
Christ the Savior Orthodox Church
Annual Parish Meeting
January 27, 2019

The meeting was opened with a prayer led by Fr. John at 10:41 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE:

- *Rector:* Fr. John Parsells
- *Clergy:* Fr. Daniel Hubiak, Dn. Steven Hall
- *Parish Council:* Patricia McAlpin, *Senior Warden*, Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia, *Junior Warden*, Tara Casserly, *Treasurer*, Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones, *Secretary*, Ginny Borodulia, Nissa Nancy Hall, Larry Casserly, Larry Perrone, Joe Dunbar, Beth Dunbar, Daniel Moss, and Cecilia Wyant.
- *Parish Members/Guests:* Rdr. George Kaloroumakis, Mat. Emily Parsells, Barbara Kaloroumakis, Angelo E., Ioana Davidson, Kathy Parrish, Bill Parrish, Catherine Lupiwok, Jason Kratzer, Alex Gray, Ruth Andreas, Joanne Patrick, Matthew Delmer, Kim Perrone, David McAlpin, Ellen Kaloroumakis, Margaret LoGerfo, Roberta Dobronz, Joanne Bushman, Laurie Morsey, Mirona Bendfeldt, Camelia Milite, Kelly Hageman, Andrew Hageman, Kathleen Moss, Dana Wyant, Gregory Parsells, Danyella Parsells.

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 of the Planning Commission
9. Report of the Infrastructure and Grounds Commission
10. Proposed Financial Budget
11. Parish Council Membership Nominations
12. Old and New Business

1. Nomination of Secretary

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

Motion to accept Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones as Secretary: Rdr. George Kaloroumakis

Second: Joanne Bushman

Vote: All in favor

2. Review of Previous Minutes

Fr. John invited the meeting participants to amend or approve the minutes of the Jan. 28, 2018 meeting, which were previously posted on the parish website and distributed via the email.

Motion to accept the minutes: Larry Perrone

Second: Daniel Moss

Vote: All in favor

3. Report of the Rector

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

- *Metrics.* Fr. John indicated that our official census (as of Sept. 1, 2018) is 45 members. During 2018, we had nine Baptisms, two Chrismations, two marriages, and seven entrances into the catechumenate.
- *Major Events.* Fr. John drew the participants' attention to the list of events listed in the report. Two important highlights – the All-American Council and the Vacation Church School – were addressed separately in the report.
- *Welcome to New Members.* Fr. John congratulated those who joined our Church family through Baptism and Chrimation, as well as those who were joined in Holy Matrimony.
- *All-American Council.* Fr. John represented our parish at the All-American Council in St. Louis, Missouri, July 23-27, 2018.
- *Vacation Church School.* Fr. John congratulated all those who made the Vacation Church School a success, especially the event organizers: Mat. Emily Parsells, Kelly Hageman, and Cecilia Wyant. Fr. John pointed out that our parish is blessed with many children, who are our greatest resource and our greatest responsibility.
- *Security Commission.* In response to concerns raised by a disruptive visitor, the Security Commission took important steps to enhance the safety of our Church premises. Rdr. George Kaloroumakis, Larry Casserly, and Dana Wyant assessed the Parish Center and grounds, and following their recommendations we now have a lighting system and security cameras.
- *Planning Commission.* The Planning Commission (consisting of Fr. John, Patricia McAlpin, Larry Casserly, Larry Perrone, and Constantine Mitsopoulos) has diligently worked to outline a long-term vision for the growth of our parish. Fr. John thanked those serving on the commission and indicated that the commission's report would be presented during the meeting.
- *Finance Committee.* Fr. John acknowledged the Finance Committee's efforts in securing a CD to hold the \$12,000 surplus from 2017 and thanked Chad Fortin, Pat McAlpin, and Dn. Steven Hall for doing the legwork on this important project. In addition, Fr. John thanked Tara Casserly, who assumed the responsibility of Treasurer and upgraded our QuickBooks data from an outdated desktop version to a cloud-based version.
- *Outreach Committee.* Fr. John indicated that the Outreach Committee has been working on various initiatives aimed at promoting our evangelical mission. These initiatives include a responsive-design website with push notifications, an improved welcome area at the candle stand, tri-fold brochures, and Christmas card mailing to parishioners, friends, and "lost sheep."

