

Christ the Savior Orthodox Church
3rd Quarter Parish Council Meeting
October 16, 2022

Fr. John opened the meeting with a prayer at 11:35.

IN ATTENDANCE:

*Rector: Fr. John Parsells

*Council: Ginny Borodulia, Beth Dunbar, Joe Dunbar, Chad Fortin, Barbara Kaloroumakis, Margaret LoGerfo, Georgianne Mathews, Tom Mathews, Pat McAlpin, Marian E. Ridge, Anne Rowe, Don Rowe.

*Also attending: Nancy Hall

Fr. John called for the **approval of the 2nd quarter minutes**. There was some discussion about the two versions of minutes, with the second corrected version not successfully received and reviewed by all Council members. The motion to accept was tabled and the final version will be approved at or before the next Parish Council meeting.

Fr John reported **Sunday attendance** of 90, an increase over last year. Father praised the youth education efforts under the leadership of Anne and the volunteers who are conducting classes. Marian asked if 90 includes youngsters? Father confirmed that all are counted, children as well as late arrivals to Liturgy. Father explained we should rejoice that we have children in our Church and we count everyone to discover how many are partaking of the Kingdom of God.

Don presented the **Junior Warden** report. The HVAC is installed and the culverts have been repaired with the help of contractors and volunteers. Many thanks to all those who contributed time and labor. The paving of the exit road is now able to move forward after documented confirmation from Tim Gray that we can proceed without a lengthy, potentially expensive approval process. Out of courtesy, Nissa Nancy was asked if there were a particular project that she would like to see funded by the Deacon Stephen Hall Memorial Fund and she has indicated her desire to see the funds used for the paving of the exit road.

The repairs to the Rectory Kitchen were reviewed. The problem lies in the current kitchen design being dependent upon the unique dimensions of high end custom appliances. When they require replacement, the very limited luxury models prove unaffordable. The most prudent course may be to renovate the kitchen, replace aging cabinets, and then purchase excellent quality but not luxury level appliances. The current cooktop needs immediate repair but the

rest of the project can be designed and implemented over a three to five year timeframe. To examine the available options it was proposed that Anne, Chad, Mat. Emily and Margaret investigate options for the rectory kitchen. It was noted that the Parsells find the current kitchen acceptable except for the malfunctioning cooktop.

Motion proposed by Don: First, to have the existing cooktop repaired at an estimated cost of \$875. Secondly, to discuss at next Council meeting the possibility of a kitchen renovation committee to examine options and periodically report back to Father and the Parish Council on the results of their research. Ginny seconded, all approved.

Don brought up a proposal for the renovation of our Parish Hall kitchen which has many storage space challenges and suffers from an unsightly former BBQ area that resembles a construction zone. He was very pleased to report that Nissa Nancy has assumed full responsibility for the cost of this project. Nissa pointed out this project was first approved by Council several years ago but for various reasons failed to move forward. Nissa has suggested a contractor willing to present an estimate.

Don will assist Nancy and the contractor to make sure all concerns about permits are satisfied, and the quality of work, design considerations, etc. are addressed and routed back to Father and the Parish Council for approval.

Motion: Pat introduced a motion to accept Nissa Nancy's offer to obtain an estimate for the purpose of the Parish Hall kitchen renovation. This was seconded by Chad and all approved. Many thanks to Nissa for proposing this project; we look forward to project updates!

Financial discussion ensued about where we stand regarding the Church Building project. Father clarified that the \$12,000 CD is for emergency repairs and is not part of the building fund. The building fund consists of a \$1,000 savings account that can only be used with the Metropolitan's approval and a building operating account with \$3,861 used for more immediate expenses such as wetland delineation. When we receive donations for the building fund, donors are given a choice whether it should go to operating or savings. Nissa asked, considering these wetland issues, does our existing property seem able to provide sufficient land for construction? Although this is early in the process, the Long Term Planning Commission remains optimistic that we will find a 5,000 sq.ft. parcel close to the existing Church, where we could build the new Temple.

Don stated we have no new updates on this or other future project from the Long Term Planning Commission.

Anne proposed that with the creation of these new committees, as well as the growing list of various projects, all committees should submit at least a brief update for our quarterly Parish Council Meetings. Fr. John pointed out that there is a slot in the agenda for committee reports.

Beth Dunbar described projects under consideration by the **Outreach Committee**.

- Updating the tear off flyer to include phone number as well as website info
- Guest speaker search
- Welcome committee needs more greeters
- Welcome cards employed to capture visitor info for follow up
- Church 'business cards' are now available at the candle stand for outreach efforts
- Hosting a guest choir concert
- Volunteering at a soup kitchen
- Directional signage at different locations
- Orthodox book signing at local bookstore
- Increasing community awareness of our missionary role
- Booth at Delaware State Fair
- Biker's welcome signage
- Sending out holiday cards

Anne suggested we also consider an Open House at the Church.

With the addition of the phone number to the tear off sheet, Georgianne pointed out the Rectory might be overwhelmed by phone calls. At some future point we may have to look at an updated message system.

Margaret pointed out that many of these Outreach projects may require funding. If so, we would like to see a proposal for an Outreach line item in the 2023 budget. It may not be possible to fund every project, but it would allow us to help the committee implement its highest priority projects.

Georgianne asked what projects could be in place by year end? Beth responded that signage and tear off sheets should be completed.

