

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting – August 12, 2014

St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church Parish Council

The Council Chair, Donna Dimitri, opened the meeting at 7:00 P.M.; Father Brooks Ledford asked the blessing on the meeting.

Roll Call: Roll Call (Linda Biando):

Council Members Present: Donna Dimitri, Peter Ghicondey, Diane Lescas, Jani Mara, Linda Biando and Linda Kosta. **Absent:** Michele Anderson **Auxiliary Members Present:** Linda Notskas, Dorothy Tomassini, David Biando and **Sunday School Director:** Steve Coraluzzi.

Donna thanked everyone for coming.

Pastor's Report: Fr. Brooks Ledford

* Future of St. Johns: Fr. Brooks expressed his concern for the future of our Church. He wonders if we can reverse the trend of not attendance and the absence of children from the Sunday School. How do we get committed Orthodox Christians more involved? He feels the upcoming meeting (September 10th) of the young adults group is of great importance. The plan is to organize what they want to do, Bible study, events, etc.

Father feels the parish will ultimately be based in Center City and some committed people from outlying areas. He suggested we form an Evangelic Committee to figure out how to get the word out – advertise? Our choices are to move the Church or to build it up in ten years where we are. Comments: Linda N. felt it is not Father's fault; However, Jani commented that the sermons could be stronger and better prepared. Steve C. said that he heard good reports about the sermons. Father said that people will come or not, rarely specifically to hear the sermon. Diane L. commented that they have to be present to hear it. There will always be conflicting opinions on the sermons. Linda B. said the sermons are important to her. Father said he spends a day to a day and a half preparing. He first reads the Gospel in Greek and in English. He works hard to make his message, the message of the Gospel, accessible to all the people. The parishioners never say they come just to hear the sermon or the priest, but because this is a welcoming community. Father said if we have things of interest people will come. Father has been spending much of his time building relationships since he has been here. More Comments: Several people feel that advertising should be directed to the Internet because that is where the young people are. Linda K. suggested using local college websites to advertise on as they are inexpensive and hit the young people. Diane L. feels that we are an English speaking Church and that fact must be emphasized especially to the younger generation. Where does that leave the Albanian speakers? We currently use some Albanian during the Liturgy. Most of the new Americans speak English now. David Biando had several suggestions: Call the missing people regularly, have reunions, picnics, food festivals, use

Craig's list, send baggies of Meshe home to the absent parishioners saying "We miss you." Diane commented "Should Church be earlier because of the competing sports and other programs?" Linda B. said "We need a greeter every week." Father said he is working on it.

Secretary's Report: the July 2014 minutes were presented by Linda Kosta. A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Pete G. and seconded by Diane Lescas. All were in favor.

Treasurer's Report: The July 2014 Treasurer's Report was presented by Donna for Michele Anderson. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by Linda K and seconded by Linda B. All were in favor. Donna reported that there has been a small loss in the investment account.

Chairman's Report: Donna Dimitri.

* **Father's Vacation:** Father is firming up his plans. He expects to be in Texas from November 24th to December 1st. We will need to cover only one Sunday, November 30, 2014. He will get back to us about Christmas.

***AED:** Spartak Brahollari was unable to attend tonight. He will bring the information promised on Sunday.

* **Floor:** A rough estimate for the marble was received from a friend of Tim Pappas. The labor cost is about \$7300 and the marble about \$7000. The rugs will run \$10,000 to \$11,000. We have two ballpark prices, one from Diane's contact and another from Tim's contact. Jani has a friend who does marble. Donna suggested he get a price from him she also commented that this is a long term project.

Vice Chair's Report: Pete Ghicondey: Emails have been sent about the Fantasy Football fund raiser. The draft day will be Thursday, August 21.

Sunday School: Steve Coraluzzi.

- Sunday School will begin On September 14th
- On Saturday, September 13, there will be a retreat for the Sunday School teachers followed by a luncheon.
- High School class will be taught on a rotating basis by Father, Vlad, and David. This will require the parishioners to dismiss themselves, venerating the Cross. (One of the Council or a volunteer will still dismiss the people by row.) There was a pro and con conversation about this, but Father feels very strongly that he needs to connect with the kids. The aim is to have 9-10 kids in the HS class.

- It is hoped to have several teachers for each class. New teachers are currently being recruited. Father will also visit the younger kids from time to time during their classes.
- This new system will be reevaluated around Christmas time to see how it is working and if changes need to be made.

Building Maintenance: Donna (Position still open!) No report this month.

Old Business:

- **Sexual Misconduct Policy: Standards and Procedures:** A hard copy will remain in the office. Everyone on Council has been emailed a copy to read. All Council members will need to sign off next month.
- **Tee Shirt** – Father will have more info next month.
- **The Greg Costa Golf Classic:** The Eagles home opener is the same day, Sept. 21st, but it is too late to change the date. Ad order forms will be in the messenger this week. Ball markers will be given to the golfers. A reminder that we need donations for the Albanian Auction. Everything will be done via email. This is the 25th Anniversary of the golf tournament.
- **Outside camera or bell** – postponed until next month.

New Business:

- **Semi-Annual Parish Meeting:** October 12 after Liturgy. One important topic will be elections. Before the next meeting, please give some thought to your current position and if you want to continue serving.
- **Coral Group:** A coral group will be using our Church on August 13th from 7-9:30 PM. Father will be in attendance.
- **Elevator** – Although it has been researched before, David Biando would like to look into an elevator. It will be his project.
- **Orchids on the altar** – Linda N. asked who had donated them. It was Greta Moy. She will be thanked in the Messenger.
- **Monthly Giving** – still going well. August is Sunday School snacks and drinks.
- **Next Council Meeting is Tuesday, September 9th, 2014 at 7PM.**

One last comment from Father Brooks: Father said he has now been here for a year, serving and leading. Occasionally he feels that he must do things a certain way. He appreciated the entire dialog and the input.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Pete G., seconded by Linda B. All were in favor, whereupon the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Linda M. Kosta, Secretary

