

Christ the Savior Orthodox Church
Annual Parish Meeting
Sunday January 26, 2025

The meeting was opened with a prayer led by Father John at 11:55 am.

In Attendance:

- Rector: Fr. John Parsells.
- Parish Members and Others: Father Joseph Oleynik, Ioana Davidson, Zach Davidson, Beth Dunbar, Joe Dunbar, Tom Mathews, Georgianne Mathews, Cheryl Kokkinos, Barbara Kaloroumakis, Justin DeArmitt, Edward Hill, Georgiana Wright, Marian Ridge, Cecelia Wyant, Vera Yevsukov, Chrissy Harris, Michael Prasalowicz, Marius Vlad Ghemis, David Hill, Raymond Sundland, Joanne Patrick, Lisa Wu, Andrew Wu, Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones, Kailyn and Matthew Harmon, Margret LoGerfo, Cami Milite, Pax Garcia, Daria Parsells, Rebecca Hill, Simone Singh, Valeria Babitskaya, Anastasia Bakie, Bill Parrish, Kathy Parrish, Daria Parsells, Nissa Nancy Hall, Will Wilkinson, Megan Wilkinson, Ginny Borodulia, Nick Borodulia, Alan Rodriguez, David Drobish, Anya Drobish, Andrew Hageman, Kelly Hageman, Alma Hageman, Nicholai Parsells, Mircea Tusca, Cristina Tusca, Alexandra Pefrea, Theodor Tusca, Perseo Tusca, Noah Tusca, Xelia Tusca, Iliuca Tusca, Bobbie Dobronz, Tatiana Dettbarn, Alexis DeArmitt, Ezra Harmon, Alexandra Petra, Alex Ortiz, Matthew Williams, Judy Williams, Elisabeth Parsells, Matushka Emily Parsells, Adrienne Slate, Carol Fravel, and Tatiana Kasimtseva.

Agenda:

- Nomination of Secretary
- Review of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Report of the Rector (Blue)
- Report of the Senior Warden (Peach)
- Report of the Junior Warden (White)
- Report of the Treasurer (Pink)
- Report of the Auditors (White)
- Report of Long-Term Planning Committee (Yellow)
- Report of Choir Director (White)
- Proposed Financial Budget (Green)
- Parish Council Membership Nominations
- Old and New Business

Nomination of Secretary

- Father John requested a volunteer or nomination for Secretary for today's meeting. Vera volunteered to take minutes for the parish meeting

Motion to accept nomination: Beth
Second: Tatiana
Vote: All in favor

Review of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

- Father John invited the meeting participants to amend or approve the minutes of the annual parish council meeting distributed via email.

Motion to accept the minutes: Tom
Second: Ray
Vote: All in favor

Report of Rector

Father John presented the Rector's Report (see Blue handout for details).

- Metrics presented: 9 Baptisms and 9 Chrismations (18 people). Father John notes that this is largest year of growth for our parish; 25 new people have joined the church. Last year we presented a census of 60 members to the Dioceses; this year was 80 members.
 - Father John expresses the tremendous loss of Matushka Annice, but our loss is Heaven's gain: may her soul dwell among the righteous!
 - Father John notes the significant number of activities related to fellowship and outreach this year; Father John thanks all for their efforts, especially the Outreach committee.
 - Please note that the Parish Safety Guidelines (drafted by the Safety Guidelines Committee) have been posted on our website: we should all be attentive to these to keep all in our parish safe.
 - Father expresses his thanks for our parish's tonsured readers: reader Nicholas Borodulia, and to our new readers: Paul Romanovky and David Drobish.
 - The remaining amount needed to address off the multipurpose room renovation was recently paid off by an anonymous donor in the amount of \$1,500.
 - Father would like to draw attention to his family members: Matushka and their children, for their many efforts that do not go unnoticed; also thanking Father Joseph for his extensive service to the Church. Gratitude is also expressed to those coming off the parish council: Justin DeArmitt, Joe and Beth Dunbar, Barbara Kaloroumakis, and Thomas Mathews.
 - A vision for 2025 with outlined bullets is presented. Father John emphasizing that growth of the church comes through personal interaction and becoming a spiritual magnet for others to bring them into the church.
 - Father John thanking the Cami Milite and her family for donating the meal for today's meeting.
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Report of Senior Warden

- Senior Warden Georgianne welcoming all and presenting Senior Warden's report (see Peach handout). She encourages all to visit our website to see a summary of our church history over the past quarter of a century. She welcomes all members to all council meetings: your input is always valuable and sought for. She thanks all those who are coming off the parish council and is offering continued prayers for all those on the council.
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Report of Junior Warden

- Junior Warden Cheryl presenting Junior Warden's report (see White handout). Cheryl expresses her thanks to Cami Milite for her biweekly deep cleaning of the chapel. Thanking Justin DeArmitt for all his help in managing all maintenance projects in the church. Thanking Father John and his family for repairs inside the rectory.
 - Cheryl also notes a number of repairs and replacements that will need to occur within the next year or two: see enumerated items on handout (e.g. dehumidifier leak, HVAC replacement, kitchen renovation, and more).
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Report of the Treasurer