Beth indicated we need to reach out to potential members living in our Church neighborhood. We also must learn how to describe our Mission to potential members with a welcoming attitude. Don reflected on the importance of Parish collaboration in the development of our Outreach message and mission.

Barbara, our Treasurer, drew our attention to the **financial reports**. Considering our overall financial position, there was some discussion on who might be the best person to make the plea for more funds. Different giving strategies were discussed by the Council, however, Father urged us to remember the Orthodox way of giving. Our responsibility is to give freely

while being 100% accountable to God. We are not restricted or even encouraged to adopt a tithing percentage as do churches that use an Old Testament model.

The concept of personal witnesses, blessing baskets, prayers for unity were also suggested. Nissa's past experience at many Orthodox churches suggest that stewardship classes for members increase support of all kinds within a church.

There was a **review of various budget line items**. There is a projected deficit of \$10,000 for the year 2022 and a possible \$20,000 budget deficit for 2023. A question was raised about the expenditure line item for the choir. The choir line item was added in 2022 at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Body as a way to begin to compensate our choir directors, following the established practice in our Archdiocese. At that time, the Council heard a variety of suggestions such as reimbursing our choir directors for gas, purchasing new sheet music, improving music stands, and lighting. No decision was made by the Council regarding the allocation of funds at that time. Subsequently, our existing four choir directors met with Fr. John on multiple occasions to discuss the choir line item. They decided unanimously that the \$2500 choir budget should be paid to our new full time choir director during the last quarter of the year due.

Questions arose from several Council members as to whether we have set aside sufficient funds to account for state and federal withholding, as well as any other required employer contributions. Barbara offered to investigate the IRS requirements for this new position and discuss them with the Council at the next meeting.

Barbara reviewed **the earmarked account records** created to track memorial and other earmarked donations for various projects. Father clarified The Gateway's Made Without Hands mosaic icon, has an estimated completion and installation date before Christmas, 2022. This mosaic is being prepared by a world-class workshop at St. Elizabeth's Convent in Minsk, Belarus and the \$15,000 cost is being completely covered by a generous donor. The other mosaics should be ready by early 2023 and they are being funded by the donations for Project Illumination.

Father reviewed the way donated **memorial funds** are handled. Most of the time, the donated funds are not substantial enough to support an entire project so they are noted for tax reporting purposes and deposited to the church operating account. However, in the case of a substantial amount, the balances are recorded, monitored, and efforts are made to stay in touch with the family, who is asked out of courtesy if there is some particular project they might like to see funded with these gifts. This was the case with memorial donations for Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak and Deacon Stephen Hall.

In 2022, the Parish Council voted on two occasions to use some of these earmarked funds for special projects which required immediate attention, namely the Parking Lot Repairs and the HVAC Replacement. Therefore these funds were used temporarily until new money could be raised and the accounts replenished for their earmarked purposes. Barbara is currently reconstructing the balances of these earmarked funds. Once this is completed we can move forward on those projects with greater confidence. She is also looking at improving our record keeping practices to simplify the reconciliation and reporting of these earmarked balances going forward. If anyone has any questions on any aspect of our financial statements you are welcome to contact Barbara directly.

Father outlined the **budget approval process** leading up to the approval of the 2023 budget. The budget will first be reviewed by Father John and the Treasurer. Then the Finance Committee will review the proposed budget and submit it to the Parish Council. There are two more meetings over the next several months for budget review and to discuss suggested modifications. Finally, the Parish Assembly will review and accept it. Father John encourages all parishioners to study the financials in preparation for those budget meetings.

Chad asked if it was true we were finishing 2022 with a \$10,000 deficit. Father confirmed this and said we would also be starting the new year with a \$20,000 deficit. A question was raised as to a line item that shows a significant decrease in donations from visitors. This decrease, however, resulted from many of those visitors being inadvertently filed as members. Part of our challenging financial position stems from projections based on our 2021 pattern of growth. These projections, however, did not result in stronger 2022 collections for a variety of reasons including CoVid lockdowns and other economic headwinds.

Discussion ensued regarding how to address the projected budget deficit of \$20,000. Don suggested contacting the Archdiocese for information on how other churches are calculating the COLA, which is estimated to be around 8.7% this year for federal employees. It was pointed out that eliminating or reducing the COLA, which is not a raise but instead an annual adjustment used to maintain the current compensation level of the priest, would decrease the value of the priest's compensation package, but still leave at least a \$13,000 budget deficit.

Father will be working with Council to address this projected shortfall. He urged us to remember we are financially blessed as a Church and through prayer and patience we will together review our finances and establish a firmer fiscal foundation. **We must remember in Orthodoxy we are equally 100% free and equally 100% accountable for our income, existing financial holdings, and charitable contributions.** We should always look at what we

do despite a strong temptation to focus on persuading others to step up their contributions. In addition we must not look at 'how much I have to give in measured terms' but focus on God and the needs of our church community. All our issues should be addressed through unity.

Ginny complimented the **improved behavior of young children** during Sunday worship. Father John gave credit to adults and parents for this improvement.

Lastly, Father reminded the Council that Marian and Margaret will be rotating off the Council next year. Everyone should start reflecting on **replacements for departing Council members**.

At Father's request, Chad made a **motion to adjourn** which was seconded by Marian. Father closed the meeting with a prayer at 1:40.

In Christ,
Margaret Juliana, Secretary