



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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AUGUST, 2018

Reflections on the 19th AAC in St. Louis –

**by Mark Skuby,
OCHC lay delegate**

My general impression of this Council was one of harmony. Despite there being few conflicting issues and few resolutions to be acted upon, the Council agenda was packed each day, starting with the Divine Liturgy at 6 am and ending with Vespers each evening. Akathist services were held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday after the Liturgies. Vigil for the Feast of the St. Jacob Netsvetov of Alaska was served on Wednesday evening, which was interesting, with over 500 participants receiving blessed oil and bread. A Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was served on Thursday morning and was particularly inspiring with a choir of nearly 100 and a large group of youth singing responses. Over 700 communicants attended that service.



Plenary session attendance averaged 400+ voting delegates and clergy, with another 100+ observers. Six amendments / resolutions were presented and voted on, with only two needing any discussion, as the other four were basically technical or grammatical changes to text.

The two resolutions requiring discussion included:

Changing the frequency of the Council from three years to four years, which was defeated by a vote of 210-203. (This required a 2/3 majority to pass.)

Adopting the proportional giving model approved during the 18th AAC in Atlanta for another three years. (This was passed by a large majority.)

One announcement that created quite a bit of attention was that of the resignations of the Syosset administrative staff, including Fr. John Jillions (Chancellor) and the current treasurer. The resignations were officially requested by Metropolitan Tikhon pending a full review of the administrative operation currently underway under the leadership of the Metropolitan and the Synod of Bishops, with an announcement of new staff expected by the end of December 2018. The current staff will remain in place, pending new assignments, through December 31, 2018. Most of the members have been in place over the last seven consecutive years. As was explained to us, these changes were not meant to reflect

lack of performance by the staff, but an opportunity for the Metropolitan to appoint his own team. Fr. Jillions, who served and preached at our parish last Sunday, will be assigned to Holy Ghost Russian Orthodox Church in Bridgeport, CT.

Six forum-type breakout sessions were offered on Wednesday and Thursday. The six sessions covered spiritual life, care of clergy, stewardship, missions, community, and external affairs. I attended the stewardship and personal spirituality forums. The excellent stewardship session was conducted by Bill Marianes, a former lawyer (Greek Orthodox) from Atlanta and was packed with good information. This dynamic presenter has material on his website (*Stewardship Calling* (<http://stewardshipcalling.com>) and regularly speaks on Ancient Faith Radio. He would be an excellent speaker to come to our parish or Diocese. I will be sharing some of his ideas in a separate communication on stewardship. Here is part of his presentation:

<http://stewardshipcalling.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PLENARY-STEWARDSHIP-PRESENTATION-OCA-All-American-Council-2018.pdf>

The spiritual life session covered personal prayer models and was chaired by Archbishop Melchizedek (Diocese of Western PA) and monastics. This was also very educational and offered ways families can include daily prayer in their lives, so that their spiritual experiences extend beyond Sunday services. The youth program had about 100 participants, and they presented a video during the Friday morning session reviewing their activities and reflections of the week. I mentioned above that they participated with the adult choir during the various services. They sang the first and second antiphons during the Hierarchical Liturgy as well as a selection of hymns during the clergy communion. They did a great job! The Council's all-volunteer choir was exceptionally good, and they sang numbers that were familiar to the majority so that congregational singing was possible. Copies of service music were included in the delegate handbook and are online. It would be nice if a recording of the Liturgy would be produced, as the blend and quality of singing were exceptional. Not sure if this will be done or not.

Video media had a major presence at this AAC. Each Diocesan report was basically a 15-20 minute video highlighting the events / activities specific to each diocese since the last AAC. The NY-NJ Diocese focused on some of the more popular retreats/programs of the youth of the diocese. Our Covenant House "*Sleep Out*" was highlighted, showing the diversity of events that our diocesan youth have engaged in. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's son, Serge, was a key speaker during the opening session and he reflected on his experiences growing up with his father and on the Council's theme, "*For the Life of the World.*" This was the title of a series of lectures that Fr Alexander had given in 1963 to college students in Ohio (which Serge had attended) that were published in book form. During the FOS reception a documentary was presented on Fr. Alexander's life, but technical difficulties prevented it from being seen in its entirety. It was originally produced in Russian and had been recently translated to an English-language version. A link to this documentary is available.

