

St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church
Parish Semi-Annual Meeting
June 26, 2022 (in person with livestream)

Roll Call

Parish Council Members Present: Christine Dardaris, Sergio Georgi, Davit Jishkariani, Reem Tarazi

Council Members Absent: Donna Dmitri, Nilda Salavachi, Zach Smith

Clergy: Father Dennis

Meeting opened with prayer at 11:17am

Secretary's Report

Reem Tarazi presented the meeting minutes from November 7, 2021. Linda Croke made a motion to accept, seconded by Davit Jishkariani. No discussion. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report (prepared by Zach Smith, presented by Davit Jishkariani)

Adjustments to budget

Because of Father Giorgi's departure from St. John's earlier this year and the effects of the coronavirus situation in the first few months of 2022, we have proposed an amendment to the budget to reflect the income and expenditures more appropriately. The following adjustments were made:

- Reduction from \$3,500 to \$0 for income from the Women's Day Dance, cancelled this year due to COVID-19.
- Reductions in the following amounts from priest expenses:
 - o Salary from \$57,000 to \$12,075.48
 - o Priest's Pension Contribution from \$3,300 to \$244.61
 - o Parish Pension Contribution from \$5,700 to \$407.70
 - o Health Insurance from \$10,000 to \$0
 - o Car Allowance from \$1,800 to \$975.
 - o Total reduction from \$77,800 to \$13,702.79
 - o These reductions reflect the full amount paid to Fr Giorgi for this year.
- Increase in the budget for substitute priest from \$700 to \$17,225.
- Reduction in expenses for the Women's Day Dance from \$1,000 to \$0.
- The net effect of these changes also caused a reduction in projected withdrawal from the investment account from \$18,310 to \$0.

As a result of the changes to income and expenditures, the projected income decreases from \$149,360 to \$127,550, and the projected expenditures decrease from \$149,360 to \$100,787.79, for a net projected surplus of \$26,762.21.

It should be noted that these amounts may change again if St. John's obtains another full-time priest. While without a full-time priest the church's budget is in surplus, with a full-time priest we

had to balance the budget by drawing on the investment account. Thus, despite the projected surplus, pledging to support the church is still essential to keep St. John's around and flourishing.

Report on finances for first six months of 2022

Because of changes to the church budget outlined above, Parish Council was able to deposit \$20,000 in the church investment account in April 2022. Unfortunately, the stock market has performed poorly this year and the investment account is down 6% this year even with the additional funds deposited. As of May 31, we had 44 families pledging a total of \$30,854.94. This is short of our goal of \$60,000 for 2022. We also had 41 families support the Icon Auction for a total of \$15,805, exceeding our budget of \$13,000. The church budget currently stands at \$17,284.08 in surplus. Thank you to all parishioners for your generous support of our parish.

Motion to accept amendment and report by Betty Subashi, seconded by Sergio Georgi. No abstentions. Motion passed.

Nick Naum Scholarship Report

Reem Tarazi reported that the scholarship fund continues to be doing well (fund currently at around \$104,000) and up to 5 scholarships have been awarded yearly in the amount of \$2000 each. We received 4 applications this year and the committee is reviewing the applications. Recipients will be notified this week and committee will be awarding scholarships after liturgy on 7/17/22.

Sunday School Report (prepared by Amy Lewis, presented by Reem Tarazi)

In the autumn, the Sunday school was successful. We had good attendance from the kids, regular teachers, and a reusable syllabus was developed with the help of Fr. Giorgi which I will ensure is available for future use. No outside excursions were planned due to Covid, though we posed the idea of once a month movie nights at Church for the kids which we may want to consider again now people are more comfortable sharing indoor space. In the Spring Sunday school was a challenge. This was due in part to not having a permanent priest with whom I could work to develop a syllabus, in part due to poor attendance by kids, and above all because of a lack of available teachers. Many of the lessons are reusable and again, I will make them available. But without consistent teachers and student numbers it was challenging to plan ahead. Looking forward, I will not be living in Philadelphia next year and so will be unable to continue in my role as Sunday school director.

Parish council asked parishioners to consider taking on this role for next year.

Chairperson Report (prepared by Donna Dimitri, presented by Sergio Georgi)

1. Unfortunately, Father Giorgi left St. John Chrysostom after serving at our parish for 6 months. He and his family also left the United States and returned to Georgia. We are once again without a full-time priest. Father Dennis and Father Emmanuel are scheduled to serve at St. John's for the remainder of the year. We are consulting with our Chancellor, Father Nikodhim, as we renew our quest to find a full-time priest for our parish.
2. The OCA All American Council is being held in Baltimore, MD July 18-22, 2022. Information on the All-American Council can be found at www.oca.org. Father Dennis,

Linda Croke and I will represent St. John Chrysostom. If anyone else is interested in attending please contact Donna.

