

Christ the Savior Orthodox Church
3rd Quarterly Parish Council Meeting
Sunday October 27, 2024

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

In Attendance:

- Rector: Fr. John Parsells.
- Council: Ioana Davidson, Zach Davidson, Beth Dunbar, Joe Dunbar, Tom Mathews, Georgianne Mathews, Edward Hill, Georgiana Wright, and Vera Yevsukov.
 Virtually attending: Justin DeArmitt.
- Also attending: Daria Parsells, Nissa Nancy Hall.

Agenda:

- Review of Previous Minutes
- Report of the Rector
- Report of the Senior Warden
- Report of the Treasurer
- Old Business
 - Long Term Planning Report
 - Renovation of Multi-purpose Room
- New Business
 - 2025 Budget
 - 2025 Council Membership and 2025 Meeting Date Selection

Review of Previous Minutes

- Father John invited the meeting participants to amend or approve the minutes of the annual parish council meeting, which were taken by Vera Yevsukov, distributed via email.

Motion to accept the minutes: Zach

Second: Tom

Vote: All in favor

Report of Rector

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

- Father mentioning the most significant event in our parish this year: the repose of Matushka Annice in July. She is remembered at all times here in the parish, by the families and all of us: May her memory be eternal!

- New prosphora baking rotation: headed by Beth Dunbar and Pat McAlpin.
- Welcoming Paul Romanovsky and David Drobish as readers in our parish.
- Thanking Tom for his craftsmanship and attention to detail for the project in the multipurpose room.
- Sunday attendance is averaging 105 (souls): our highest ever.
- Georgianne made a comment that the ladies had a wonderful outing on the boat and thanking everyone for coming out. Father John thanking for everyone organizing and participating in all of the additional events in the church.

Report of Senior Warden

- Senior Warden Georgianne stating that she has no formal report, but would like to share an overall observation. We are at a watershed moment for our church and for this council in anticipation of building a new temple. She expresses her appreciation for Father's sermon on people's giving. She urges everyone to pray for clear communication in meetings here and going forward; she feels very grateful for everyone and feels excited in her heart.
- Father thanking Georgianne for sharing this; though we face challenges ahead, we remember that they are opportunities for growth.

Report of Junior Warden

- None, as Junior Warden Cheryl is out of state this weekend.

Report of the Treasurer

- Ioana presented the Balance sheet and Profit and Loss (see handouts).
- Balance sheet: all of balances as of end of September have been entered. Noting that the Willards account is a CD that is maturing in November of 2025; we cannot touch it until then.
- Profit and loss: as of now, we have a \$10,000 deficit in net operating income.
- Regarding counting:
 - Ioana stating that she has spotted numerous discrepancies between collection sheets and earmarked checks (i.e. checks are earmarked for operating, but sorted to building fund, or vice versa). Please make sure both people are double checking to make sure the money is going where the person who is making the offering intends for it to go.
 - Regarding cash from the collection basket that is not from a specific person: please make sure you enter the total cash amount on the collection sheet.
 - Signing the collection sheet: please make sure both counters are signing, and indicate who is depositing the money.
 - Father John reiterating importance of signing of both parties following counting

- Georgianne suggesting the creation of an instruction sheet or visual checklist to enforce all of these procedures. Several council members expressing verbal agreement.
- Ioana gave an update on the amount of money in the building fund at this time: Total building fund donated to date is around \$34,700. That comes from \$26,810 plus the \$7,890 from the donations made in memory of Matushka Annice (which are all going to the building fund). There is also an additional \$2,000 in memory of Matushka Annice that has not been entered yet.
 - Father John clarifying: our thermometer for phase 1 for the building project is currently at around \$36,800, exceeding our original goal.
- Ioana suggesting that a new thermometer could perhaps display a goal for funding the multipurpose room renovation.
 - Father stating that operating fund goal is also an ongoing goal/goal thermometer that we can discuss.
- Father thanking Ioana for a clear report and for her job as treasurer.

