

**Parish Council Meeting
December 4, 2023
Remote Zoom Meeting (recorded)**

Roll Call

Parish Council Members Present: Christine Dardaris, Donna Dimitri, Sergio Georgi, Nilda Salavachi, Zachary Smith, Reem Tarazi, Davit Jishkariani (8:30pm)

Clergy: Fr. Kai

Auxiliary Members Present: Steve Coraluzzi, Linda Croke, Liya Gendler, Linda Notskas, Grigor Lakuriqi

Meeting opened at 7:40 pm with prayer.

Secretary's Report (reported by Reem Tarazi)

Reem presented the minutes from the November 2023 meeting. A couple of corrections were proposed.

Nilda moved to accept revised minutes as presented and seconded by Christine. Motion passed.

Parish Council discussed officer roles for next year. Officers will remain as is as no one expressed interest in serving in a different role.

Treasurer's Report (reported by Zachary Smith)

At end November 2023:

- Checking account down to ~\$24,000
- Market investment up to ~\$257,000, which is a meaningful increase
- 5 new pledges (total 67)
 - ~\$48,300 pledged, and slightly more received
- Still ~2000 away from what was pledged for icons
- Investment account and check register presented for review
- Notable Income
 - Pledges received ~9000
 - Sizeable memorial donations
 - Parishioner donations
 - Sunday school gift drive (\$695)
- Notable Expenses
 - Annual insurance premium ~\$13,000 processed in October
 - Parish donations in honor of Bishop Nikodhim's ordination
- Zach explained mismatch between what treasurer report states was paid for salary to Fr Kai this year and what was actually budgeted; total compensation amount is consistent with budgeted
- Zach explained what seems to be transposition of priest and parish pension contributions
- Still in red for year
- Bank and CC statement available for review

Grigor mentioned a personal connection with an insurer and he will look into options with that insurance provider. Zach will provide necessary information.

Reem moved to accept the report, seconded by Sergio. No discussion. Zach abstained. Motion passed.

Zach sent housing allowance form to Fr. Kai. Council will review and will follow up via email to approve.

Chairperson Report (reported by Donna Dimitri)

- 1) Windows in main church: Waiting for the contractor to come to the church to provide an estimate for the window installation. Should be here in the next two weeks.
- 2) Acer Associates, LLC, came to the church on November 27, 2023 to perform the asbestos inspection. The report should be ready next week. It will be forwarded to Parish Council when received.
- 3) Sunday school is still struggling with attendance. The Sunday School Christmas Pageant is scheduled for December 17. Paula Bendo, Ilirjan & Fiori Papa, Entela Ndrecka and Diane Coraluzzi have been meeting with the kids on Sundays.
- 4) Father Kai completed the Nativity Letter which was shared with Council. It will be mailed this week.
- 5) 2024 Calendars arrived. Sponsored by Vraim Funeral Home. Father Kai's name and phone number added this year. A Thank you letter will be sent to David and Michael Vraim.
- 6) Jim Bendo prepared the Coffee Hour sign-up sheet for 2024. It is posted in the side vestibule.
- 7) The Christmas tree was set up in the church and all of the decorations were placed in the church. Greta Dilo will be at church on Friday to decorate the tree. Margarita Sevi and Alfred Coni will be there too. I will send an email to request additional help on Friday, Dec 8, 2023 4:30 pm

Vice Chairperson Report (reported by Sergio Georgi)

- 1) Upstairs window repair: mostly completed; just needs some final caulk. Thank you, Sergio!
- 2) Livestream: 200 subscribers at present
- 3) Some sound issues last Sunday when Sergio not in church, but he will look into it.
- 4) Eda Petuqi helping with website
- 5) Email from Square about policy changes re: transactions as surcharge to CC purchase; discussed with Zach
- 6) New LED bulbs installed on 2nd floor, so now all bulbs consistent

Nilda suggested we make online church store on website. Sergio agreed it is possible. Will get pictures to post for website.

Nilda suggested we put updated pictures of parish council members and Bishop on website. Will do this in January.

Clergy report (reported by Fr. Kai)

- 1) Diocese meeting held; Fr. Kai summarized what was discussed at the meeting and various perspectives represented

- 2) Preparing for Christmas
 - a. Traditionally, would have 3-4 days of services; may try to do so next year
 - b. December 24 liturgy will be followed by a special service that will involve our youth
- 3) Fr. Kai explained his intention to have more people involved in the altar
- 4) Spoke to Fr. Nick re: challenges with general participation; Fr. Nick shared information about converts who join his parish yearly; this should be a goal for us too and Fr. Kai shared ideas on how to achieve this goal
- 5) David Brook is working toward being tonsured as a Reader.
- 6) Suggests sharing with parishioners our financial situation and what is expected of them to elicit more donations
 - o Discussion: letters from priest; targeting different groups; again recommend specific donation amounts based on family status/age; membership requirements; sending letter again as Zach did earlier this year summarizing financial contributions; reminding people what it costs to run church and how much pay for other daily needs; include QR code for payments when we elicit pledges or donations
 - o Will put an agenda for further discussion at January meeting

Old Business

- 1) Background checks: Christine did not hear back from Fr. Mark since communication in November; the OCA now has a process and we have to go through them
- 2) Christmas preparation
- 3) Reem provided update on holiday gift drive through St. Chris: 4 families are doing purchasing/wrapping and we collected \$695 donations from parishioners
- 4) Icon auction scheduled for Jan 7 and 14: parishioners reminded to return icons; Donna will check if Stephanie Kosta and/or Peter Ghicondey would be willing to run auction; updated list of icons will be posted on website
- 5) Epiphany/Theophany will be celebrated with a Liturgy on Saturday January 6, 2024 at 10:00 am. Father Kai will also bless the water on Sunday January 7, 2024 at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

New business

- 1) Soup-er Bowl Sunday Feb 11: will proceed as usual
- 2) Women's Day Dance: will discuss plans/date in January
- 3) Sexual Harassment Policy: Donna will email; review and sign online
- 4) Sergio asked about sending out pledge cards. Will discuss in January.

Next Parish Council monthly meeting scheduled for Monday, January 8, at 7:30pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm with a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Reem Tarazi