

Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western PA
Minutes of 2015 Annual Archdiocesan Assembly

The Annual Assembly of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western PA was held on Saturday, November 7, 2015, at the Nativity of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Philipsburg, PA.

The Assembly opened with the celebration of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. The Archbishop was the main celebrant of the Liturgy, assisted by Father Chancellor and clergy of the Eastern (former Altoona-Johnstown) Deanery. Archpriest Mark Meholick, Dean.

The first plenary session was called to order by Archbishop Melchisedek at 11:15 am in the parish activity center, with the singing of O Heavenly King.

Credential Report:

1 Hierarch
20 Archpriests and Priests
6 Deacons
21 Lay delegates
7 Archdiocesan Council members
2 Observers
1 Visiting Clergy (Archpriest Eric Tosi)

A total of 55 were eligible to vote.

Election:

Clergy Vice Chair-	Father George Johnson nominated by Father Nikolai Breckenridge. Second by Alexis Parshook. Passed.
Lay Vice Chair-	John Rusinko nominated by Gregory Nescott. Mr Rusinko declined. Ron Skvir nominated by Justin Nescott. Second by Father Lawrence Daniels. Passed.
Clergy Secretary-	Archpriest Michael Senyo nominated by Father Nikolai Breckenridge. Second by Father Gregory Peterson. Passed.
Lay Secretary-	Rebecca Danchenko nominated by Diane Robb. Second by Justin Nescott. Passed.

All elected by acclimation.

Minutes of Previous Assembly

The minutes of the 2014 assembly were previously distributed to the delegates via email, and the reading of the minutes was dispensed. Correction: there were 49 delegates and not 53 as reported. The minutes were accepted with corrections.

Report of the Hierarch:

Verbal report of the Hierarch highlighted these major items:

- 100th Anniversary in Portage (Saints Peter & Paul)
- Steubenville College Outreach through a Coffee House and bookstore (St. Sophia)

- Blessing of the Holy Spirit Chapel in Beavertown, PA
- New Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) Community at Edinboro and Slippery Rock Universities
- Celebrated at consecrations with Bishops Paul and Daniel
- Attended the All American Council (AAC) in Atlanta, GA which passed new statues and funding models
- Small Parish Conference at St. Nicholas in Weirton, WV
- Synod liaison for dialogue with the Anglican Church in North America
- Synod retreat at Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction, MI
- Synod meetings; member of the “Standing” Synod (formerly the Lesser Synod)
- Attended Assembly of Bishops Conference in Chicago, IL
- Visited his monastery brotherhood in Greece
- Attended sessions of Metropolitan Council
- Planning for the 100th Anniversary of the Archdiocese in 2016
- Long-range Planning Committee to issue options for the property in Cranberry Twp, PA

Following the Hierarch’s Report, a DVD about the history of the Archdiocese was shown to the Assembly.

Chancellor’s Report: A written report was distributed electronically to the delegates prior to the Assembly. Copy filed.

Additional remarks of the Chancellor:

- Reviewed his responsibilities within the Archdiocese
- Currently seven (7) vacancies in the Archdiocese (Black Lick, Masontown, Homestead, Monessen, Philipsburg, West Brownsville and Weirton)
- Outlined goals for the coming year
- Mentioned the celebration for the 100th Anniversary of the Archdiocese in October 2016
- Spoke of renewing a schedule of clergy retreats, gatherings and symposia

Treasurer’s Report: A written report was distributed electronically to the delegates prior to the Assembly. Copy filed.

Mr. Gregory Avdakov gave the financial report with a summary of income and expenses from January to September 2015 (copy filed). A deficit budget was presented and reviewed (copy filed). A review of the investment accounts was presented (copy filed).

Questions regarding the report: Father Chancellor discussed the pending sale of the Reed Street property (formerly St. Michael’s Cathedral).

- Moved a loan of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) to Holy Spirit Mission in Beavertown, PA from the Archdiocese
- Archpriest Thomas Soroka inquired about the O.C.A. per capita assessment. Ninety dollars (\$90) is the current assessment
- Mr. John Rusinko suggested funds from the Bishop Benjamin Scholarship Fund be considered for investment to provide increased income

Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Passed.

Audit Committee: Alexis Parshook reported no issues with the books. Also, the outside audit was 'clean'. Auditor's reports were accepted.

Dean's Report: A written report was distributed electronically to the delegates prior to the Assembly. Copies filed.

The Archbishop announced the new Deanery boundaries:

- Eastern Deanery- Archpriest Mark Meholick, Dean
- Southwest Deanery- Priest Gregory Thompson, Dean
- Northwest Deanery- Archpriest Joseph Wargo, Dean
- Cathedral- Archpriest Michael Senyo, Dean

Parish Growth and Development: sustained and positive discussion regarding small parishes, demographics, consolidation, funding of clergy and attracting seminarians to serve in the Archdiocese

- Archpriest Thomas Soroka suggested to make a new DVD that would/should feature present growth with an emphasis on the future
- Priest Daniel Mathewson spoke regarding prayer and growth, suggesting the Archbishop compose a special petition for the Divine Liturgy to pray for church growth
- Three questions to ask:
 - Are we being the Church?
 - Do you love the people?
 - Do you speak of Christ and who He is?

Lunch Break started at 1:18pm

The Second Plenary Session was called to order at 2:15pm

Review of additional reports with comments of Committee Chairs (copies filed)

Long Range Planning Committee: Priest Nikolai Breckenridge reported options to be presented to the Archdiocesan Council during their joint meeting, scheduled at the Cathedral on November 16, 2015

Archpriest Eric Tosi, Secretary of the OCA, made a brief presentation of the work of the Chancery, the Central Church administration, the All American Council and communications

Unfinished Business from 2014 Assembly- none

Proposed Budget for 2016: Passed

Elections

Nominations were received for the following clergy positions within the Deaneries:

- Eastern Deanery- Priest Elijah Bremer
- Southwest Deanery- Archpriest Gregory Peterson
- Northwest Deanery- Priest Nikolai Breckenridge

Nominations were received for the following laity positions:

- Lay at large: Justin Nescott
- Deaneries: Nicole Rogos (Northwest Deanery)

Gregory Ohler (Southwest Deanery)

Metropolitan Council: Priest Nikolai Breckenridge
Dr. John Schultz

Auditing Committee: Priest Daniel Mathewson
Alexis Parshook
Helen Billak

Nominated and elected. Motion passed.

Being no further business before the Assembly, the motion to adjourn was made, with a second made at 3:20pm. The Archdiocesan Council and Auditing Committee were officially installed by Archbishop Melchisedek. Meeting was concluded with the singing of the Hymn to the Theotokos.

Respectfully submitted,

Very Rev. Michael Senyo
Clergy Recording Secretary

Rebecca Danchenko
Lay Recording Secretary

The Most Rev. MELCHISEDEK
Archbishop of the Archdiocese of
Pittsburgh and Western PA

Very Rev. William Evansky
Chancellor of the Archdiocese of
Pittsburgh and Western PA