Motion to accept the Report of Treasurer: Beth

Second: Georgiana

Vote: All in favor

Old Business

Long Term Planning Report

- Tom presenting LTPC Report (see handout). He summarizes the LTPC recommendations to the Parish Council. There are a lot of preliminary actions needing that require community participation. It is a daunting undertaking. He is looking for people to pray about it and stepping up to help: we will likely need to form subcommittees in the future; people with banking and financial backgrounds are needed.
- Father John reminding council that LTPC operates under parish council. LTPC is asking for authorization on their 4 recommendations.
 - Father John recommends to make a motion to accept these points after we discuss the 2025 Budget.
- Edward asked whether this document has been shared to the parish.
 - Father stating that we did not want to bypass the council; stating that if we get approval from the council, we can go about conducting parish-wide survey to understand wants and needs for the new temple.
 - Edward stating that he believes this is a good report, this entire page needs to be sent to the whole congregation so that the whole parish becomes aware – most people in the church do not know what goes into something like this; it is daunting and we will need help.
 - Father John clarifying that if approved, we would distribute this first as part of a cover letter followed by the survey.
 - Beth stating that when distributing this document, we should cover the whole gambit: posting it in church, on the email list, on the website, etc.

- Father John stating, per Ella's idea, that we could make a video to tie the building plan into 25th anniversary weekend to inform and inspire parishioners for involvement. Reminding everyone that Phase I ends with a development plan: this is our goal; we are not yet raising money to build. Phase I is a biteable piece.
- Edward posing a question: does the OCA have an office that assists churches projects like this? Father replying that Dioceses of the South and West have more resources available because they are building a lot of churches; we can also reach out to individual parishes for information and help.

Renovation in Multi-Purpose Room

- Tom wants to give credit to Roy and Mirona Bendfeldt, Father John, Cecelia Wyant, and Pat McAlpin with all of their assistance on the project and with furnishing. Tom is continuing to work on the bookshelf side of the room; Daria and Pat are working on procuring a table for the room as well.
- Father John expresses thanks to Tom and Georgianne and all those involved in undertaking this project.

New Business:

2025 Budget presented by Father John

- This time of year, we take the first 9 months of data from Quickbooks, enter it into a spreadsheet that is shared with the Treasurer, Senior Warden, and Priest. This is then presented at 2 more council meetings, then shared with parish body. In the past, we have not made modifications to stewardship levels, we waited until the parish body meeting (likely end of January, early February), so that people feel they have ownership of the budget.
- See 2024 Budget document
 - Looking at projected for end of 2024, we are at -\$25,000. Because of increase in cost, budget for 2025 is -\$31,000. Some reasons for this: we are short \$16,000 projected on stewardship than we had hoped to be. Worst case scenario: we would be -25,000 at the end of the year.
 - In the past, we have come to the parish body to tell them what the needs are. \$25,000 is a high number, and we are looking at 2 months. We should look at things on the expense side. We have lean budget with expenses: the only thing we can afford not to pay is health insurance expenses for the priest (pension, and social security are mandated).
- Currently, our stewardship goals are not being met. Potential reasons for this: our general ask is to continue with stewardship and give above and beyond for special projects; we may have not reiterated this as much recently. We have a surplus in building fund, but we cannot switch it once it has been earmarked. We can ask people to give primarily to operating fund for the rest of the year. We are growing: 105 people/Sunday, but not everyone is giving. Father stating there are at least 5-10 families who are not giving in a

documented fashion; who if they gave, we would not have a budget problem. That being said, our focus is not on one segment of the parish, but on us as a whole. We need to give more regularly and sacrificially as good Christian stewards; we all could improve on stewardship side.

