

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting – November 12, 2013
St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church Parish Council

The Council Chair, Donna Dimitri, opened the meeting at 7:00 P.M sharp. Father Brooks Ledford asked the blessing on the meeting.

Elections: The slate is the same as 2013. Donna Dimitri – Chair; Pete Ghicondey – Vice-Chair; Michele Anderson – Treasurer; and Linda Kosta – Secretary. There were no other nominations. The Chair cast one vote for the three members of the Council-at-Large: Jani Mara, Linda Biando and Diane Lescas. Auxiliary members are Steve Ghicondes, Linda Notskas, Dorothy Tomassini and Tish Klus, William Bortner.

Roll call was not taken due to elections. All of the above were present except Steve G. and Dorothy T. Steve Coraluzzi, Sunday School Director was also present.

Secretary's Report: The Minutes of the meeting on October 7, 2013 were presented by Linda Kosta. A few minor corrections were suggested. A Motion to accept the amended minutes was made by Michele Anderson, seconded by Linda B. All were in favor.

Treasurer's Report: Michele Anderson presented the treasure's report from October 2013. The motion to accept was made by Linda B. and seconded by Pete G. All were in favor. Comments by the treasurer: 84% of the Icons are now paid for and 80% of the Pledges. The checking account balance is \$43,686.14 and the investment account is \$230,710.65.

Chairman: Donna Dimitri.

* 82nd Name Day and Bishop Nikon's visit review:

- Saturday Vespers and “Philly Style Dinner” went very well. Attendance was decent about 28.

- Liturgy – There were several clergy, deacons and altar boys. It was a joyful service, The Bishop gave a wonderful sermon, but it was difficult to hear him. Additionally, Fr. Brooks commented on the behavior of the parishioners during Communion. People are sitting as the clergy takes Communion and they should stand. The doors are open. Also, there is too much socializing in the Communion line. **Suggestions:**

Get the new sound system up and running -Diane. Talk to the parishioners about the correct behavior. They all know it, but need to be reminded now and then.- Fr. Brooks.

- Luncheon: “Our cup runneth over!” The hall looked lovely and the food was great; however, there was some chaos getting everyone to the buffet table. **Suggestions:**

Only have two serving tables and just replace food as it goes.- Linda K. Number the tables and with our new sound system call the people up by table number – Pete G.

- Overall: It was a wonderful day with a very full church and hall. Most people were very pleased.

* Christmas Donation Mailing: There are 400 people on the extended list. Donna would like to do a bulk mailing. Fr. Brooks will rewrite the letter and Donna will let us know the date for the assembling and coordinating.

* Policies, Standards and Procedures of the OCA on Sexual Misconduct: Copies were passed out. All Council members must read and sign off.

* Donation: Fr. Stephen from St. Peter and St. Paul's asked if we could donate \$200 to help a homeless man go to school. This action was approved via email prior to tonight's meeting.

* Discretionary Fund: In light of Fr. Stephen's request, Fr. Brooks suggested that we need a discretionary fund here at St. John's because homeless people come to the Church often for help.

Linda K. made a motion to establish a "Petty Cash" fund to be used as Fr. Brooks deems necessary. He will evaluate the need and proceed accordingly. The motion was seconded by Pete G. All were in favor. Michele will make the arrangements.

* Calendar – Linda B. Linda reminded us that it is time to collect the Icons for the auction in January. The second Saturday in December (12/14) will be Church decorating day 10:00 AM or before. The Sunday School Pageant is on Sunday, December 22 after Liturgy. Christmas Eve Liturgy is at 7 P.M. There will be no coffee hour.

* Home Blessing List: There will be a meeting of the committee to reorganize the list on November 24th. Members include John Rubis, Steve G, Jani, Father Brooks, Donna and whoever else is interested. On that note, the Bishop mentioned that we may want to consider doing Home Blessings in the fall when the weather is better. This is for future consideration.

