliana LoGerfo, and Walter Sterling Basil Casserly on their sacramental reception into the Orthodox Church.
- *Protopresbyter Daniel's 90th birthday.* Fr. John reviewed Protopresbyter Daniel's 90th birthday celebration events, which took place on Jan. 15 and Aug. 26, 2017. Fr. John emphasized Fr. Daniel's exceptional service to the Orthodox Church in America, service which was recognized by the Gold Medal in the Order of St. Innocent. This medal is OCA's highest honor, bestowed upon Fr. Daniel and Mat. Dunia by Metropolitan Tikhon on Aug. 26, 2017.
- *Transition to parish status.* Fr. John briefly reviewed the events of Met. Tikhon's visit to Christ the Savior (Aug. 25-27, 2017) and expressed gratitude to all who contributed to the success of these events. Fr. John also reviewed the three-fold purpose of Met. Tikhon's visit: to raise the mission to full parish status, to celebrate Fr. Daniel's 90th birthday, and to lead the annual Diocesan Day.
- *Parish by-laws.* Fr. John indicated that a committee consisting of Deborah Wilson, Daniel Moss, Joanne Bushman, and Fr. John revised the starter by-laws to ensure compliance with the new OCA Statute. Fr. John thanked the committee and indicated that the adoption of the revised by-laws appears on the meeting agenda as a separate item.
- *Sunday of Orthodoxy celebration.* Fr. John indicated that, for the first time, our parish hosted the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers; Fr. John expressed appreciation to all who supported this event.
- *Tonsure of Reader Nicholas Borodulia.* Fr. John congratulated Nicholas Borodulia on his tonsure as Reader on Aug. 26, 2017.
- *Altar servers, choir members/directors, and ushers.* Fr. John expressed sincere appreciation to those who have served in these capacities. Fr. John recognized and thanked our choir directors: Daria Parsells, Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia, and Joanne Patrick.
- *Sunday attendance.* Fr. John indicated that the average attendance at the Sunday Divine Liturgy was 64 people.
- *Pilgrimages and trips.* Fr. John thanked those who took pilgrimages and brought back blessings on our Church, especially in the form of holy oils. Highlights of pilgrimages and trips include the March for Life in Washington, DC (led by Fr. John), a pilgrimage to venerate the Kardiotissa Myrrh-Streaming Icon in Bel-Air, MD (led by Dn. Steve Hall), and a pilgrimage to venerate the Hawaiian Iveron Icon in Gradyville, PA (led by Rdr. George Kaloroumakis).
- *Donation from the estate of Patrick George Brien.* Fr. John indicated that our parish received a \$15,000 donation from the Estate of Patrick George Brien, a close friend of Mat. Emily. May his memory be eternal!
- *Replacement of the boiler.* Fr. John reminded the Parish Body that the boiler stopped functioning in November and had to be replaced. Due to the urgent nature of this

repair, the Parish Council had to act quickly and allocate the funds from the Brien Estate to the purchase and installation of a new boiler. Fr. John indicated that, due to the financial magnitude of this decision, the Parish Council would seek formal review of the decision by the Parish Body.

