

**St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church**  
**Parish Semi-Annual Meeting**  
**April 30, 2023 (recorded)**

**Roll Call**

**Parish Council Members Present:** Donna Dimitri, Sergio Georgi, Davit Jishkariani, Reem Tarazi,

**Parish Council Members Absent:** Christine Dardaris, Nilda Salavachi, Zach Smith

**Clergy:** Fr. Kai

Meeting opened with prayer at 12:00pm

**Secretary's Report (reported by Reem Tarazi)**

Reem Tarazi presented the meeting minutes from semi-annual meeting in October 2023.

Stephanie Kosta made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Linda Kosta. No discussion. Motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report (prepared by Zachary Smith, presented by Reem Tarazi)**

Reem Tarazi presented the treasurer's report, which is attached as an appendix. Reem thanked parishioners for generous contributions that helped support cost of the new roof and highlighted the data on pledges and contributions (few families accounting for large percentage of income) and encouraged families to reflect on the current and future needs of the parish and their contributions.

Stephanie Kosta encouraged parishioners to increase pledges to support parish and full-time priest. Linda Kosta encouraged parishioners to increase dollars put in collection plate on Sundays. Ilirjan Papa suggested that council send targeted requests for donations when there is an unexpected, large cost to the church, as we did for roof donations.

Motion to accept report by Colleen Xhoxhi, seconded by Stephanie Kosta. No opposition or abstentions. Motion passed.

**Clergy Report (presented by Fr. Kai)**

Fr. Kai is happy to be our priest! He highlighted that the Church is us, as a people, and not just the building. He encouraged all to be present, participate, and bring "physical and spiritual power" to the church and respond to the call of Christ. He asked us to remind others of this who are present.

Fr. Kai is available 24/7 and parishioners should contact him directly if in need of anything from him (contact information on website and weekly messenger).

**Sunday school (presented by Fiori Papa)**

Sunday school continues to be a challenge. We have some improvement in student attendance, although we still have work to do, but remain in need of consistent teachers. There is an effort to plan a field trip to Sky Zone before the end of the academic year.

### **Chairperson Report (presented by Donna Dimitri)**

- Albanian Archdiocese Assembly will be held Sept 15-17 at St. George Cathedral in Boston
  - On Sept 16, the bishop elect Nikodhim will be elevated to bishop
  - Service will be held on Sept 17
  - Everyone is welcome to attend assembly and elevation
  - Donna will share more information closer to the meeting
  - We will elect delegates at the end of this meeting
- Church hall AC – We have been awaiting new AC for 2 years; AC is ordered and waiting for it to come in
- In November we will have election for new parish council; please consider running for council
  - Reem stressed need for treasurer and Zach's willingness to train a new person in this role

### **Vice-Chairperson Report (presented by Sergio Georgi)**

- 1) Sergio thanked parishioners in attendance, Fr. Kai and the Melnik family.
  - 2) There is a redesigned website – check it out! We are in need of people to help with website management; please reach out to council if interested.
  - 3) Livestream (you tube) is going well and it's a way to provide access to those unable to attend in person. We have 163 subscribers. We also need people to assist and be present to help with livestream during services; please reach out to council if interested.
- Donna stressed that the commitment for roles such as website management or assistance with livestream requires a few hours per month at most and can be done from home so please consider committing some time and talent toward the needs of the church.

### **Old Business**

Stephanie Kosta asked about status of Facebook account ownership. Eduard Papa, who works at Facebook and has been trying to assist us, reported that it is a complicated process to resolve. Stephanie suggested opening a new page at this point given the time that has passed; Fiori agreed. Stephanie and Fiori will work together to open a new page. Donna stressed that this needs to be a church account, with administrative access to several designated people.

### **New Business**

Election of delegates to archdiocese meeting (2 delegates and an alternate)

- a) Colleen Xhoxhi, Linda Notskas, and Fiori Papa expressed interest
  - a. Will work out who will be 2 voting delegates and who will be alternate
- b) Everyone is welcome and anyone can attend the meeting in addition to elected delegates!

Stephanie thanked the council and made motion to close meeting. Sergio seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting concluded at 12:32pm.

Respectfully submitted by Reem Tarazi

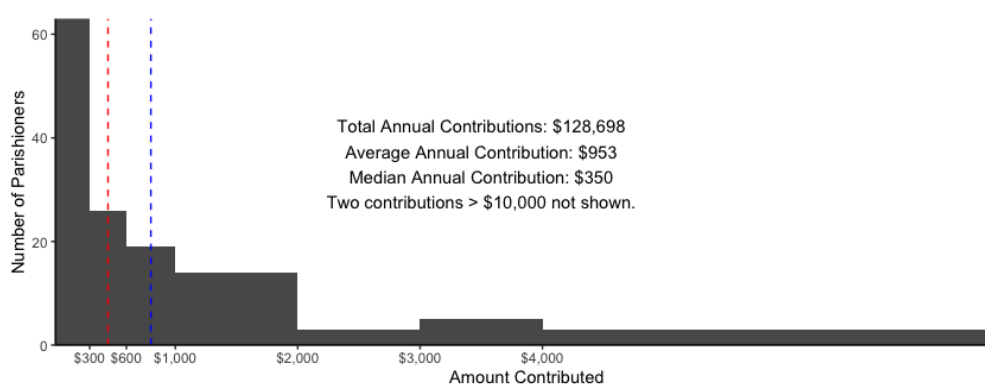
### Appendix Annual Report on Parish Finances

The Parish Council has recently reviewed the parish finances at the close of 2022, and, in the interest of transparency, has prepared a report for parishioners on the state of the parish finances. This report is particularly important as St. John's has a full-time priest, Father Kakhaber (Kai) Kurtanidze, and expenses projected for 2023 and beyond.