I particularly enjoyed meeting with friends from parishes we have been connected to over the years-- namely St. Cyprian of Carthage (Richmond, VA) and Washington Diocese parishes (St. Nicholas, St. Mark, St. Catherine, St. Matthew, and St. Andrew)-- and with clergy from NJ / NY and eastern PA. The banquet on Thursday evening had over 700 in attendance, including Metropolitan Theodosius, who was present for two days of the Council. Hearing the 700 attendees singing "*O Lord Save Thy People*" as the hierarchs entered the banquet hall was very emotional and moving.

I appreciated the opportunity to represent our parish at this council. Should anyone have any questions, please see me. Go to the OCA's website for documents and videos:

<https://oca.org/history-archives/aacs/the-19th-all-american-council>

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **SATURDAY, AUGUST 4: COMMUNITY LUNCHEON — 9 AM.**
- **FRIDAY—SATURDAY, AUGUST 17-18: PIEROGIE SESSIONS— 9 AM. St. Helena's will have a Meeting after the Saturday Session.**
- **SUNDAY, AUGUST 19: *IN CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION AND THE THEME OF THE BLESSING OF FLOWERS*, there will be an "*Herbal Talk*" during Coffee Hour. Come, learn, and share info on the wonderful herbs around us.**
- **THURSDAY, AUGUST 23: PARISH COUNCIL MEETING at 7 PM.**

ICON PLAN COMMITTEE: See Fr. John if you are interested in participating in a Committee that will explore and develop an iconographic plan for the outside and interior of our church. We are hoping to complete the "*On the Way to Emmaus*" icon over the entranceway over the next month: a new painting surface has been installed.

UPCOMING FALL FESTIVAL PREPARATION SESSIONS:

August 17 & 18 - Pierogies Sessions
Sept 14 & 15 - Stuffed Cabbage Sessions
Sept 18 - Borscht Session

THE INREACH/OUTREACH COMMITTEE will be sponsoring during the *Dormition Fast* (it will continue until August 19) a collection of new baby items to benefit the *Helpers of God's Precious Infants*.

LAYETTES FOR HELPERS OF GOD'S PRECIOUS INFANTS

· Layette items are coming in. There is a nice collection of items in our collection box in the social hall. THANK YOU everyone who is participating!

· Collection will continue until August 19th.

· Some people are having trouble finding sweaters and caps. A sweat shirt type jacket with hood or a cap would be a great alternate choice. If you can't find a neutral color, please get blue. Girls can wear blue. Boys can't wear pink!

Questions: Call / text Trudy at 610-393-9897 or email - trellmore@gmail.com

SUNDAY AUGUST 12 — TEENS AND THE ADULT CHOIR: Following the Divine Liturgy, the choir will hold a shorter rehearsal to which the parish teens will be invited — both those who have sung in the children's choir and those who have not. We hope this will allow them to rehearse with the choir at

a time that will be convenient for them. See Josef Gulka for more information.

WOMAN2WOMAN ACTIVITIES:

* **Tuesday, August 21:** Ladies' Luncheon at El Azteca Mexican Grille, Ramblewood Shopping Center (Mt. Laurel), 12 noon. Please RSVP with Genie Skuby at 856 802 1664.

* **Thursday, August 30:** Woman2Woman regular meeting at Phyllis Pritchard's home, 28 Liverpool Way, Medford, 08055, 7-9 p.m. Please contact Phyllis at 609 315 1258 if you plan to attend.

Contact: **Genie Skuby** at 856 802 1664 or skubydoo81@comcast.net

Saturday, August 25, 11 a.m., baptism of *Charlotte Skuby Chassen*. All are welcome! Reception to follow. Please RSVP with Genie or Mark.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Thursday, July 19, 2018 by Phyllis Prichard.

Treasurer's Report- Mark will email the July balances to Phyllis to record for July Minutes. Mark transferred the \$6750 that was paid to Dan Brunetti for the ramp repairs from the Capital Improvement account to our business checking account today. The account balances reflect that transfer.

- A) The account balances as of July 20th, 2018 are as follows:
**General Fund \$25,252.88, Memorial Fund \$49,683.38,
Capital Improvement Fund \$45,200.24, Food Coupon Fund \$6,409.08,
Choir Fund \$4,129.48 Father's Supplemental Checking \$402.36,
Fundraising Account \$1,618.94**
- B) The **Mortgage Balance** as of July 19th, 2018 was \$81,947.69
- C) **Overpayment in payroll**- Father John found an overpayment in his payroll and corrected the issue, Follow up needed due to possible pension complications.
- D) **Lenten Retreat**- Mark will approach St. Helena's Guild (Andrea Burns) about the prior agreement to co-sponsor the Retreat, sharing the expenses (this would amount to \$200.00).
- E) **Covenant House Donation**-There was a question on how much was given to Covenant House. Only \$125.00 was recorded. Phyllis will look to see if she has any other record.
- F) **Investment Options for parish accounts**- Documents have been signed.
- G) **Counting money**-Greg Gotowchikov made a recommendation to make the counting process easier, this process will be incorporated this week.
- H) Wally Loza made a motion to accept the report. Mark seconded. All in favor.