- Ioana presented the Profit and Loss (see Pink handouts) sheet, as well as the Balance Sheet.
- Kathy posing a question regarding the contributions statement for 2024 offerings: why don't we have a line-by-line category for earmarked donations?
 - Father John answering that we switched our Quickbooks software from the desktop version to the online version; the online version does not have the capability of sorting donations into earmarked categories. At this time, this type of sorting would require many additional hours of work for the treasurer.
- Ginny asking why trash removal is a \$5,000 expense? Can we get less pickups, or fewer dumpsters, to decrease this cost?
 - Father John stating that one dumpster is designated for recycling, the other is trash; they are on every other week pickup. With regards to this issue, Edward recently contacted waste management and got a reduction on our rate.
 - Edward called waste management and was able to obtain a reduction in our rate from \$475/month to \$318/month; the representative stated that every year the rate goes up, to call them back and renegotiate the rate. Many parish members thanking Edward for this effort.
 - Valeria stating that, in her experience, disposing of plastic bags or other non-recyclables in recyclable dumpsters may result in additional fees. Georgianne

suggests to provide a list of recyclable items in the hall to remind all to sort the trash properly.

Motion to accept the Report of Treasurer: Joe

Second: Anastasia

Vote: All in favor

Report of the Auditors (Ryan Harris, Chrissy Harris, Michael Prasalowicz)

- Michael Prasalowicz presented the Audit for 2024 Parish Financial Statements (see White handout for details). Several minor issues (the majority of which were with regard to collection envelopes lacking one or both counters' signatures) are enumerated in the document; overall the auditors' report that they found the church's finances to be well-tracked and in good order.
- Ginny posed a clarifying question: do we pay the IRS? Is an external audit ever performed/required by the OCA?
 - Father John answering: as a church with nonprofit status, we are exempt from federal taxes; we do pay a county tax to service our drainage ditches. External audits would only occur if the internal audit would uncover something questionable. It is not required to have an external audit to maintain nonprofit status. Ioana adding that as a church, we follow a tax return differently from a typical nonprofit.

Motion to accept the Report of Auditors: Elisha

Second: Marion

Vote: All in favor

Long-Term Planning Committee Report

- Presented by Father John (see Yellow handout for details). We have raised \$35,000 in 2024 for the development of the site plan for a new temple on our property. A substantial portion of this sum was given in memory of Matushka Annice.
- Father asked for all to please submit the Building Survey that was distributed via email as soon as possible, since consultation with a designer (working with our surveyor) is coming within the next few weeks.
 - We are seeking a designer currently, who hopefully is an architect as well; LTPC has honed in on one candidate currently.
 - Anya stating that she has physical copies of the survey for those who would prefer this method.
- Father John giving an update regarding the \$100k matching grant: we have raised almost \$11,000 so far. Constructing a new temple is estimated to cost between \$1.4-2.4 million.

Building a church used to be the most expensive undertaking. However, in our modern times, this amount is meager compared to some current schools, homes, office buildings, and stadiums. We are preparing conservatively, but funding of the temple is not as insurmountable as we might first think; especially as we anticipate continual parish growth and more members in the future.

- Father John encourages all parish members to help in this effort to build the church; the church will be built not just by money, but by bringing more people to the church; this new building must be filled with more parishioners.
- We need to raise more capital than \$100k matching to obtain a mortgage that is reasonably within our range.
- Father John presenting projections regarding attendance and stewardship for upcoming years; these projections are conservative (linear) in nature.
- Reader David asking for clarification on whether we are moving towards actually breaking ground to build the church.
 - Tom stating we will keep moving forward with the county to lay the foundation for the project. We will not be able to break ground for some time, unless a substantial donation is made. Father John stating that this topic will be revisited at least quarterly; all of us little by little can make offerings, too.
 - Reader David asking whether we have reached out to sister parishes to ask for financial assistance? Father John stated yes that this is always an option; reaching out to Diocese for assistance is an option as well; and that the LTPC will do so.
- Andrew asking whether a cemetery would be feasible to have on these grounds.
 - Father John stating that water table is too high for a cemetery.
- Kathy asking about the projected occupancy of 225 people for the new temple; should we be aiming to accommodate more people for the space, given how we have grown and how much we are spending on this substantial project?
 - Father John stating that we have issues with wetlands – we are making 5,000 sq ft impact (building a 4,000 sq ft church), a number which we cannot surpass. We must also have sufficient parking for the church (1 parking space/ 3 occupants). 225 is a high number based on these two numbers; we are probably looking at a number around 175 occupants (from fire marshal), but 225 may be an estimate for feast days like Pascha. Father also reminds all of the importance of creating more mission/satellite churches to other regions of the shore.
 - Edward recounting an anecdote from the church of the Holy Theophany in Colorado Springs with their founding priest, Father Anthony Karbo. Soon after the construction of the first church, Father Anthony began planning for the founding of a second parish and temple; once you hit a goal, you start another church. Becky commenting on the value of smaller parishes with smaller worship spaces. Father John reiterating that a church can become too large, too crowded; and the burden on the priest too great to minister to a large flock. Studies on parish size have shown that: 153 was the “magic” number, which is also a biblical number (153 fish caught by the disciples after Jesus’s Resurrection. See John

12:11). Research has also shown that a cramped space may stunt growth and discourage more people from attending.