- *Expansion of the parking lot.* Fr. John indicated that the expansion of the parking lot increased our parking spots from 17 to 27 and the building occupancy from 51 to 81.
- *Matching donation.* Fr. John indicated that, through our collective efforts, we were able to secure a \$12,000 matching donation. Fr. John expressed sincere thanks to our donor as well as to those who made the match possible by increasing their offerings.
- *New Church sign.* Fr. John pointed out that our church sign is in need of replacement. The phone number listed on the sign, for instance, is no longer in service. Fr. John then recommended that we consider the sign replacement as one of our important tasks for 2018.
- *Defibrillator.* Fr. John thanked Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia and Kathy Parrish for securing a defibrillator and offering training sessions. The defibrillator is located in the choir loft.
- *Fellowship/pool.* Fr. John thanked all who made our fellowship events a success. Fr. John also pointed out that the pool, which has been an important aspect of our fellowship gatherings, will need attention soon. The pool cover, which is meant to function as a seasonal cover, is starting to get damaged by repeated folding and unfolding, thus causing safety concerns. Because the replacement of the pool cover represents a significant financial decision, it will be discussed later in the meeting (under New Business).
- *Education.* Fr. John pointed out that Bible studies were held on Saturday nights throughout 2017. The primary adult education, however, occurs during the Sunday sermon. Fr. John thanked Nissa Nancy and Pat McAlpin, who have coordinated children's education in our Church School. Fr. John emphasized, however, that children's education occurs primarily through the family members' example.
- *Charity.* Fr. John indicated that our Church participated in a number of charitable efforts, such as donations for food banks, the local pregnancy aid center, and struggling families. Fr. John thanked all who supported these efforts.
- *Parish work days.* Fr. John extended sincere appreciation to those who help clean the Church on a weekly basis as well as during designated parish work days.
- *Parish Council and supporting committees.* Fr. John indicated that the Parish Council and supporting committees assist in the administrative work of the Church. This work is fraught with challenges and temptations; nevertheless, every year people work together to overcome these temptations. Fr. John emphasized that disunity is what hurts the Church; for this reason, we should continue to strive towards achieving unity and carrying out the Lord's work in good order and harmony. Fr. John extended sincere thanks to all who carry out this work, and especially to Deborah Wilson (Senior Warden), Barbara Kaloroumakis (Treasurer), and Joanne Bushman (Parish Council Member), whose terms of service have concluded.
- *Vision for 2018.* Fr. John shared his vision for 2018, a vision which includes the following points of focus: outreach and evangelism to the local community; increased financial stability through good stewardship; installation of a new sign and other capital improvements; prayerful discernment of the Lord's will for both short-term and long-term planning; joint services and activities with local Orthodox churches; charitable initiatives inside and outside our community; and learning, living, and loving our

Orthodox Faith. Fr. John emphasized that the love of our Faith stems from learning and living the Faith, and he encouraged all to persevere in education, practice of Christian precepts, and appreciation for the beauty of Christian life. Fr. John concluded his report by thanking everyone on behalf of himself, Mat. Emily, and the children.

Motion to accept the Rector's Report: Beth Dunbar

Second: Patricia McAlpin

Vote: All in favor

4. Report of the Senior Warden

Deborah Wilson shared the Senior Warden's report, which summarized our Parish's efforts in 2017 from the perspective of our responsibility to love God with all our heart, our soul, our mind, and our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

- *Our heart.* Deborah pointed out our obligation to maintain our house of worship and reviewed some of our important challenges. Deborah thanked everyone for working together to overcome these challenges and encouraged all to persevere in caring for our church property.
- *Our soul.* Deborah thanked the choir directors – Daria Parsells, Rdr. Nicholas, and Joanne Patrick – for prayerfully leading our choir. Deborah also encouraged the parish community to remain mindful of good order during services and urged everyone to avoid using the doors in the choir area while worship is in progress.
- *Our mind.* Deborah thanked Nissa Nancy and Pat McAlpin for leading the vibrant Sunday school program and Fr. John for leading the Bible study classes.
- *Our strength.* Deborah also thanked those who participated in parish work days and those who clean the church property regularly.
- *Loving one's neighbor as oneself.* Deborah thanked everyone who participated in various charitable events and encouraged everyone to remain involved in service to our neighbors.
- *Thanks extended to Deborah for her faithful service.* Fr. John thanked Deborah for her service and pointed out the theological value of her report. Fr. John encouraged everyone to read the report carefully and remain mindful of its message.

Motion to accept the Senior Warden's report: Joanne Bushman

Second: Margaret LoGerfo

Vote: All in favor

5. Report of the Junior Warden

Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia presented the Junior Warden's report, which emphasized completed projects and future needs.

