



METROPOLIS
OF DETROIT

HOLY TRINITY-ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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General Assembly Minutes February 26, 2012

ATTENDANCE

Clergy: Fr. William Cassis, Fr. Paul Truebenbach.

Parishioners: 53 voting parishioners were in attendance.

MEETING

Call to order: Chris Chryssovergis called the Assembly to order at 12:14 pm.

Opening prayer: The opening prayer was given by Fr. Bill.

Election of Chair: Nick Sarakatsannis was nominated to chair the Assembly and approved unanimously.

Prior Minutes: Reading of the minutes of the October 16, 2011, General Assembly was suspended. The minutes were approved unanimously.

President's remarks: Chris Chryssovergis referred to the Parish survey conducted last fall by the Long-Range Planning Committee, the first since 2008. The survey results will be highlighted today. He outlined several steps that the Parish Council can take or has taken to respond to the sentiments expressed:

- Greeter program: the Council has been leading this charge, with the program having just been put in place. This will help to integrate newcomers into the community. Please reach out to those wearing visitor badges, as newcomers are needed to grow the Parish.
- Communication: the Council already sponsors several ways to provide effective communication within the Parish, e.g., the website, e-mail, the church bulletin board, but some believe more can be done. Ianthe Schulte will lead a reconstituted Communication Committee. Please bring items to the Council that need to be circulated, and the Council will take forward to communicate them to the best of its ability.
- Spiritual education: Fr. Bill is open to having teaching liturgies so that adults and new members may appreciate the meaning of the various parts of the service.
- Worship space: Suggestions have been made to make the Narthex a more reverent space during service. It is an extension of the Nave and should be accorded similar respect when people enter the church.

- Outreach ministries: our community should be known for more than just the Panegyri. We make other contributions, e.g., the food pantry, as a way of giving back. Outreach also helps to attract new members.

Clergy remarks:

- Fr. Bill:
 - As of April 15th, he will have been at the Parish 20 years. Thanks to all who have helped during that time for their commitment and support of the clergy.
 - 2011 was the best year financially and for increased attendance. The best part of Sunday is to look out after communion, once the youth have left for Sunday Church School, and see hardly anyone left. It's a sign of how young a Parish we are.
 - Our time with Fr. Ciprian was concluded last year. All reports from Traverse City have been positive. We have that community's thanks for our work to prepare Father for them.
 - Our new associate priest is here. Thanks to all for their patience during the six-month transition. Thanks both to Metropolitan Nicholas and to Metropolitan Gerasimos so that Fr. Paul could be here to share his time and talent with us.
 - Great Lent is fast approaching. There are many spiritual opportunities, so come and participate.
 - The stained glass inlays have been placed in the front doors. Thanks to Sam Boulmetis, the Parish Council and the Long-Range Planning Committee.
 - Again, thanks to everyone for their efforts last year.
- Fr. Paul:
 - Thanks to all for their patience, for their understanding during these first two months as he faced his father's illness and started to learn his way around the area and liturgical matters. He and Presvytera could not be happier with the move.
 - He is spending time:
 - Learning how to transition to the priesthood liturgically and pastorally.
 - With the various youth programs, i.e., GOYA and JOY/Hope. He is working to build the latter back up to prior strength.
 - Working on different teaching opportunities, e.g., the Monday evening reading course at 5:45 pm and upcoming Lenten meditations on Wednesday nights.
 - Again, thanks very much to all and wishes for a blessed Lent.

Treasurer's report:

- Nick Georgiton presented the 2011 year-end financial statements. Last year was a very good year, permitting guarded optimism for the current year if the Parish can stay on track. Stewardship was up last year, and net revenues received from the festival and the car raffle were also good. These reflect on the good job that everyone does, everyone therefore all should be commended. However two old chillers were just replaced, with 20 more pending. Having a good 2011 does not mean that the Parish can relax financially.

- Questions:
 - Nick Sarakatsannis re: the basis for the Archdiocesan fair share contribution – it is based on a two-year average of expenses. The fact that the assessment was lower in 2011 than 2010 reflects the work of Eugene Nicholas and the Parish Council to reduce expenses last year. The increase in the budgeted contribution for 2012 is due to the Metropolis budget being higher, not due to higher Parish expenses.
 - Lew Assaley re: debt – the amount shown represents what is owed on the improvement loan taken out five years ago. Full repayment is anticipated by the end of 2013.
 - Irish Condorodis re: having an equipment reserve for replacement – that has been instituted this year.
 - Jim Schultz re: the cost of the replaced chillers – each was approximately \$8,000. Some of the other units could cost more.
- The Treasurer’s report was unanimously accepted.

