

St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church
Parish Semi-Annual Meeting
June 2, 2024 (in person; audio recorded)

Roll Call

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

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

Clergy: Fr. Kai

Meeting opened with prayer at 11:52am

Secretary's Report (reported by Donna Dimitri)

Donna presented the meeting minutes from semi-annual meeting in October 2023. No questions or concerns. Linda Croke made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Karen Kane. No discussion. Motion passed.

Donna recognized other tasks completed by Reem in her role as council secretary.

Treasurer's Report (presented by Reem Tarazi)

Based on 2024 income and expenses until end of April 2024:

- The checking account balance is at \$43,088.36, following a large payment toward the new windows in April.
- The investment account balance is at almost \$273,000 – we started the year around \$270,000 and have seen fluctuations reflecting market, but this value is higher than at any time in 2023.
- We are up to 46 pledges so far in 2024 totaling just shy of \$40,000, and we have received \$22,385 of that amount.
- Icon payments so far this year are at \$11,400 of the slightly over \$17,000 pledged.
- Notable income so far in 2024:
 - Raised almost \$8000 for the Women's Day Dance.
 - Over \$6000 in memorial donations received YTD
 - ~\$2500 in Pascha donations in April alone
- In addition to budgeted and anticipated expenses, Capital improvement project for the new windows a major expense for which we are starting a fundraising drive - Donna will give an update on expense and status of that project
- Because of the high capital expenditure in April, we are in red at this point.

Motion to accept report by Linda Croke, seconded by Greg Dardaris. No oppositions. Motion passed.

Clergy Report (presented by Fr. Kai)

- 1) Fr. Kai reminded parishioners that he is committed fully because of the positive interactions, support, and feedback he has received from church family
- 2) Wedding, funeral and baptism update – has been a busy year
- 3) Ongoing goal to beautify our services to the extent possible to maintain engagement of those that attend church. Will aim to have an Albanian language service monthly.
- 4) Update on Philadelphia Orthodox Brotherhood – will host at St. John's a Paraklesis in August for all local orthodox churches

Donna thanked Fr. Kai for his leadership, commitment, enthusiasm and dedication.

Sunday School update (reported by Ilirjan Papa)

- Only about 5-6 children showing up on Sundays.
- Encourage parishioners to bring children to church!
- Asking for volunteers for Sunday School teachers, especially for the older/high school students

Donna thanked Ilirjan for his commitment to reviving Sunday School program.

Chairperson Report (presented by Donna Dimitri)

- 1) Windows have been installed in the church. Cost will be \$6,000.00 per window. Will also have all caulking removed and replaced on Gothic windows in the church hall, and on the lower roofs. Cost for this work is \$7,000.00. It will begin this week. \$70,000 for this project was approved by parish at the last meeting.
- 2) On May 8th, 2024 the church and church sign were hit by a vehicle that had been stolen. The base of the sign was moved toward the building. Will get an estimate for the repair of the base. We are in the process of getting the police report. Our insurance deductible is \$10,000.00 so we will not be submitting a claim for this.
- 3) The Archdiocesan Assembly will be September 20th & 21st at our sister church, SS Peter & Paul in Northeast Phila. All parishioners are welcome to attend the assembly and observe what occurs at our assembly. When we get to new business we will elect 2 representatives to attend the assembly as voting delegates. There will be a liturgy on Saturday, September 21st. More information to follow.
- 4) At our fall semi-annual meeting we will have elections for Parish Council. We need people to volunteers to serve on council. Parish council is responsible for the oversight of the operation of the church, coordinating with Father Kai regarding liturgical services and making sure Father Kai has everything he needs as pastor of our parish. Please speak with Father Kai or me if you are willing to help your church by serving on Parish Council.

Old Business

- 1) Ilirjan Papa reminded parishioners about the iconography project presented at the October 2023 meeting: Proposal in early stages - anticipate this as a 5-10+ year project. Plan would be for families to make donations toward specific icons. No money being requested from parish council. Any interested parishioners can discuss further with Ilirjan or even meet with iconographer. Donna suggested we invite iconographer to come and do a presentation.
- 2) No other old business from the floor.

New Business

- 1) Elect delegates for Archdiocesan Assembly Sept 20-21
 - a. Self-nominations from Linda Notskas, Anila Vero
 - b. Fr. Kai shared importance the meeting and encouraged all to attend.

Greg Dardaris made motion to close meeting. David Brooks seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting concluded at 12:28pm.

Respectfully submitted by Reem Tarazi