- *Completed projects.* Rdr. Nicholas indicated that completed projects include Phase I and Phase II of the parking lot, which added ten additional parking spaces (although we are still waiting for the contractor to finish the last spot). In addition, completed projects

included the replacement of the old water system with a tankless system and modifications to the filtration system.

- *Future projects.* Rdr. Nicholas indicated that future needs include repairs to the original driveway (which has suffered a number of cracks), work on the exit driveway (which has a drop off that needs to be graded), repairs to the exterior wall stucco, rain gutters, and roof, as well as the replacement of the pool cover and of the signage on Carey Road.
- *Clarifications concerning the hot water system.* Fr. John and Rdr. Nicholas indicated that the new water system is more energy efficient, since it uses gas only when there is a demand for hot water. Fr. John pointed out that this is a dual system, which serves both as HVAC and as a hot water boiler; in addition, Fr. John indicated that Poseidon Plumbing, the company that installed the system, plans to give us a presentation on this system.
- *Clarifications concerning the filtration system.* Fr. John indicated that the previous position of the filters on the ceiling area made the cleaning and replacement of the filters extremely difficult, as work had to be done from below. The dehumidifier system in the back of the chapel since has one filter which needs changing from above but all other filters are accessible from below.

Motion to accept the Junior Warden's report: Darrell Wilson

Second: Joanne Bushman

Vote: All in favor

6. Report of the Treasurer

Barbara Kaloroumakis presented the treasurer's report. The ensuing discussion centered on the following points:

- *Thanks to all.* Barbara thanked everyone for the donations which have ensured the operation of our Church.
- *Ordinary income versus special donations and expenditures.* Fr. John pointed out the difference between ordinary income (which is incorporated in the budget) and special expenditures (which are covered by dedicated donations).
- *Financial assistance.* In response to Joanne Bushman's inquiry, Barbara indicated that our church offered financial assistance to someone in need. The funds came from a special private donation, which was routed through our church's bank account. To preserve the donor's anonymity, a check was cut from our CTS account.
- *Savings account.* After Ginny inquired into the status of our savings account, Barbara indicated that this is the first time we have any excess funds. Fr. John added that we have not been in a position to set anything aside, as we have struggled to pay our monthly bills. The matching donation has put us in a better situation; however, these funds have just come in, and the Parish Council has not had the time to research the best use for the excess funds. The Parish Council will conduct this research soon and make a concrete proposal.
- *Past challenges.* Deborah Wilson indicated that, in the past, our financial challenges have been so severe that Fr. John had, on several occasions, to hold the salary check and delay depositing it. Deborah extended heart-felt gratitude to Fr. John and his family

for their selfless sacrifices, but she advised that we should do our best to avoid such situations in the future. Fr. John, likewise, thanked everyone for their own sacrifices.

- *Amazon Smile.* After Joanne Patrick requested clarifications on the Amazon Smile program, Fr. John indicated that this involves a one-time setup, when the user selects a specific charity. After that, a small fraction of all purchases made through Amazon Smile is donated to that charity. Fr. John indicated that an Amazon Smile link is available on the CTS website.
- *Thanks to Barbara.* On behalf of the entire parish body, Fr. John extended sincere thanks to Barbara for her competent, dedicated, and faithful service during her tenure as Treasurer.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report: Daniel Moss

Second: Mat. Emily Parsells

Vote: All in favor

7. Report of the Auditors

Tara Casserly and Chad Fortin presented the auditors' report, which found no irregularities in our parish's financial records.

