

Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday, January 8, 2020
Saint John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church

Donna Dimitri opened the meeting with a prayer at 7 p.m.

Roll Call: Council Members Present: Donna Dimitri, Sergio Georgi, Fiori Papa, Wes Hanson, Linda Biando
Absent: Elena Shomos, Nilda Salavachi
Auxiliary Members Present: Steve Coraluzzi (via conference call), Michele Lorimer
Auxiliary Members Absent: Linda Notskas, Janice Leyden, Bill Bortner, Dorothy Tomassini, Grigor Lakuriqi

Secretary's Report: Linda Biando presented the minutes from the December 2019 council meeting. There were no questions or amendments. A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Fiore and seconded by Wes. The Secretary's report was unanimously accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report: Donna gave the Treasurer's Report.

1. As of December 2020-
 - Investment account \$130,562.71
 - the icon auction is currently ongoing and will be reported on next month
 - total number of pledges as of the end of December 2019 is 87 and we have received \$52,108.00 of the \$52,350.00 pledged
2. \$ 867.00 year to date Received from "Network for Good on Facebook. Linda made a motion to accept the October report, Fiore seconded the motion and all were in favor.
3. Christmas donations are still being sent in and will be reported next month.

Chairperson Report: Donna Dimitri

1. Window update: Form a committee to begin fundraising for windows. Final cost per window \$7,500.00
2. Sunday School: New closet built, pillars trimmed out, baseboard installed. Finalizing a date to install finish floor.
3. Front Window put on hold until the spring. It was too cold for the epoxy.
4. Steam Boiler: Installation began yesterday. Will be operational by Sunday. We received a check from the insurance company for \$27,694.00. We will submit a claim for the rental, installation and removal of the portable heaters.
5. Refund for Sales Tax paid via PGW June 23, 2019 we filed an appeal for the refund of \$1,176.10 in sales tax paid via the PGW bill. After reviewing the evidence, the Board of Appeals granted a full refund. We will be receiving a check. We are no longer charged sales tax by PGW. Letter attached.
6. Father Dennis Rhodes offered to do home blessings. A list has been started. Father Dennis will contact those who signed up and set up a time to visit. Father Dennis also volunteered to serve Pre-sanctified liturgies and Holy Week.
7. Metropolitan Tikhon will visit our parish and Ss Peter & Paul Feb. 22nd - 23rd. Hotel rooms reserved for the Metropolitan and Deacon Joseph. The plan is to have Vespers at SS Peter and Paul Saturday and celebrate the Divine Liturgy at St. John Sunday.
8. Church Sign installed and paid for. Linda Notskas donated \$1,500.00 to cover the initial down payment for the sign.
9. Jordanian Couple have not contacted me in reference to the \$1,800.00 check that was returned marked "altered". Father Milad spoke to their family members but nothing has happened. I will continue to follow up.

10. Cushions for pews obtained an estimate for bottom cushions for the pews 2" high, 15" wide, various lengths. – Labor and materials Foam & PolyWrap \$1,550.00, Velcro \$150.00, Fabric estimate \$20 per yard, \$1,500.00, Labor \$2,200.00 Total \$5,400.00, or \$270.00 per pew. Estimate from Tushy Cushy LLC.
11. Icon Auction Part 1 \$8,270.00 was bid for the first 40 Icons. \$1,800.00 in payments via the Credit Card machine. Thank you, Sergio. Part 2 of the Auction this Sunday.
12. Father Brooks was sent the attached letter by the OCA Chancellor, Alexander Rentel. Metropolitan Tikhon has released Father Brooks from his duties at St. John Chrysostom and from the Albanian Archdiocese. Father Brooks has been placed on a leave of absence and is attached to St. Sergius of Radonezh, Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY.