- *Sunday Attendance.* Fr. John indicated that our average Sunday attendance was 73 people, the highest we have had so far!
- *Choir Relocation.* The choir's relocation to the left and right kliros was made possible by the installation of new benches and area rugs. Although this relocation brought about some challenges, ongoing rehearsals and improved communication have made the transition smoother. Fr. John thanked the choir directors and the choir members for their efforts in this important ministry.
- *Capital Improvements.* Fr. John thanked the donors who made possible the following capital improvements: a new commercial-grade pool cover with 30-year warranty (\$2,000), a new camera-based security system upgrade (\$1,000), an energy-efficient lighting system (\$500), new area rugs for the choir and altar table (\$900), new benches for the right and left kliros (\$700), and a new icon the Theotokos, painted by Mirona Bendfeldt (\$800).
- *Earmarked / Restricted Funds.* At this time, our parish has approximately \$9,000 earmarked for the Church Sign, \$2,000 earmarked for a special project, and smaller amounts earmarked for various charity and ministry initiatives.
- *Education.* Fr. John pointed out that our education programs for adults and children have grown. Fr. John thanked those who, through their participation and engagement, have enriched the Bible Study class for adults. Fr. John also thanked the Church School instructors (Mat. Emily, Joanne Patrick, and Cecilia Wyant) and assistants (Joanne Bushman, Beth Dunbar, and Kelly Hageman) for their contributions to the holy endeavor of children's education. Fr. John also indicated that several catechumens and inquirers have met with Fr. John to discuss Holy Orthodoxy.
- *Fellowship.* Fr. John thanked all those who have contributed to our various fellowship events, which this year have included coffee hours, festal meals, women's outings, youth group trips, barbeques, and birthday celebrations.
- *Fr. John's Surprise 40th Birthday Party.* Fr. John thanked all for the surprise birthday party and for the love and support he has received from our Church family.
- *Thank You to All.* Fr. John thanked his fellow clergymen, the parish council officers and members, all parishioners and friends, and especially Mat. Emily for their service to the Lord and our Church.
- *Vision for 2019.* Fr. John shared his vision for 2019, a vision which includes the following points of focus: outreach and evangelism to the "lost sheep" and the local community; encouraging and nurturing our youth in the Faith and service to the Church; prayerfully discerning the Lord's will for both short and long-term planning and projects; securing the Parish through maintenance of infrastructure and good stewardship of resources; learning, living, and loving our Orthodox Christian 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, the 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: Cecilia Wyant

Second: Beth Dunbar

Vote: All in favor

4. Report of the Senior Warden

Patricia McAlpin, Senior Warden, highlighted the following items from her report (included as a hard copy in the meeting packet):

- *Thanks to Our Clergy.* Patricia McAlpin extended heartfelt thanks to our clergy families – Fr. John and Mat. Emily, Fr. Daniel and Mat. Dunya, and Dn. Steve and Nissa Nancy. Pat gave thanks to our clergy for serving the divine services, for inspiring us with their presence, and for encouraging us with their kindness and humility.
- *Return of the Morsey Family.* Pat praised God for the return of the Morsey family after Maleah's severe illness.
- *Coffee Hour.* Pat thanked all who have made our coffee hour a success through their various contributions and participation. Pat also acknowledged Nissa Nancy Hall, who has managed the kitchen and our fellowship efforts. Pat pointed out that Nissa Nancy's contributions are not limited to the coffee hour. From welcoming parishioners and visitors to instructing children in the Church School and participating in various outreach efforts, Nissa Nancy has been involved in many aspects of our parish life and has touched us all with her kindness.
- *Planning Commission.* Pat commended the Planning Commission for working to discern God's will for the future of our parish. Pat encouraged the commission to continue shaping and implementing a vision for the future, and she expressed trust in God's providence.
- *Thanks Extended to Patricia McAlpin.* Fr. John thanked Pat for helping us navigate the challenges of 2018 and for substantially contributing to a good and peaceful year.

