

**Parish Council Meeting
October 7, 2020
Remote Zoom Meeting**

Roll Call

Parish Council Members Present: Donna Dimitri, Sergio Georgi, Linda Biando, Elena Shomos, Wes Hansen, Nilda Salavachi **Clergy:** Father Dennis

Auxiliary Members Present: Linda Notskas, Zach Smith, Peter Ghicondey, Jim and Paula Bendo, Davit Jishkariani, Christine Dardaris, Gregory Dardaris, Spartak Brahollari, Reem Tarazi

Meeting opened with prayer at 7:02pm

Secretary's Report

Elena Shomos presented the minutes from the September 2020 meeting. The only change is that we will only include Fr Dennis once as Clergy on the Roll Call. Linda Biando motioned to accept and Nilda seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Checking account and investment account have dropped from last month. Pledges are catching up – for September received \$35,843. Icon sale payment also picking up slowly - as of September \$10,465 out of \$12,620. A recent major expense was the credit card payment for camera for the livestream (\$2200). This month the insurance bill was low because September is the rollover month. Insurance went up about \$100-\$150 per month due to number of previous claims. Collection and candles last year was about \$10,000 – this year we are at \$3500. There was some revenue from baptisms and Network for Good. Moving forward Network for Good will be electronic payment. Debit card has been cancelled. Also, our fair share for the Archdiocesan will go down by about \$3000 this year. Motion to accept by Linda B, seconded by Elena. Passed.

Vice-Chairperson Report

Fiori Papa absent. Nothing to report.

Chairperson Report Donna Dimitri

- 1) Thank you, Father Dennis for all you have done and continue to do for our parish. In addition to celebrating the Divine Liturgy every Sunday, since July 12th, he has done 5 baptisms (beginning July 25th) and has another scheduled for Oct 24th.
- 2) After further examination we determined the leak above the organ was caused by water backing up due to blockage in the downspout. Still investigating the cause of the leak near the door to the side vestibule. The roofs were replaced in 2017 when the copper work (built in gutters) was done. As of now the plan is to connect the downspout from the upper roof directly to the downspout going to the ground. It currently goes into the lower roof gutter.

- 3) The newly installed Gothic windows in the church hall are leaking water when it rains hard. We are contacting Mulroybay Construction – the contractors who installed the windows.
- 4) Upcoming Parish Council election in October. Christine Dardaris, Davit Jiskariani, Reem Tarazi and Zach Smith have volunteered to serve on Parish Council. I contacted Michael Gregory, Lay Vice Chair of the Albanian Archdiocese to get his input as far as the new council. Michael suggested we have a Zoom Parish Meeting and formally elect the slate of candidates along with other business. Thinking of October 29, 2020 @ 7:00 pm for the meeting.
- 5) Meeting with Metropolitan to discuss the selection of a parish priest for St. John Chrysostom. Received an email from the Metropolitan's secretary indicating he was (as our Bishop) agreeable to meeting with us. Will contact his secretary to find available dates.
- 6) Nameday Celebration November 8th
- 7) Christmas is Friday, Liturgy on Christmas Eve?

Father Dennis Report

Father Dennis weighed in on how to facilitate SJC Name Day, as well as Christmas Eve/Christmas services (see below). Father Dennis also reported on the Archdiocesan Assembly (see below).

Sunday School Report

Overall teachers do not want to conduct Sunday School in person. Steve will pursue online options. There's an OCA online school that we are publicizing in the Messenger. Steve will put something in the Messenger sometime soon.

Technology Report

Things are going well with streaming. Two people are interested in helping with streaming. Still struggling with Verizon with the amount of data we have to use. The iPad is set up to be another camera (to display the choir or other events). That way we have a good-looking live stream with multiple camera angles. Serge has a tripod to hold the iPad so it doesn't shake. Serge reminded us that livestreaming is a one-way broadcast (there is no interaction). He suggested that we could send the audio feed through Zoom, and have people interact on Zoom live with Father Dennis if we want to. Father Dennis clarified that this would not replace liturgy. We could stream an additional half hour or so if necessary, for ceremonies/celebrations. There is some question about whether parishioners would know how to use this technology. This discussion to be continued in later meetings.