Pastor's Report: Fr. Brooks

⑩ Bishop Nikon was very pleased with his visit and glad to see the Church in a better state of fellowship.

⑩ Father said he likes to spend the coffee hour getting to know and visiting with the parishioners. He would prefer not to conduct business.

⑩ In response to Father's concern, Pete G. volunteered to help out with the responsibilities of maintenance and repair since John Rubis is no longer on the Council. We know that if we really need it, John will help out also.

⑩ Father's current projects:

- Sound System: Father has spoken with two providers. One wanted \$125 just to come out and the other sent a design but no money estimate. He will have the required three estimates by the December meeting.

- Church Sign: He has one estimate so far from a company in TX for a digital sign at a cost of \$9414. We were not thrilled with the design. Linda N. suggested he look at the cathedral sign on 18th Street. More to come....

⑩ OCA Pension Fund: The OCA is upping their required donation for the parish to 8%. Currently it is 6%. This matter will be tabled until the December meeting.

⑩ Strategic Planning Committee: Father would like to establish a committee to work on a 5-10 year plan (vision for the future) to be presented to the Council. Preferably, this committee would include non-council members. Names suggested were: Pete G., Jani, Linda B., Michele, Donna, George Prifti, Mike Dardaris, Ilirjan Papa, Eduard Papa and Jen Waldhauser

Sunday School: Steve Coraluzzi.

* The kids will be having a Gertrude Hawks candy sale during November as a fund raiser.

* There will also be a trip subsidized by the Sunday School to the Camden Aquarium on November 17. So far, 66 parents and kids are signed up.

* Christmas Decorations – Bill Bortner will be donating and helping the kids create ceramic decorations for the tree in the fellowship hall. (He will make and glaze. The kids will paint.) This will take place the first two Sundays in December. The kids will decorate their tree on December 15th.

* November 24th will be the Albanian Thanksgiving presentation organized by Sandi Fiss.

* Christmas Pageant on December 22 will also be organized by Sandi Fiss

Building Maintenance – Donna (position still open!)

- * We need someone in charge. This will be announced on Sunday.
- * The caller ID is set up as is the international blocking on the church telephone.
- * John Rubis is still working on the intercom system for the back door. He will get back to us when Nick Mandia, our electrician gives him an estimate.
- * John Rubis is still checking out a way to disguise our new light as not to be so obvious. However, it may not be possible.

Stewardship: Linda Biando

- ⑩ In our first newsletter in a long time, the people will be thanked again for making a pledge in 2013.
- ⑩ The new drive will start soon.

Old business was covered in the earlier reports.

New Business:

- ⑩ Christmas Card Project: Linda K. will update the list and get it ready for distribution with the weekly bulletin.
- ⑩ Albanian Flag Day: :
 - An Albanian flag will be raised and fly over Philadelphia City Hall on November 27th from 9 AM to Noon.
 - There is also a flag day party poster which will be passed around.
 - Albanian Flag Day prayers will be said on November 24th. Michele commented that we should have an American Flag day.
- ⑩ Church Library has been relocated to the church hall.
- ⑩ Website: Pete G.
 - Pete announced that Tish Klus has volunteered to be an associate webmaster. We are all happy to have her and her extensive web management experience with us.
 - Stephanie Kosta will contact Fr. Matthew to see if we can purchase the site www.stjohnsphila.com from him.
- ⑩ More bottles will be purchased for the distribution of Holy Water in January.

Important Dates:

- ^ **Veteran's Day – November 11- Prayers and "Many Years"**
- ^ **Education classes – 6:30 PM, November 6, 13 and 20**
- ^ **Icon Sale – January 5 and 12**
- ^ **Epiphany – Sunday, January 5**
- ^ **Women's Day Dance – March 8, 2014**
- ^ **Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, December 3th, 2013 – 7 PM**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Michele Anderson, seconded by Linda Biando. All were in favor, whereupon the meeting was adjourned. The meeting was closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Kosta, Secretary