- Father requests help in presenting the data to the church. Father stating that he and his family may be willing to reduce health insurance package to meet goals as well.
- Beth thanking Father for his sermon on stewardship today. She inquires whether it would be wrong to talk to individual families one-on-one about the responsibility of giving?
 - Father John stating that the sermon was general; for some people that's all we can do. Some people might follow-up and ask Father themselves about how this might be feasible. An approach by the priest one-on-one regarding financial matters may create tension and drive people away.
- Joe suggesting an average donation recommendation per parishioner (i.e. what does everybody need to give across the board to meet goals? Can you give \$37/month?).
 - Father stating that that reference point can be harmful; those who give more think they can give less, and vice versa. In the past, we have shown data in columns of how much specific people (anonymous) give. For example: 2 families give 15K, 3 families give 12K, 10 families give \$0, etc.. This gives people an idea of how much families give to the parish, which can serve as models for their own family.
- Edward stating that the \$10,000 deficit that caught him off-guard; Tom agreeing. Edward suggesting that the budget be shared once a month with the whole parish, instead of waiting till October; they should see this every single month.
 - Father stating this is a great point; he has not followed this until recently.
 - Conversation ensuing that though information is shared on website, most people are not seeking this out. Edward stating that we should be continually reminding people monthly.
- Ioana suggesting that some families make a donation per year; maybe could suggest monthly donation rather than large sum a few times per year. Usually this method does not help with operating expenses. Father reiterating that we do not want a membership fee; Old Testament tithe is 10%, this is not the biblical ideal. Our ideal is to give regularly and sacrificially with 100% of what God has given us being managed in a godly way. Father stating that if God desires a church to be built, it will be done; our goal is to get everyone involved and not left out.
- Georgianne suggesting: could we draft a letter from parish council to the parish body? We need to communicate tie between giving and building up our joy/faith to do so. The letter could encourage speaking with Father John about a giving plan to help in building your faith too. It would inspire voluntary conversation and spiritual growth.
 - Father John stating that such a letter should come from the Senior Warden and the entire council.
- Ioana adding that people are welcome to contribute with cleaning, offering their talents. Father John stating that there is a very small sliver of people who are forced to give time and talent instead of giving financial; there is a larger group that chooses not to give financially when they could and should.
- Zach stating that he feels very uncomfortable to reduce priest's compensation to meet budget goals, as does Justin. Numerous people agreeing.

- Father saying that it is probably early to do so, but something to think about.
- Father John reminding everyone that HVAC, stove, ovens are with issues. Father John stating that ideally, if we reach our stewardship goals, he would like to donate back part of his compensation and earmark it for kitchen maintenance/renovation. He and Matushka Emily are considering doing this annually for around \$10,000. He is mentioning this to the parish council as it is responsible to have a plan for addressing maintenance issues.
 - Georgianne asking clarifying question regarding mechanics of this donation. Father stating that if we meet stewardship side goals, his family would be able and willing to donate back \$10K earmarked for kitchen renovation. The Parsells family has chosen to make their donations to CTS for non-budgeted needs so that the parish itself can meet the regular expenses in a way that wasn't artificial (i.e. the priest having to donate his compensation back to balance the budget). This keeps the parish on stable financial footing, independent of who is assigned as its priest.
- Ioana expresses that she feels strongly that given all that Father John contributes, he should not be donating to the church.
 - Father sharing appreciation for love and care for him and his family; we are still stewards of the church.
- Edward stating: our expenses are not extravagant. The issue with not meeting goals is giving, and people are simply not aware. Many people who give little or do not give need tools to learn. Father agreeing that this is a learnable skill. Father John apologizing for lack of communication from his end regarding budget updates. Edward reiterating his suggestion that the Treasurer send out communication monthly to show where we are.
- Father John referencing the impact that donations of estate after a person's passing can have on building funds; many churches were built like this.

New Business Items to Approve:

- Monthly email from Treasurer Ioana to the parish list regarding status of operating costs and meeting financial goals
- Making announcements regarding stewardship at the end of Liturgy by council members
- Drafting a letter from the parish council addressed to the parish regarding stewardship
- LTPC recommendations approved by the Parish Council
 - Also approving LTPC Report to be distributed to parish
- Creation of a checklist for counters to use to ensure all procedures are followed accordingly
- Placement of new thermometer in the back of the church to show goal for projected budget / operating expenses, and what we need from stewardship to reach this goal.
- The subsequent quarterly meeting, per Father John's suggestion, will take place on Sunday, December 8th. Annual meeting date: January 26th (the snow date being the following Sunday, February 2nd).
 - Council membership: need to recruit new people for the new year. If you have someone in mind, let Father John know.

Motion to carry out above items: Beth
Second: Georgiana
Vote: All in favor

Ioana moved for adjournment, Georgianne second, approved. The meeting closed with a prayer at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Vera Yevsukov, Secretary