

Meeting of the Archdiocesan Council

The Archdiocesan Council held a regular meeting on August 16, 2021 in the hall of Saint Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. The meeting was called to order by the Archbishop at 6:30 pm with the singing of the troparion for the Dormition of the Holy Theotokos.

Members Present: Archbishop Melchisedek, Chancellor Archpriest William Evansky, Secretary Archpriest Michael Senyo; Archpriests: John Mikita, Cathedral Dean, Mark Meholick, Thomas Soroka; Priests: Nikolai Breckenridge, Stephan Gresh. From the Laity: Rebecca Danchenko, Gregory Sidorick, Raymond Steeb.

The Oath of Office/Council Membership was taken by the members present, being administered by the Archbishop.

Sec Report: was distributed electronically prior to the meeting. There were no changes or corrections.

Treas Report: was distributed electronically. Alexis noted that currently no parishes are in arrears in their financial support to the Archdiocese. Motion to accept by Father Stephan Gresh. Second by Father Nikolai Breckenridge.

Hierarch's Report: The Archbishop reviewed his full schedule of parish visitations and other events, noting He has been very active since the pandemic related restrictions. The Archbishop also announced that, save for an extreme national health crisis, there would be no restrictions or advisories placed upon parish communities in the Archdiocese. Archpriest John Mikita was assigned to the Cathedral. Protodeacon Alexander Cadman will be ordained to the Priesthood on September 4 at Saint John parish in Canonsburg. Currently, there are seven communities with no assigned priest. These parishes are being served by deanery and retired clergymen. The Archbishop noted that Igumen David, serving Madera and Irvona is in very poor health, and expects that he will be retired. The properties in Moundsville and Masontown have been sold. A portion of the funds from the Masontown sale have been designated for care of the Cemetery. Both the Archbishop and Father Chancellor spoke of the difficult legal and canonical problems related to the Duquesne parish. Some time was spent explaining events, circumstances, persons and clergy involved. A peaceful resolution is being sought, without having to turn to the courts.

Chancellor's Report: Father Chancellor spoke further on the difficulties in Duquesne. In this context, he noted that rectors have the responsibility to see that parish by laws are up to date, conforming to the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America and Archdiocesan by-laws. An update on ill and elderly clergy of the Archdiocese was provided. Clergy and Lay retreats are being planned, delayed by pandemic concerns. Meetings of OCA Chancellors and joint meetings between the Synod of Bishops and Diocesan Chancellors are scheduled. On the topic of retreats, Father Nikolai suggested workshops on proper liturgical practice be organized, particularly for deacons.

Building and Grounds: Report filed. Gregory Sidorick expressed concerns related to maintenance of the newly planted spruce trees. The need for property maintenance is a constant concern. Within the budget, some repairs have been made, and insulation has been added to the Archbishop's residence.

Church Development: Report filed. Extensive discussion concerning the focus of the program, the performance of Mr Kormos and problems related to continuing the program under his direction, in consideration of the funds being budgeted.

Metropolitan Council: Father Nikolai noted a joint meeting of the Synod of Bishops. Diocesan Chancellors, and the Metropolitan Council will be held on October 20. Raymond Steeb reported on the lack of movement regarding the sale of the Syosset property, concerns for location of the Archives and a residence for the First Hierarch.

Children and Youth Protection: Protodeacon Alexander reported that difficulties regarding the contractors conducting the background checks have been worked out. Parishes are responsible for fees related to background checks.

Unfinished Business: Father Mark Meholick offered a report on the new Saint Nicholas parish property in Dubois. Father Michael Senyo offered a report on the Jeannette parish's participation in the LPAP. Mr Benedict Breckenridge offered a thoughtful and positive perspective on working towards growth in the South Side parish (copy at filed) Positive discussion followed, with the Chancellor stating further meetings will be held to continue this process. For the Assembly, elections will be held for the following open seats: Metropolitan Council (clergy); Southwest Deanery (lay); Northwest Deanery (lay); and Auditors.

Budget Discussion: Copies of the proposed budget were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Alexis reviewed minor changes and called for questions. Father Stephan Gresh moved to accept. Second by Father John Mikita. Passed.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:45 pm

Respectfully Submitted, Archpriest Michael Senyo, Secretary