Motion to accept the auditors' report: Joanne Bushman

Second: Daniel Moss

Vote: All in favor

8. Report on Stewardship

Fr. John drew the attention of the Parish Body to the stewardship report. The ensuing discussion addressed the following points:

- *Data represented in the report.* Fr. John indicated that the stewardship report shows the distribution of \$130, 552 among 85 families. The report does not show, however, cash offerings that cannot be attributed to a specific individual or family, such as cash for candles or the kitchen.
- *Stewardship and spirituality.* Fr. John emphasized that stewardship is primarily a matter of spirituality. Everyone is 100% free to use financial resources as he/she decides; however, everyone is also 100% accountable for the gifts entrusted by God. Generally speaking, our parish is doing well at this time. We must, therefore, strive to learn, live, and love our Faith and continue to grow as Christians.
- *Missing return envelope in the stewardship package.* Nissa Nancy pointed out that each parish member or family has received a stewardship package including a summary of financial contributions during 2017 as well as a request for information on future contributions of talent and resources. This package is missing a return envelope, however. For those who prefer to mail in their responses rather than hand them in, Nissa Nancy can provide a return envelope.

Motion to accept the stewardship report: Beth Dunbar

Second: Pat McAlpin

Vote: All in favor

9. Proposed Financial Budget

Fr. John directed the attention of the Parish Body to the proposed 2018 budget. The ensuing discussion focused on the following points:

- *Changes in the budget.* Deborah Wilson pointed out key changes in the budget, which include rising health insurance costs (\$510.21/month increase), trash removal increase (from \$1,000 to \$1,500), and attendance at the OCA All American Council (\$3,000). Deborah clarified that the OCA All American Council meets every three years, and we are budgeting for the participation of two delegates from our parish.
- *Budgeted income.* Fr. John indicated that no changes were made to the projected income compared to the previous year. Fr. John also pointed out that last year we were actually under budget with our expenses.
- *Unforeseen expenses.* Ginny Borodulia pointed out that we are not prepared for extraordinary/unforeseen expenses. Fr. John agreed but indicated that special projects have been funded from special collections or unsolicited donations.
- *Pool cover.* Kimberly wondered whether the pool cover replacement may qualify as one of these special expenses and inquired into the replacement cost. Fr. John indicated that the existing pool cover costs about \$3,000. Mat. Emily clarified that the seasonal cover gets overused as the result of repeated folding and unfolding. Fr. John also indicated that the Parish Council will be seeking the Parish Body's authorization to research options for replacing the cover.
- *OCA assessment.* Fr. John clarified that neither the OCA nor our church require a set membership fee. In addition, our parish does not require anyone to pay any assessment. The OCA has implemented instead a proportional assessment system, which provides for a slight yearly increase.
- *Fundraisers.* In response to inquiries about possible fundraisers, Fr. John specified that our zoning and septic system do not allow us to hold festivals, for example. Rdr. Nicholas proposed that we consider setting up a table at the Greek Festival in Ocean City. Beth proposed that we brainstorm for options during the next Parish Council meeting. Fr. John emphasized that, while we can indeed research viable options, we should remain focused on stewardship, which should take priority over other initiatives.
- *Outreach.* Because the need for increased outreach emerged from the discussion, Fr. John stressed that outreach efforts should not focus on money but on people. In other words, we should concentrate first and foremost on sharing the message of the Kingdom. Gabriela followed up by proposing the formation of an Outreach Committee. Margaret LoGerfo, Tara Casserly, Pat McAlpin, and Nissa Nancy Hall expressed interest in joining this committee. When the committee meets for the first time, it will elect a chair.
- *Surplus.* Rdr. Nicholas stressed that the current surplus should not be used for everyday expenses and urged everyone to remain mindful of the importance of sustained stewardship.
- *Communication plan.* Fr. John indicated that we will continue to implement a financial communication plan, so that we do not lose focus of our commitments.

- *Budget deficit.* With no change in the income, the 2018 budget shows a deficit of \$11,848.75. Gabriela suggested that we rise to this challenge by increasing both our stewardship and our outreach. Fr. John re-emphasized that all efforts to this end must place above all the sharing of the Kingdom.