Motion to accept the Senior Warden's report: Ginny Borodulia

Second: Larry Perrone

Vote: All in favor

5. Report of the Junior Warden

Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia presented the Junior Warden's report (included as a hard copy in the meeting packet) and highlighted the following completed, ongoing, and new projects:

- *Completed Projects.* Rdr. Nicholas pointed out that the change to copper plumbing was completed below cost (approximately \$1,000 less than originally estimated). Rdr. Nicholas also pointed out that Dry Tek will complete the crawlspace encapsulation at no charge. Completed projects also include a donated pool cover, repairs to the rectory chimney, and new hot water and HVAC systems.
- *Ongoing Projects.* Rdr. Nicholas indicated that we haven't yet received a response from McNeil Paving regarding the completion of the last half-parking space. At this time, we are raising funds for filling and grading the exit driveway area.
- *New Projects.* Rdr. Nicholas emphasized that the biggest issue at this time is the roof. Cracks and broken tiles create the potential for further damage, so these repairs represent an important priority. Rdr. Nicholas also indicated that Larry Casserly has prepared a report of ongoing and new maintenance issues.

Motion to accept the Junior Warden's report: Larry Casserly

Second: Joanne Patrick

Vote: All in favor

6. Report of the Treasurer

Tara Casserly presented the treasurer's report. The ensuing discussion centered on the following points:

- *Financial Data.* Tara drew the participants' attention to the profit/loss data for 2018 and invited questions. Fr. John pointed out that the profit/loss report has two parts: the first part includes the budgeted income and expenses, and the second part includes other income and expenses. Fr. John indicated that, thanks to increased stewardship efforts, we were able to meet our budget goals and finish the year in the black. Fr. John thanked all those who made reaching this goals possible.
- *Maintenance List.* Tara indicated that in 2019 a spending schedule will accompany the maintenance and project list.
- *Coffee Hour.* Rdr. George Kaloroumakis pointed out that the expenses associated with the coffee hour supplies by far exceed the budgeted \$32.97 and urged everyone to contribute to the donation basket placed in the parish hall. Fr. John clarified that, in addition to the cash from the donation basket, we received a generous \$1,000 donation for supplies. Fr. John reminded everyone to be mindful of this expense and not use more supplies than needed.
- *Thanks to Tara.* On behalf of the entire parish body, Fr. John extended sincere thanks to Tara for her hard work, especially for transitioning our financial records from the outdated version of QuickBooks to the up-to-date cloud-based version.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report: Rdr. George Kaloroumakis

Second: Larry Casserly

Vote: All in favor

7. Report of the Auditors

Ioana Davidson presented the auditors' report prepared by her and Ramona Sterca and included as a hard copy in the meeting packet. The ensuing discussion focused on the following points:

- *Findings.* Ioana Davidson summarized the auditing process, which focused on matching collection sheets to Sunday envelopes, deposited amounts to collection sheet totals, cut checks to corresponding expenditures, and reimbursement checks to reimbursement forms and receipts. Ioana indicated that the parish's financial records are in good order; however, the auditors found a few discrepancies in the recorded and deposited totals and a few instances of incomplete information on the collection sheets.
- *Recommendations.* Ioana indicated that the auditors' report includes a series of recommendations for optimizing the collection records. Fr. John and Rdr. George commended Ioana and Ramona for their excellent recommendations and for their thorough report.

- *Envelopes.* Nissa Nancy urged everyone to use only this year's envelopes and discard unused envelopes from previous years. Nissa Nancy pointed out that, every year, the envelope numbers are matched differently to the members' names; therefore, it is important to use the current envelopes in order to avoid confusion and misattributed donations. Nissa Nancy also recommended that envelopes with cash donations indicate the donor's name as an additional safeguard. Rdr. George also encouraged everyone to use the envelopes and thus help expedite the counting process.

