

MINUTES OF THE SEMI-ANNUAL PARISH MEETING- November 3, 2013
St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church
APPROVED at the March 30, 2014 Semi-Annual Parish Meeting

Father Brooks Ledford opened the meeting with prayer. He welcomed the people and thanked them for attending. The people were alerted that our microphone was again not functioning and asked to speak loudly.

Chair of Elections: The chairman Donna Dimitri welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for nominations for the Chair of Elections. Steve Ghicondes was nominated and there were no other nominations. The Chair cast one vote for Steve.

Steven presented the slate of officers for the 2014 Parish Council as follows: Donna Dimitri, Peter Ghicondey, Linda Kosta, Michele Anderson, Jani Mara, Diane Lescas, and Linda Biando. As there were no other nominations, a motion to accept the slate was made by Nick Zoto and seconded by Phil Kosta. All were in favor.

Donna thanked John Rubis and Steve Ghicondes who are leaving the board for their years of devoted service. Steve will continue to man the candle stand and John will add his building expertise if we need it.

Father Brooks Report:

- Father thanked everyone for their warm reception and for welcoming him and his family back to Philadelphia.
- He explained why he had left in 2002 to work with the homeless, an issue close to his heart; however, he is most happy to be back at St. John's and is looking forward to many years of working with the parishioners.
- His vision for himself is in the role of pastoral care, although he will have many other roles to fulfill. Please let him know if you need any kind of help. He is at Church everyday but Monday and is always available by phone or email – any time of day or night.
- Please let him know if he has missed anything such as a hospital visit. He needs our help. If he does not know, he can not help.
- He is working on our first Newsletter in a long time.
- Home Blessings – He will begin these after January 6th and will strive to get to every family who wants their home blessed. He feels the most important part of the Home Blessings is time to visit with and get to know the parishioners better.

Minutes of the spring 2013 Meeting: were presented by Linda Kosta and approved. The motion to accept was made by Mike Dardaris and seconded by Linda Biando. All were in favor.

Treasurer's Report and 2014 Budget: Presented by Michele Anderson.

- Because of so many memorial donations the checking account was very high; therefore \$25,000 was transferred to the investment fund where it can earn some interest.
- Michele reminded the parishioners that we will accept 2013 pledges until December 31, 2013. Also, if you have not paid your pledge or icon contribution, now is the time so you can claim it on your taxes for 2013.
- Stewardship: Linda Biando reported that that pledges have been a little skewed the last couple years so they appear to be down. Currently we have 110 pledged families. The

average amount has increased. Hopefully, there will be a few more pledges before we close the books for 2013.

- A motion to approve the Treasure's Report was made by Linda Biando and seconded by Dorothy Tomassini. All were in favor.
- A motion to accept the 2014 Budget presented by Michele was made by Linda Biando and seconded by Stephanie Kosta. All were in favor.

Chairman's Report: Donna Dimitri – Donna acknowledged the help of the auxiliary committee during 2013. The members are: Dorothy Tomassini, Linda Biando, Linda Notskas, Janice Leyden, and Kathie Costa. She reminded the parishioners that anyone is welcome to the Council meetings at anytime and encouraged them to come and get involved or to simply learn how the business of the Church is done.

Stewardship: Linda Biando – Much of this was covered under the Treasurer's Report notes; however, Linda added a few comments. She said that although the parishioners have been generous in 2013, we must continue to do so if we want to keep a full time priest. She also reminded us that stewardship is about more than money, it is also about participation, the giving of your time and talent.

Maintenance and Repair: John Rubis

- John with the help of others has completed the following projects during his time in office:
 - Replacement of a section of the Sunday School Floor
 - Drain pipe in the kitchen and bathrooms replaced
 - Repair of the side entrance door, the addition of a motion sensor light and a stay open system added.
 - Chair lift repair
 - Water pump for the Sunday School heating system was replaced.
 - A/C system serviced and condenser motor belts replaced
 - Candle stands and Altar Cross were re-plated.
 - The Sunday School evaporator units were replaced due to a manufacture's recall
 - Florescent light ballast in Men's Room replaced.
 - Iconostas lighting has been replaced with LED lights.
- John specially wanted to thank George Kosovo for all his help with pluming repairs and Nick Mandia for electrical repairs.
- The lower roof drain outlet is scheduled for repair.
- In 2014, it will be necessary to address the repair and painting of the large front window and the side windows. There will be more about this at the Spring 2014 Parish meeting.
- Stephanie Kosta commented that the Ladies Room door needs repair.

Ladies Club and Choir: Diane Lescas reported that the Ladies Club is still on a break until we get some younger women. However, we will decorate the Church on December 14th at 10 AM. This is an all parishioner event. She also reported that some of the young girls have started singing with the Choir and thanked Caroline Fiss, Lilly Whitney and Juliana Melnik.

Sunday School: Steve Coraluzzi:

- There has been a nice turn out for the new Sunday School year.

- Teachers have stepped up. We are now fully covered. The Sunday School can not run without them.
- There are a lot of events planned
 - Hot dog sale – there has only been one so far this years because of date conflicts.
 - During the upcoming Church anniversary, the children should be here at 9:50 AM to present flowers to Archbishop Nikon
 - November 17th there will be a visit to the NJ Aquarium
 - On November 24th, we will hold our traditional “Albanian Thanksgiving” which is being organized by Sandy Fiss.
 - Christmas Candy Sale is starting very soon
- Steve C. thanked the Ladies Club for the recent Halloween party. As usual, it was a big event and well attended.
- Steve reminded the parents that the Sunday School can only function and succeed if the parents bring their children
- Donna thanked Steve for a job well done as the Sunday School director.

Annual Assembly Meeting – September 26th – 28, 2013 – Donna Dimitri

- * No decision has yet been made concerning the recent fire and damage at St. John’s in Boston.
- * Grant Project – The first grant award was given to St. Mary’s in Worcester for an after school program to teach English and Albanian.
- * Student Fund – There is money to educate anyone who wants to be a priest or deacon. Currently, no one is using the fund.
- * The 2014 Assembly will be at Sts. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia.
- * The Arch Bishop’s extensive report is available online or ask a Council member for a paper copy.

Old Business:

Peter Ghicondey reminded us that we can pay out pledges, make a donation or pay for our icons using “Pay Pal” online. www.stjohnsphila.org. We have about 17 unique visitors a day and have had visitors from all over the world.

New Business:

- Mike and Carolyn Dardaris reported that they had received a text from Zack who is currently in his first year at Villanova, about how much he missed St. John’s. He had just attended a Roman Catholic Mass. We miss him, too!
- Rug Replacement in the sanctuary – long needed. Michele Anderson made a motion that we allot \$20,000 to spend on replacing the rugs. The motion was seconded by Linda Kosta. All were in favor. Three bids will be obtained as is the policy.

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Michele Anderson and seconded by Chris Manosis. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
By: Linda M. Kosta
Secretary