3. The Albanian Archdiocesan Assembly is scheduled for September 23-24, 2022 at St. Nicholas Church in NY. There is a very good possibility we will be voting on candidates vetted by the Synod of Bishops to fill the position of Bishop of the Albanian Archdiocese. The election of a Bishop will fill the vacancy created with the passing of +Archbishop Nikon in September 2019. Metropolitan Tikhon is the locum tenens of the Albanian Archdiocese at this time. We can have 2 lay delegates and the parish council chair attend the meeting as voting members of the assembly. I will attend the assembly as a member of the Archdiocesan Council. Therefore, we can have 3 voting delegates at the assembly. I'm not sure if we can send another voting delegate since we don't have a full-time priest. I will check on this and advise. There is an Archdiocesan Council meeting on June 30, 2022 @ 7:00 pm via Zoom. Details for this meeting will be emailed.
4. Church hall air conditioner. The company we hired last year, Phoenix Home Services, who we contract with to replace the church hall air conditioner at a cost of \$29,654.00 contacted us and advised they cannot do the job. Last June 2021, we gave Phoenix Home services a check for \$14,827.00 (1/2 of the contracted price) with the balance to be paid upon completion of the job. The \$14,827.00 was from the insurance company. Phoenix Home Services was not able to get the a/c unit last year – supply chain issues. Now they are unable to do the job. We have been told they will return the deposit we made. Since being notified by Phoenix Home Services they cannot do the job we have obtained proposals from Oliver Heating and Air Conditioning \$49,987.00 (they installed the A/C in 1999), a proposal from Affordable Fixes \$43,192.00 and are waiting for a proposal from Tozour-Trane. Scott Dwyer, the insurance adjuster has been contacted and advised of the increased cost to install the unit. He will look at our insurance claim and let us know if the insurance company will increase the amount they will pay. Should know more in the next couple of weeks.
5. There are a number of leaks in the church (near window by the door leading to the vestibule on the south side of the church), area near where the choir sings on the south side, area near the center of the church on the north side and a large leak in the church hall above the center window on the south side of the church. The roof on the church was installed in August 1999. The main roof needs to be replaced. In the process of obtaining proposals for the roof.
6. Building project – new windows in the church sanctuary. We spoke about this project at the November meeting. It was postponed until this year as the cost of lumber and the windows greatly increased due to supply chain issues. This project has been postponed until we have the roof replaced.
7. I want to thank Parish Council, the Auxiliary Council and my church family for the love, prayers and support extended to my family following the death of my son, +Steven. I am so fortunate to be a part of such a loving church. Thank you.

Vice-Chairperson Report (presented by Sergio Georgi)

1. It was a tough year again because of the pandemic, but we think attendance is improving.
2. Thank you to Fr. Dennis for always being willing to help and serve and for his dedication to our church.
3. Thank you to Melnik family for attending every week and serving in choir and altar consistently.

4. Sergio is working on replacing website with a more modern one so we have better interactive opportunities.
5. Email delivery has been a problem (especially AOL and yahoo users); have been working with orthodox web solutions to resolve.
6. Church is in need of coffee hour sponsors; individuals can sign up in person or online
7. Livestreaming – up to 111 subscribers; we want to increase in person attendance but also want to maintain method to reach those who cannot attend; looking for volunteers to help assist with livestream on Sundays

Old Business

None.

New Business

1. Elect delegates for Archdiocesan Assembly Sept 23-24, St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church Flushing NY
 - a. Linda Croke, Linda Notskas, Spartak Brahollari, Nilda Salvachi self-nominated
 - b. Pete Ghicondey made a motion to accept nominations; Betty Subashi seconded. No discussion; motion passed.
2. Preliminary plans to initiate a support/process group for parishioners
 - a. Reem Tarazi presented idea/plan developed by Reem and Susan Melnik to start a general social-emotional support group for church members. More information will be forthcoming.
3. AANO Convention Philadelphia Aug 5-7 (Nilda)
 - a. Nilda has tickets to this event; please contact her if interested
4. OCA All-American Council in Baltimore, MD July 18-22
 - a. If anyone else is interested in attending, please contact Donna.
5. New business from the floor
 - a. Linda Kosta asked about plan to replace sanctuary windows because they do not seem to pose any problem; Sergio confirmed will be postponed due to need to focus on roof and other more essential problems.

The next Parish Council meeting will be at July 12 at 7:30pm.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 12:00pm.