Motion to accept the auditors' report: Joanne Bushman

Second: Beth Dunbar

Vote: All in favor

8. Report of the Planning Commission

Fr. John and Larry Perrone presented the report of the Long-Term Planning Commission (included as a hard copy in the meeting packet). The ensuing discussion addressed the following points:

- *Mission Statement.* Fr. John opened the report by drawing the participants' attention to the commission's mission statement: "With the grace of God and to His glory, the Long-Term Planning Commission will provide a plan for the Christ the Savior Parish for capital improvement, with the primary goal being the construction of a new Church Temple according to the tradition of the Orthodox Church."
- *Commission Make-up.* Fr. John indicated that the Planning Commission is comprised of himself, Patricia McAlpin, Larry Perrone, Larry Casserly, and Constantine Mitsopolous.
- *Planning and Timeline.* Fr. John emphasized that, without vision, people either perish or don't thrive. It is for this reason that the Planning Commission will work to prepare for the growth of our parish. Both Fr. John and Pat indicated that the plan's implementation may happen ten, fifteen, or twenty years in the future. Fr. John reminded everyone that, with God's providence, our transition to our current situation occurred very quickly, thanks to the generous loan that allowed us to purchase our property and the donation that paid off the remainder of our mortgage. Therefore, it is important that we prepare ourselves, so that God's providence continues to bless us.
- *Completed Actions.* Larry Perrone indicated that the commission has obtained permission from the Parish Council to outline our vision for the future. In addition, the commission has met with the Worcester County Building Department to inquire about the steps we need to take, both short-term and long-term, in order to carry out this vision.
- *Proposed Actions.* Larry Perrone indicated that the next steps should target the creation of a separate building fund and the identification of a site for a new Temple. Larry Perrone clarified that the construction site would be on our current property. Once we identify the site, we should clear the area so as to mark our goal visually. Andrew Hageman, however, cautioned against clearing the land too early, so as not to create additional yard work for an unnecessarily long period of time.
- *Percolation Test.* After Larry Perrone indicated that the perc test should be one of the first things we accomplish, Joanne Patrick inquired how long the test would be valid. Larry then estimated that the test would be valid for about ten years.

- *Architecture.* Alex Gray inquired whether our new Temple would have a dome. Fr. John indicated that we would build the Temple in accordance with the architectural traditions of the Orthodox Church.
- *Cemetery.* Bobby Dobronz inquired whether our Church would have a cemetery. Fr. John indicated that the high water table unfortunately prevents us from pursuing this option.

Motion to accept the Planning Commission’s report: Barbara Kaloroumakis

Second: David McAlpin

Vote: All in favor

9. Report of the Infrastructure and Grounds Maintenance Commission

Larry Casserly presented the commission’s report (included as a hard copy in the meeting packet). The discussion highlighted the following information:

- *Determination of Needs.* Larry Casserly indicated that he and Fr. John walked the property and determined maintenance needs. A complete list of these needs is included in the report, and estimates for some of these projects have either been obtained or are under way. Larry pointed out that we may be able to save money by completing some projects ourselves (such as painting).
- *Priority Needs.* Larry Casserly recommended that the following projects take priority: roof repair, ground stabilization in the parking area, exterior light improvement, and pool paver leveling.
- *Roof Repairs.* Larry Casserly indicated that the roof repairs need immediate attention. Fr. John indicated that approximately eight roof valleys need repair. This project is very important, as water can cause further damage to the roof and the property.

Motion to accept the report of the Infrastructure and Grounds Maintenance Commission: Cecilia Wyant

Second: Mat. Emily Parsells

Vote: All in favor

10. Proposed Financial Budget

Fr. John directed the attention of the Parish Body to the proposed 2019 budget (included as a hard copy in the meeting packet). The ensuing discussion focused on the following points:

- *Preparation and Approval Process.* Fr. John indicated that the proposed budget was prepared by the Finance Committee and reviewed by the Parish Council. The approval by the Parish Body is the last step before the budget is presented to His Beatitude for blessing.
- *Stewardship, Budgeted Expenses, and Special Projects.* Fr. John indicated that, if we maintain our stewardship at the current levels, we expect to meet our goals for the budgeted expenses and thus balance the budget. Fr. John also clarified that special projects are not a part of the operating expenses and have to be funded separately.