Committee / Other Reports

1. Sunday School Report- Steve Coraluzzi reported that Sunday School classes continue to be held upstairs in the Church Hall. They will remain there until the basement repairs are completed, most likely very soon. Steve thanked Sandi and Caroline Fiss for the great job they did with the Christmas pageant which took place on December 22nd following the Divine Liturgy. Many people said it was the best one ever! The blessing of the water for Epiphany went very well. The Sunday School students helped fill the bottles of Holy Water and assisted at the hot dog sale that followed during the Icon Auction. Regarding the annual ice-skating event at the University of Pennsylvania rink, Steve has had trouble getting in touch with rink staff. We will probably have pizza at church before going to the rink and not reserve the room that we often get. Steve will update us on this event at the next meeting. There was discussion about a possible Sunday School trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. On the first Sunday of each month the cost of the art museum is to "pay what you wish" and there is a new exhibit geared towards children and technology.
2. The technology report was given by Sergio Georgi. The website is current. The homepage has been updated. Photos of part one and two of the icon auction will be up following next week's event. All photos and Weekly Messengers are now archived to date. 2020 will be input as they are received. The installation of an audio mixer is now completed and all floors of the church are connected to provide audio. Sergio will add the option to pay for the Valentine's Day dinner online via Square. All thanked Sergio for the great job that he is doing.
3. Outreach, Charity and Benevolence, Stewardship Committees- Donna suggested that there needs to be a council member for each of the committees. Committee members agreed that this is important.

Old Business-

1. Aid to Albania for earthquake victims- \$1,000 was donated by parishioners for this purpose. A check will be sent to Archdiocese this week.
2. Valentine's Day Dance February 15th, 2020. Sergio has created a flyer for the Valentine's Day Dance. The tickets will be \$60 for adults and \$25 for children. Dinner will be provided and this will be a BYOB event. Nilda will update us next time about items purchased for the event and the food menu. Tickets will be available at church and online via the website. We are considering charging \$5 more for tickets that are sold at the door.
3. Update on the construction project at the Basilica of St Peter and Paul's. Steve went to a Zoning meeting yesterday at City Hall. There will be a meeting on January 14, 2020 with the Logan Square Neighborhood Group. The meeting will be attended by Steve and possibly Linda Biando. The concern about parking on Sundays was brought up and while we believe that there will still be parking available at the Basilica, we have other possible options for parking for example the String Theory School next door has 80 parking spots. We may be able to negotiate with them for parking if the need arises.

4. Update / search for new priest. Father Brooks is no longer connected to the Albanian Archdiocese. He will be connected to Saint Sergius Church in Oyster Bay, New York (Syosset.) The council plans to invite Father Brooks and Prifteresha Jamie to a luncheon during coffee hour in the next few weeks so that we will have the opportunity to thank him for his service and wish him well. Wes will write a letter to go out in mid-January regarding the search for a new priest and bring to the committee for review.
5. Possible future consideration of new more traditional Orthodox icons for the Iconostasis. In follow-up to Wes's question last meeting regarding the costs involved for obtaining more traditional icons, Linda reported that she is waiting for information from Saints Peter and Paul regarding the cost of their Iconostasis update. The project to have new icons at Ss Peter & Paul Church was undertaken many years ago. Linda believes that it was fairly expensive. Steve or Tina Marianka were asked to contact Linda. Jim Shaffer sent along some photos of their Iconostasis for the council to look at. He said that the updated Iconostasis was done before he was a parishioner there. So, it may have been quite a long time ago. We may also check with Qiriako Kosova because he has written many icons in the past. He lives in Albania. If we were to move forward with a project such as this, we would fit the icons into our existing wooden Iconostasis because it is so beautiful.

New Business

1. Archdiocese on sexual harassment policy was reviewed by council members and each one present signed off on having read the policy. The signatures will be forwarded to the Archdiocese.
2. Soup-er Bowl Sunday, February 2nd. Linda Biando reported that our Soup-er Bowl Sunday event will take place again as in previous years. A sign-up sheet will be made available for people donating soups. Parishioners will be encouraged to donate homemade soups. Proceeds will once again benefit a local charity.
3. Semi - annual parish meeting date. Council members agreed that March 15, 2020 would be a good date for this meeting. It will follow the Divine Liturgy.
4. Thoughts for our focus/ activities during 2020- fundraisers to help defer costs of the new upstairs windows. We will put a plaque on each individual window for those that donated to help pay for them. Wes and Elena will help create a poster for this. Fiori will look into the possibility of another painting class around Mother's Day and report back to us. We are interested in showcasing the talents of our Sunday school children with a talent show.
5. Pascha preparations 2020. Pascha falls on April 19th this year. Father Dennis Rhodes will serve during Presanctified Wednesday Liturgies during Great Lent, Holy Wednesday, the Holy and Great Friday, Holy Saturday and Pascha. The dates were given by Donna. Linda Biando will check on the hospitality room at the Penn Center house to check on availabilities for a room on April 17th and 18th for father Dennis.
6. The next parish council meeting will be held on Monday, February 3rd at 7pm.

Linda made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fiore Papa seconded the motion. All were in favor, whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Biando