Maintenance Update- Mark Skuby

- A) **Pest control**-Mark will call our pest control company to come out and look at the side of the front entrance.
- B) Also, there was a new valve put on one of the spigots outside.

Open Action Items: Old Business

- A. **Repair of Ramp**– Mark Skuby reported that the ramp is completed. The final cost was \$10,750.00 with the railing. The initial cost of the ramp was \$6,000 with additional work needed, the cost of the repair was an additional \$750.00 . The railing represents the remaining balance of \$4,000 paid The ramp will still need to be sealed and the railing will need a touch up with paint.
- B. Rob Lenio from American Quality Remodeling came to the meeting to talk to Council about Hardie Plank in outside areas, see below (J).
- C. **Siding**- Mark- Still needs to be repaired.
- D. **Parking lot sealing**- Mark/Gary- Ok to complete.
- E. **Exterior Lighting**- Mark/Gary-Mark to call electricians.
- F. **Fall Festival**-(September 22nd) next meeting Sunday July 22nd. Mark will talk to the township about signage.
- G. **Quote for top landing and crack**- Mark will call Brunetti for quote about the top landing and crack.
- H. **Standing Rules corrections/Parish By-Laws**- Father John/ Mark- Copies of the changes were given to Council to review.
- I. **Investment options for parish accounts**- Documents have been signed.
- J. **Hardie Plank Replacement (entry)**- Rob Lenio, the rep from American Quality Remodeling, who had met previously with Fr John, reviewed with the Council his proposal for using “real” Hardie Plank/Board in:

1) the area designated for the Emmaus icon (\$1,100.00), 2) around the back door which had been damaged by water (\$250.00), 3) where the soffits are located underneath the front awning (\$250.00), 4) and in the front of the church around the entranceway (\$3,600.00).

The Council agreed on proposals 1, 2, & 3 (\$1,600.00) and will consider 4. [Note: Fr. John met with Rob Lenio the next day, July 20 and provided the required 30% deposit of \$533.00. He will coordinate this work with the iconographer, Seraphim O’Keefe].

Next Meeting- The next Council meeting - **Thursday, August 23rd**

COFFEE HOUR ASSIGNMENTS:

- August 6* Team Kathie P. & Andrea B.
- August 13* Team Diane V. & Debbie C.
- August 20 St.Helena's Guild (Contributions Welcomed)
- August 27 " "

- September 3 Kathie Pierman
- September 10 Volunteer Needed

* Denotes Fasting Period

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Coming Up This Summer: “*The Nine Songs – 2017-2018 Youth Sermons*” booklet with youth activity photos. Each family will receive one copy – additional ones can be purchased.

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross – AUGUST, 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 <i>Community Luncheon – 9 AM</i> NO <i>Great Vespers:</i>
5 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—9:00</i> <i>Collection of new baby items</i>	6	7	8 <i>Vespertal Liturgy for the Feast of St Herman — 7 PM</i>	9	10	11 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
12 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—9:00</i> <i>Post-Feast of the Transfiguration</i> <i>Collection of new baby items</i>	13	14 <i>Vespertal Liturgy for the Dormition of the Theotokos</i> <i>7 PM</i>	15	16	17	18 NO <i>Great Vespers:</i>
19 <i>DIVINE LITURGY – 9:00</i> <i>Fr John will be on vacation</i> <i>Collection of new baby items</i>	20	21 <i>Ladies’ Luncheon at El Azteca Mexican Grille</i> <i>Noon</i>	22	23 <i>Parish Council Meeting – 7 PM</i>	24	25 <i>Baptism of Charlotte Skuby Chassen – 11 AM</i> <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
26 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—9:00</i>	27	28	29 <i>Divine Liturgy for the Beheading of St John the Baptist</i> <i>9 AM</i>	30 <i>Woman2Woman regular meeting at Phyllis Pritchard’s home</i> <i>7:00-9:00 PM</i>	31	1 <i>September</i> <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>