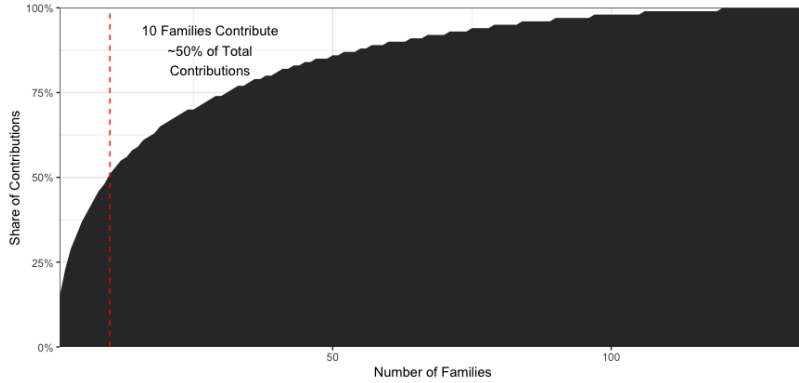
In 2022, St. John's took in **\$167,311.74** in income, of which **\$5,910.04** were from insurance reimbursements related to the theft of copper from the air conditioning unit. The church received **\$53,262.74** in pledge donations, **\$15,518.44** in icon donations, and **\$10,281.43** in memorial donations. Additionally, parishioners donated **\$12,972.63** toward the roof replacement and sidewalk repair projects.

In 2022, St. John's incurred **\$154,095.87** in expenses, of which **\$60,645.70** were to pay for the roof and sidewalk repair projects. St. John's paid **\$29,653.79** in expenses related to the parish priest or substitute priests. In order to obtain a reduction in insurance premiums, the parish council also voted to pay for the 2022-23 insurance year premium in an annual lump sum, which increased reported expenses in 2022. The roof replacement cost **\$55,000.00**.

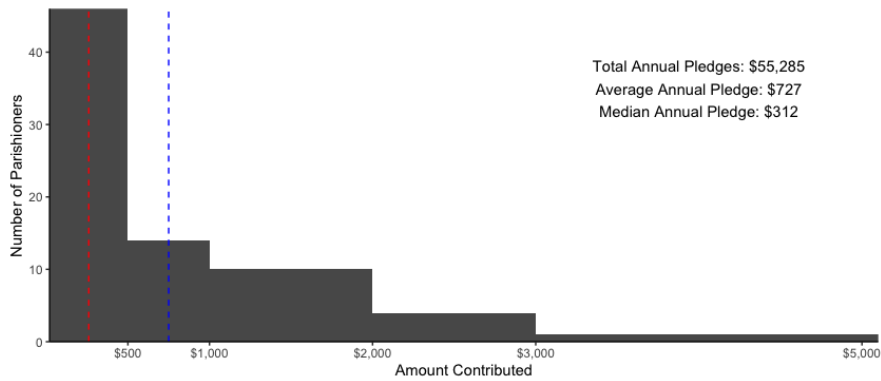
It is important to note the distribution of the contributions that St. John's receives, especially as we incur additional expenses with a full-time priest and with rising prices. In 2022, St. John's received **\$128,698** in designated contributions from parishioners or friends of the parish from 135 families. On average, this works out to \$953 per family per year. However, because of some large donations from parishioners, the "median" or middle contribution amount was \$350 annually. These contributions are shown in the graph below.



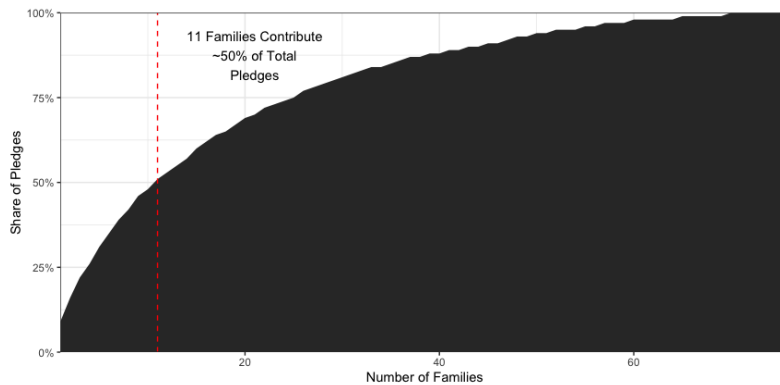
The next graph also illustrates the challenges that St. John's faces in maintaining its current budget. Ten families contribute half of total contributions to the parish—that is, 10 families contributed more than \$65,000 of parish contributions, while 125 families contributed the remainder.



The same situation applies to annual pledges. Last year, St. John’s set a budget of \$60,000 in pledges. However, we did not meet this goal, and parishioners from 76 families pledged \$55,285. On average, this works out to a pledge of \$727 per family. However, the “median” or middle pledge amount was \$312 per family.



Much as with the contributions, eleven families pledged more than half--\$28,120—of all pledges, with the remaining 65 families pledging the remainder.



These figures present challenges for St. John’s as we work to expand our parish. Now, more than ever, your stewardship is crucial to helping this community thrive. Our parish needs your help! Please consider making or increasing your annual pledge today.