Stewardship report:

- Peter Aamodt reviewed 2011 stewardship. Last year was a very successful year, with the Parish exceeding the \$400,000 goal by \$8,000. The number of pledging families increased from 294 to 347, and the average pledge received per household increased from \$807 to \$839. Average stewardship received increased from \$595 to \$680 per household. Thanks to the 2010 and 2011 Stewardship Committees, Tasos Ioannides for the stewardship messages contained in his weekly Liturgy inserts and to Eugene Nicholas for his frequent e-mail reminders to the community as year-end approached.
- For 2012, the goal is again \$400,000, but there is continuing interest in having all operating expenses 100% met by stewardship. If the \$839 average pledge received could become the average for all households, then the Parish would be tantalizingly close to 100% coverage.
- Questions:
 - Lew Assaley re: what actions will be taken to reach out to those who have not made a pledge commitment this year, including direct, personal contact – Metropolitan Nicholas has been asked to permit a “stewardship talk” in Church at the conclusion of Liturgy. This will allow parishioners who do not attend General Assemblies to hear a stewardship appeal. Also, the Committee is willing to contact directly those who are reluctant to make pledges.
 - Jim Raptis re: the distinction between the two household numbers in the written summary – 347 households formally pledged last year, while 601 total households made an offering during the year, whether pledged or not.
- The Stewardship report was unanimously accepted.

Panegyri report: Frank Cook briefly reported that the festival will be the same as last year’s, to be held the last weekend in June.

Endowment report:

- Steve Bottomley provided the following updates:
 - As of December 31, 2011, the fund balance was \$293,632. It is currently \$309,851. The market has been good to the fund, hence the increase. The fund is now almost a third of the way toward its \$1,000,000 goal.
 - A giving tree will be established for the endowment fund. This fundraising effort will commence with a dinner on Saturday, April 28th. Metropolitan Nicholas will be the featured speaker. This will provide an opportunity to enlighten attendees as to the purpose and importance of the endowment fund.
- Question: Peter Aamodt re: different ways in which the endowment can be funded – direct giving examples include appreciated assets, e.g., stock that can be sold for a gain, and life insurance policies. The Committee can call on experts to identify other means of donating to the fund.

Long-range planning report:

- Lew Assaley, Long-Range Planning Committee Chairman, and James Kellaris provided a brief overview of the recent Parish survey. The results show an evolution in the views expressed by parishioners. Thanks to Committee members for helping to conduct the survey and to James Kellaris for the compilation of results. There are five principal areas of concerns raised by survey respondents:
 - Welcome/inclusion: only 70% of respondents feel truly welcomed. That number should be 100%.
 - Communication: while the Parish Council does a good job communicating, some respondents are unaware of the different communication outlets being used and thus are not fully informed.
 - Facility expansion/improvement: a particular need to refresh Parish facilities.
 - Finance: expansion of stewardship to cover 100% of Parish operating expenses, and the need for members to participate in stewardship.
 - Faith/understanding: improvement of Orthodox education to build excitement about the faith, and the greater use of English in the Liturgy.
- Questions:
 - Jim Schultz re: the nature of a teaching liturgy – Fr. Bill explained that it is a regular liturgy but with periodic interruptions to explain what is being done and why, covering the five main sections of the Divine Liturgy and also explaining actions that people don't see. A teaching liturgy should elevate the education of the laity and their insight. These will go forward later in the year according to what the master calendar permits.
 - Bob Economou suggested the benefit to be had through better communication with other Orthodox communities in the area.

Old Business:

- By-laws: Revised Parish by-laws were presented to the prior General Assembly for comment. The revisions were made to clean up past typographical errors and to consolidate them according to past actions taken. Lew Assaley moved that the revised by-laws be approved, Sam Boulmetis seconding. This motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

- Clergy-Laity Congress delegates: The Parish priest and the Parish Council president are automatic delegates to the Congress, plus two others approved by the Assembly. Peter Aamodt was nominated. Lew Asseley moved that the one delegate be approved, deferring to the Parish Council to select another, James Kellaris seconding. This motion was passed unanimously.

Organization Reports:

- AHEPA: Andy Stefanopoulos announced that AHEPA's Greek Independence Day dinner-dance will be held Saturday, March 17th. Kostas Kastanis from Louisville will provide Greek music, and George Kaelmanis will cook. Please see Andy, Sophie Guethlein or any AHEPA member for more information and tickets.
- Philoptochos: Melanie McNulty announced the hosting of next Sunday's luncheon for the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Philoptochos will also sponsor a luncheon on Palm Sunday, egg dyeing on Holy Thursday and a ZODOCHOS PEGHE brunch on Bright Friday.
- Men's Ministry: Jim Raptis announced that the ministry team will partner with GOYA and the Maids of Athena on March 12th to visit shut-ins and help with household chores. Please suggest whom they can visit. All those interested – men and women - may volunteer.

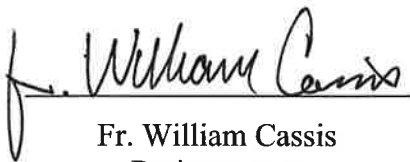
Other: Fr. Bill elaborated on the front door inlays. These are laminated glass pieces that have been insulated. It is art glass, not stained glass.

ADJOURNMENT

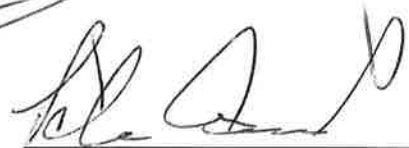
Call to adjourn: the motion to adjourn was made at 1:19 pm.

Closing prayer: Fr. Paul offered the closing prayer.

Approved as written,


Fr. William Cassis
Proistamenos


Chris Chrysovergis
President


Peter Aamodt
Secretary