

**Parish Council Meeting  
October 16, 2023  
Remote Zoom Meeting (recorded)**

**Roll Call**

**Parish Council Members Present:** Christine Dardaris, Donna Dimitri, Sergio Georgi, Davit Jishkariani, Zachary Smith, Reem Tarazi

**Parish Council Members Absent:** Nilda Salavachi

**Clergy:** Fr. Kai

**Auxiliary Members Present:** Linda Croke, Liya Gendler, Linda Notskas

**Meeting opened at 7:40 pm with prayer.**

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

Reem presented the minutes from the September 2023 meeting.

Sergio moved to accept minutes as presented and seconded by Davit. Motion passed.

Donna thanked Reem for continuing to send thank you notes.

**Treasurer's Report (reported by Zachary Smith)**

At end September 2023:

- Checking account up to about ~\$37,500
- Market investment down to ~\$247,600, reflecting market
- Up to 60 pledges
  - ~\$41,500 pledged, ~35,900 received
- Few new icon payments
- Investment account and check register presented for review
- Notable Income
  - \$3700 from pledges
  - Generous \$2000 donation from a parishioner
  - \$18,400 AC reimbursement received from insurance
- Notable Expenses
  - Nothing unusual
  - Substitute priest fee week of assembly will be reimbursed by archdiocese
- In black this month secondary to insurance payment; still in red for year ~\$6000
- Bank and CC statement available for review

Per Donna, Fr. Kai's expenses for assembly will be submitted; all other attendees paid for own rooms. THANK YOU to attendees who made these indirect donations to church.

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

Zach brought up discussion of Fr. Kai's compensation which requires vote from council. We intended to provide cost of living increase, which is 3.2% for 2024. Some have proposed an increase to 6% total and most council in agreement. Some discussion but no formal vote.

Zach presented 2024 budget for review. Council discussed and made minor changes. Zach will present the proposed 2024 budget at semi-annual parish meeting on 10/22/23.

#### **Clergy report (reported by Fr. Kai)**

- Met today with Temple college students who have attended our church
- Shared about his experience at Archdiocesan Assembly
- Suggested we plan meaningful experiences as a parish (e.g., visiting monastery)
- Fr. Kai is looking for people who are musically inclined and willing to learn to chant/sing for Vespers given the sole burden on the Melnik family; Fr. Kai is interested in broadening the "beauty" of the church through chanting
- Fr. Kai is seeking honest feedback and suggestions from council and parishioners
- Re: iconography for church: despite financial burden, feels important to explore possibilities to add iconography and encouraged consideration of various styles and options
- Wants to introduce one other service during the week – Peraklesis for Theotokos. Day of week to be determined based on interest from others in collaborating for service
- Wedding and baptism update – much to celebrate!

Donna thanked Fr. Kai for his commitment and enthusiasm.

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

- At the Assembly Dinner, council members in attendance made a \$1000.00 pledge to the AOAA student fund.
- Linda Croke and I attended Father Arthur's funeral on October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at the Cathedral in Boston. On Friday evening there was a service with Bishop Nikodhim and about 8 priests. On Saturday the Divine Liturgy was celebrated. Father Arthur's wife, Margaret, and his son, Evans, spoke on Friday night and thanked everyone for their love and support.
- On October 11 & 12 Father Dennis and I attended the OCA Metropolitan Council meeting in Springfield VA. The meeting on October 11<sup>th</sup> involved a training session for the entire metropolitan council concerning pension funds. In the afternoon the Metropolitan Council and the OCA Pension Board met and discussed ongoing concerns in reference to the Pension Fund. A 2% increase in Parish Contributions was approved to bring the Parish Contribution to 14% and the contribution by priests and lay employees remained at 6%. The Pension Board will develop a Funding Improvement Plan for presentation to the Metropolitan Council. October 12 was devoted to reports from various committees and the OCA treasurer. The \$2,361,581 budget for 2024 was approved. The Albanian Archdiocese Fair Share assessment for 2024 remains at \$22,000.00.
- Windows in main church: A presentation will be made at the Parish Meeting asking for approval to use \$70,000.00 to buy and install new windows. The estimated cost breakdown is as follows: windows \$2000.00 each, installation \$3000.00 each, window film \$2000.00 each
- Still working on getting a company to conduct an asbestos survey at the church. It is much more complicated than originally thought. Will have an update next month.

- The church sign was vandalized, ripped from the frame and thrown on the driveway of the Sheraton Hotel. This occurred between Saturday, Oct 7<sup>th</sup> and Sunday morning October 8<sup>th</sup>. Fortunately, the sign was not stolen or damaged too much. We will purchase some touch-up paint and put the sign back in the frame.

### **Vice Chairperson Report (reported by Sergio Georgi)**

- Upstairs window repair: ongoing, but delayed; hope will be completed soon
- Livestream: 183 subscribers at present
- Always seeking help with livestreaming; let Sergio know if interested
- Still seeking help with routine website management
- Ordered more LED lights and will replace as needed

Reem suggested that we put out an *explicit and direct* appeal for help for website management and livestream. Sergio suggested asking for Nilda's help to recruit someone for website management given her position as social media director.

Fr. Kai suggested there may be better ways to communicate with and engage parishioners who speak/read Albanian only.

### **Old Business**

- 1) Iconography: Quirako Kosova (iconographer) is working on immigration to US; will aim to invite him to speak to council in January
- 2) Semiannual meeting scheduled for 10/22/23. Donna confirmed who will attend and what will be reported.
- 3) Sergio shared reflections and updates from the Archdiocese annual meeting and ordination of bishop. During the meeting, council members in attendance agreed it would be most appropriate to increase planned donation from our parish to student fund to \$1000.

### **New business**

- 1) Halloween party scheduled for 10/29/23
- 2) Thank you to Paula Bendo for working with our Sunday School students
- 3) Church Name Day celebration and bishop visit scheduled for 11/12/23
- 4) Nativity Pageant planned for 12/17/23
- 5) Donna stated that no one is signed up for coffee hour for 12/24 or 12/31 and suggested we forgo coffee hours those dates.
- 6) Christmas liturgy: Fr. Kai suggesting adding brief Nativity service at the end of morning liturgy on 12/24. Will finalize a plan at future meeting.

**Next Parish Council monthly meeting scheduled for Monday, November 6, at 7:30pm.**

**The meeting adjourned at 9:54 pm with a closing prayer.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Reem Tarazi