Tara Casserly indicated that the maintenance list presented by Larry Casserly would be accompanied by cost estimates and a spending schedule.

- *COLA.* Fr. John indicated that the Parish Council recommended the addition of 2.8% cost-of-living adjustment to the priest's compensation package. This is an increase of about \$900 aimed at maintaining the compensation at the same cost-of-living level.
- *Priest's Travel.* Rdr. George inquired whether the budget should include a travel allowance for Fr. John, who often drives to visit people in need. Fr. John indicated that he would prefer to decline a travel allowance at this time. Rdr. Nicholas recommended that Fr. John include travel costs in his tax documents (the current deduction is \$0.55 per mile). Joe Dunbar recommended that Fr. John keep track of his travel expenses this year, so that a determination regarding a travel allowance can be made next year. Fr. John agreed.

Motion to accept the proposed 2019 budget: Larry Perrone

Second: Cecilia Wyant

Vote: All in favor

11. Parish Council Nominations

The following members were nominated for Parish Council membership: Ioana Davidson and Jason Kratzer.

Motion to accept the nominations for Parish Council membership: Mat. Emily Parsells

Second: Larry Perrone

Vote: All in favor

12. Old and New Business

Fr. John proposed as a new business item the request for the Parish Body's authorization for the Parish Council to research and implement the use of Church credit cards and develop procedures for credit card use. Fr. John also invited suggestions for other new or old business items. The discussion focused on the following issues:

- *Need for credit card(s).* Fr. John indicated that, at this time, the Church bills are processed through Fr. John's personal bank accounts: Fr. John pays the bills, prepares and submits reimbursement forms, and then receives reimbursement checks. This is a cumbersome process, which could be expedited if payments were made by credit card. Credit card payments have the additional advantage of providing immediate and clear records of all activities. Fr. John emphasized that credit card use will be regulated by procedures developed by the Parish Council. Fr. John also indicated that the Parish Council will determine how many credit cards are needed (one or more). Larry Casserly indicated that a Home Depot credit card might be appropriate for maintenance-related purchases.
- *Use of Credit Card(s).* In response to Joanne Patrick's inquiry regarding allowed purchases and authorizations on the Church credit card(s), Fr. John indicated that the Parish Council will develop policies and implement restrictions for credit card use, so as to ensure that credit is used only for its intended purposes.

- *Interest.* Kelly Hageman inquired whether our parish is prepared to pay interest on overdue payments. Gabriela urged everyone to recognize the inconvenience that Fr. John has had to experience over the years, when he used his personal accounts to make payments on our behalf and then wait for reimbursement, which sometime would come late. Gabriela recommended that we as a parish do not continue to inconvenience Fr. John and his family; therefore, we should take responsibility for any late payments and pay interest if we fall behind.
- *Selection Criteria.* Kathy Parrish recommended that we consider cash rewards as one of the criteria for selecting the Church credit card(s).
- *Other Business.* Rdr. Nicholas followed up on the report of the Planning Commission and inquired whether another building could be raised on top of our existing structure. Fr. John indicated that the Planning Commission would explore all options moving forward.

Motion to amend the Parish By-Laws with the following textual changes (shown in bold below), authorizing the Parish Council to research and implement the use of church credit cards, as well as develop appropriate procedures for credit card use: Rdr. George Kaloroumakis

“All expenditures of the Parish shall be made by check **or credit card**, except those made through 'petty cash.' **The Parish Council will oversee the usage of (a) church credit card(s), researching and implementing the appropriate policies and procedures for such usage.** All expenditures made through petty cash must be accompanied by vouchers. Reimbursements to members of the Parish must be authorized in the operating budget or approved by the Parish Council. Reimbursement checks require two signatures who are not the recipient of the check.”

Second: Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones

Vote: All in favor

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Joanne Patrick

Second: Kathy Parrish

Vote: All in favor

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer led by Fr. John at 12:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones, Secretary