Old Business

- Directory updates are complete (names, contact information, photo). Sergio proposed putting the directory in a secure location on the website (password protected). We discussed whether we should send out a copy to everyone on email

list or send to parishioners upon request. We could include wording indicating that the directory is for parishioner use only. Decided to send the messenger group indicating that if you want a copy of the directory, send us an email and we will send it back.

- A letter asking for additional donations will be sent to parishioners (without the line about the directory). The point is to generate a group of people to become pledge members. First mail it physically by next week, then email.
- Name Day Celebration on November 8 will be the liturgy then coffee hour and fellowship outside with wrapped/prepackaged foods. We can add capacity upstairs and livestream if necessary. If there is rain, we can use tents.
- We will need to address Christmas Eve and Christmas. We could start brainstorming ideas for how families/children could send well wishes for Christmas. The next Council can continue to brainstorm ways to be encourage additional participation.
- Memorials –families could donate food for coffee hour, could make a monetary donation, or could make a monetary donation for other needs of the church (vestments, etc.). We will put this information in the messenger.

New Business

- Linda B and Fr Dennis reported on the Archdiocesan Assembly. The meeting was conducted via Zoom. Additional information on the meeting can be found in the email from Linda B reporting out on the Assembly provided to the Parish Council email group on 9/27/2020. The below bullet points are highlights of what we discussed at our Parish Council meeting. Comments from our discussion are in bold.
 - Michael Gregory was elected chairman for the meeting. Approximately 40 people were on the zoom call. The meeting this year via zoom was due to restrictions of in person meetings due to the COVID 19 pandemic.
 - Michael Gregory announced that the special assembly on Zoom was approved in the bylaws and that a mechanism for secret ballots can be used for an election of a Bishop. Zoom calls are now an acceptable way to hold our meetings.
 - Metropolitan Tikhon addressed the special challenges affecting us due to the pandemic and sale Of the New York chancellery of the OCA of America. The office will move eventually to Washington DC. The July 21, 2020 all American Council meeting scheduled to be held in Baltimore will most likely be canceled due to restrictions of the virus.
 - The search for a new bishop for the Albanian archdiocese has slowed due to COVID-19. There is one current applicant. No name was given. Metropolitan wanted to make sure there was time for others to apply as well. He said this process May be very slow as everything has slowed down during this time.
 - ***Additionally, we talked about the possibility of hiring a priest if someone knows of a priest looking for a posting.***

- All of the parishes are financially hurting from the effects of closure and limited reopening on a limited basis. Michael Gregory will call a treasurer meeting via zoom so that they can problem solve some of these issues.
- The student fund was given by Fr. Nicodemus. This is very much on hold. There has been decreased enrollment. There have been no candidates recruited in our churches within our ranks. There was clarification about how the committee can award the monies both for tuition and spiritual help to strengthen clergy.
 - ***Additionally, we talked about how it would be a great opportunity for someone in our Parish to take advantage of this full-scholarship opportunity. Men who are already married are also eligible.***
- The sexual misconduct form is mandatory and ongoing. There are legal implications if this is not completed the need for background checks was also discussed. It is unclear right now if this is done on a three-year basis or more often.
 - ***Our Parish is in good standing.***
- There will be an IT Committee with one representative from each parish. Of particular concern is virtual engagement for Sunday School students.
 - ***Fiori Papa was nominated to be our IT representative by Donna Dimitri. Donna will discuss this with Fiori to assess her interest.***

Old Business

- We received instructions from the church in Worcester about how to put the candle donation on the website. We could send a photo of the lit candle to the purchasing parishioner.

The Semi-Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Zoom Wednesday, October 28. All parishioners are welcome to attend. Parish Council members should plan to attend.

The next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday, November 4.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58pm with a closing prayer from Fr Dennis.

Respectfully submitted,
Elena Shomos