Motion to form an Outreach Committee: Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones

Second: Barbara Kaloroumakis

Vote: All in favor

Motion to accept the proposed expenses without change but balance the budget deficit through increased stewardship: Gabriela

Second: Joanne Bushman

Vote: all in favor

10. Parish Council Nominations

After the Parish Body agreed to waive the one-year membership requirement and reduce it to six months, the following parish members either volunteered or were nominated for service in the 2018 Parish Council: **Chad Fortin, Tarra Casserly, Joe Dunbar, Larry Perrone** and **Cecilia Wyatt**. Additional discussion focused on the following points:

- *Responsibilities of the Parish Council Member.* Fr. John indicated that the basic responsibilities of the Parish Council Member include counting the weekly offerings on a rotation basis and participating in Parish Council meetings. The work of the Parish Council is very important to the life of the Church and sincere appreciation is extended to those who commit to this ministry.
- *Privacy of stewardship contributions.* Ginny Borodulia expressed concern about the privacy of the weekly stewardship contributions, since a rotating team of Parish Council members must record all donations. Fr. John stressed that those who count the donations do so in rotation and do not have a complete picture of any one member's (or visitor's) stewardship, especially since they don't know what proportion of the donor's income the offerings represent and what level of sacrifice the donations entail. Fr. John also stressed that we are a church family, and we must therefore continue in showing compassion and respect to one another.

Motion to accept the nominations for Parish Council membership: Joanne Bushman

Second: Cheryl Kokkinos

Vote: All in favor

11. Special Business: Adoption of New Parish By-Laws

Fr. John invited discussion and a decision on the new Parish By-Laws. The discussion focused on the following issues:

- *Preparation of the Parish By-Laws.* Fr. John indicated that the proposed by-laws were drafted by lawyers of the Diocese of the South and adapted by our parish's By-Laws Committee.

- *Gender-inclusive language for Parish Council officer positions.* Gabriela proposed that the by-laws be accepted in their current form but with a change in the language referring to the Parish Council officer positions. Specifically, Gabriela recommended gender-inclusive language in references to the Senior Warden (from *he* to *he/she*). Gabriela suggested that clarity in this regard may be important, since – unlike clergy positions – Parish Council positions are open to both men and women. Fr. John indicated that, in our parish, women parishioners have regularly served as Senior Warden.

Motion to accept gender-inclusive language in references to Parish Council members and officers: Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones

Second: Darrell Wilson

Vote: All in favor

Motion to accept the proposed Parish By-Laws (with the indicated language change): Beth Keller

Second: Darrell Wilson

Vote: All in favor

12. Old and New Business

Fr. John invited discussion of old and new business. The discussion focused on the following issues:

- *The pool cover.* As announced previously in the meeting, Fr. John indicated that the Parish Council seeks authorization from the Parish Body to research and implement options for the replacement of the pool cover, while preserving or improving the current level of safety.
- *The boiler replacement decision.* As announced previously in the meeting, Fr. John indicated that the Parish Council seeks formal approval from the Parish Body regarding the decision to replace the boiler system.
- *Church sign.* Joanne Bushman recommended that we make the research/replacement of a new church sign one of our priorities for 2018.
- *Sign inside the church.* Fr. John indicated that the sign inside the church, which reminded people to keep quiet, has been removed because some people felt the sign to be offensive. Fr. John acknowledged the importance of good order during services but suggested that this sign may send an unwelcoming message, especially to visitors. Fr. John recommended that the Parish Council continue to explore options but emphasized the importance of compassion for our brothers and sisters, as well as the importance of changing ourselves first. If we become more focused, orderly, and compassionate, then we can influence others through example.

Motion to authorize the Parish Council to research and implement a solution for a pool cover replacement: Larry Perrone

Second: Nissa Nancy Hall

Vote: All in favor

Motion to approve the Parish Council's decision to replace the boiler system: Beth Dunbar

Second: Margaret LoGerfo

Vote: All in favor

Motion to authorize the Parish Council to research options for a new church sign: Joanne Bushman

Second: Pat McAlpin

Vote: Abstentions: Ginny Borodulia; remaining: in favor

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Mat. Emily Parsells

Second: Daniel Moss

Vote: All in favor

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer led by Fr. John at 12:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones, Secretary