- Megan asking who are the designers for the new temple: are they local, Orthodox?
 - Tom answering: CJK Designs (California-based) is Orthodox and working with St. George's in Ocean City; licensed as a designer and an architect in MD. They are giving us the best breakdown start to finish. Others include: Andrew Gould (Orthodox and recently designed Holy Cross Hermitage, Holy Ascension in South Carolina), Bob Lasko (Orthodox), several non-Orthodox companies who have built Orthodox churches, Beers + Hoffman in PA (licensed in MD as an architect) and some others.
 - Megan asking follow-up: is the building survey determining who will design the church? Father John clarifying that this survey provides input by the parish for hopes and dreams for the new church; survey is geared to keep the design within traditional Orthodox parameters.
 - Elisha asking when delineation was done; what is the timestamp for it?
 - Father John stating that it was done last year; the expiration date is not of much importance, as the site plan (staying within 5,000 sq ft) is the key to getting approval from the county.
 - Valeria asking whether it would make more financial sense sell this property and move to another to bypass wetland restrictions? Perhaps this would allow for a larger space, allocation of a cemetery by the church, and income from selling this property?
 - Father John replying that we have not considered that option, but would likely see it as a step backwards, since we moved into this facility, restored and renovated it, built an archway.
 - Reader David asking about how to best communicate ideas for additional fundraising (e.g. food festivals)?
 - Father stating the best way to communicate these ideas in a centralized fashion would be via the stewardship committee or quarterly parish council meetings (all are welcome).
 - Valeria suggesting the idea of a fundraising banquet for the 25th anniversary. Georgianne encouraging to share more ideas with her later.
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Report of the Choir Director

- Alexis sharing her report (see White handout). She expresses her gratitude for all choir members and their efforts in learning new music and rehearsing in service to God. She is especially grateful for the support shown to her and her family after Matushka Annice's repose in the Lord; she thanks the entire parish, substitute choir directors, choir members and readers for their love.

- Father John thanking Alexis for the report and noting that the choir's growth and improvements are substantial and noticed by many visitors.
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2025 Financial Budget presented by Father John

- This is a working document that began with drafting by the Treasurer and Priest, then went to parish council for approval. The parish council is now submitting it to the parish body for approval. Upon adoption, we will submit to His Beatitude.
 - We have transferred the stewardship level amounts from last year; thus, we have not modified the income side of the budget.
 - We want to make sure that all contributors (parish members) have input into making the decision to raise stewardship levels. This will also allow for a conservative projection for the year to come.
- Ioana stating that in last council meeting we decided to have Alexis go on salary to become an employee of the church, as opposed to an independent contractor.
- Taylor asking whether we are budgeting for the bookstore in 2025.
 - Father John replying that no, we do not have a budget for this. We do have an educational budget to refill the stock of Orthodox literature in the back.
- Edward speaking on maintenance: there are many repairs and replacements on the horizon. Our lawnmower will need to be replaced; 2 HVAC units will need to be replaced; many appliances in the rectory kitchen need to be updated. We established a maintenance fund outside of the budget (not part of our operating expenses). To donate appropriately, you can give to this online or earmark your checks for "maintenance fund". We need to be prepared to make these repairs, and set aside money for them. Currently, there is \$14,000 in this account earmarked for the kitchen renovation.
 - Father Joseph reiterating that the largest cost is often maintenance. It never goes away, you never know what's going to happen. This property is our home and we should take care of it as such.
- Father John clarifying that we should give in tripartite way: give to stewardship; give to matching/building fund; and give to maintenance (we don't know that the expenses would be year to year, which is why we keep it separate from operating; working it into the budget is difficult).
 - Reader David asking if we should consider saving for major repairs (~20k).
Father John agreeing that this is an ideal to work towards.

Motion to raise stewardship levels (by \$12,057.97) to balance the budget and to approve the proposed 2025 Budget: Daria

Second: Rebecca.

Vote: All in favor

2025 Parish Council Members

- Father John asks for nominations for Parish Council.
 - Cecilia nominating Anya Drobish. Ioana nominating Marius, Cecilia: second. Ioana also nominating Ryan, Chrissy, and Michael.
 - There is a 1-year membership requirement to serve on the council that has been historically waived if consensus of parish body is to welcome them.

Motion to submit names for new Parish Council members: Tom

Second: Elisha

Vote: All in favor.

Old Business and New Business

- Kelly asking whether there will be a food collection and donations upcoming Superbowl, as we have had in years past.
 - Father John stating that yes, we will be collecting items this year: more to come via announcements.
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Andrew moved for adjournment, Justin second, approved. The meeting closed with a prayer at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Vera Yevsukov, Secretary