

**ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK
MINUTES OF THE FOURTH DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY
SEPTEMBER 15, 2008**

The fourth assembly of the Diocese of Washington and New York was hosted by St. Peter and Paul Church in South River, N.J. Following Divine Liturgy, a brunch was served. The assembly was then called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Archpriest Joseph Lickwar, Chancellor. His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, led in the singing of the opening prayer.

Appointments

Father Lickwar announced the following appointments and noted that in the future they will be nominated from the floor:

Co-Chairs: Clergy-Archpriest David Garretson, Lay-Scott Anderson.

Secretariat: Priest Stephen Evanina, Rosalie Luster.

Credential Committee: Archpriest Martin Kraus.

Motion: Archpriest Samuel Kedala moved to accept the appointments; seconded by Fred D'Amato. Motion approved.

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Robert Kornafel moved to accept the agenda; seconded by Peter Eagler. Motion approved.

Minutes of Previous Assembly (attached)

Archpriest Theodore Boback requested the minutes be amended to include the following changes on page 6, lines 15 and 39:

Line 15 - The secretariat did a secret ballot poll after which the chair asked that the sheets containing the polls be shredded.

Line 39 - Strike "resolution" to "motion" read by Archpriest David Vernak which was not allowed.

Motion: Priest Gary Breton moved to accept the minutes as amended; seconded by David Maliniak. Motion approved.

Resolution Presented and Discussed Later

Igumen Joseph (Hoffman) then presented and read the following resolution from the New Jersey Deanery to the Diocesan Assembly of Washington and New York:

WHEREAS the combining of the former Diocese of Washington and the former Diocese of New York and New Jersey have created a single diocese that is unmanageably large and inaccessible for diocesan wide retreats, meetings, assemblies, etc., and

WHEREAS the diocesan boundaries, as stipulated by the OCA Statutes (Art.ii, Sec. 7c) are solely within the competence of the Holy Synod, and

WHEREAS we desire a new Diocesan Authority be installed as quickly as possible so that our widowed faithful may not be deprived of desperately needed and desired spiritual leadership;

THEREFORE The New Jersey Deanery, meeting this 9th day of September 2008 at the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul, Manville, New Jersey resolves that

The Diocese of Washington and New York respectfully request the Holy Synod to reestablish separate dioceses for the former Diocese of Washington (returning it to its former status as the Metropolitan See).

And the former Diocese of New York and New Jersey and

At the Diocesan Assembly meeting on the 15th day of September 2008 at Sts. Peter and Paul Church, South River, New Jersey, [only] the delegates from the deaneries that would comprise the reestablished

Diocese of New York and New Jersey elect a candidate for presentation to the Holy Synod as a possible choice as the new Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey and That, in accordance with the Statute of the OCA (Art. IV Sec 4), the election of a new Metropolitan be the first order of business at the 15th All American Council held November 10-13, 2008 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

Address of His Grace, Bishop Tikhon

Bishop Tikhon said we are in a confusing state alternating between good and bad. We should look seriously and turn to our Lord Jesus Christ. Now that the SIC report has been made public and Metropolitan Herman is retired, we should move forward.

His Grace announced that Metropolitan Herman is having surgery tomorrow and our prayers are with him. Pray also for the Holy Synod and election of a new Metropolitan. We need to discuss new issues of the National Church including the roles of the Metropolitan Council, administration, Holy Synod, dioceses and parishes. We have to re-focus about what we are gathered to do. His Grace also commented that this is an unusual situation as he is not the Diocesan Bishop. The Church is still the Church and we have to work together. Bishop Tikhon ended by asking the assembly to keep him in their prayers.

- Archpriest Theodore Boback then questioned why there was no vote to include the resolution in new business while Archpriest John Shimchick questioned the contents. Archpriest Samuel Kedala, Dean, New Jersey Deanery, withdrew the resolution and indicated he would reword and change it.

Credential Committee

Archpriest Martin Kraus announced those present at the Assembly included:

(1) Hierarchy, (47) clergy, (36) delegates and (31) observers. It was noted that there were enough in attendance for a quorum.

Motion: Archpriest George Hasenecz moved to accept: seconded by Robert Kornafel. Motion approved.

Guest

The Chancellor welcomed Archpriest Alexander Garklavs, Chancellor of Orthodox Church in America.

Report of the Chancellor - Archpriest Joseph Lickwar

Father Lickwar announced that his report was not mailed in advance and a written report will follow later. Father expressed that these are exceptional times and then read excerpts from the OCA Statutes regarding the requirements for participation at the All American Council as an observer or delegate. Father then proceeded to make the following remarks:

- Thanked Bishop Tikhon for attending the assembly as well as Bishop Benjamin, his committee and spiritual court for bringing peace and spiritual harmony.
- Announced that Father's Vansuch and Federoff passed away in 2008.
- Explained that we have gained back the Diocesan Center and he learned that tenants have more rights than do the owners. There are two wills. Some paintings, carpeting and furniture are left. Archbishop Peter passed away in 2007 with burial at St. Tikhon's. The Diocese will receive \$1693.19 for 89 months from Bishop Peter.
- Announced that an audit will be done for the former New York and New Jersey Diocese.

- In response to the letter sent to the parishes in the Diocese requesting assistance for Archpriest Joseph Chupek, a total of \$9000 was collected not counting those parishes that forwarded their collections directly to him.
- St. Andrew's camp is not doing very well. Both the camp director and Archpriest Ken James Stavrevsky have resigned.
- This year St. Cosmos and Damian adult home is celebrating 30 years in operation and needs to be re-evaluated in regards to location, purpose and staff.
- Archpriest Raymond Valencia has resigned from the Mission and Evangelization committee.
- Introduced three new clergy in the Diocese - Father Konstantin Gavrilkin, Archpriest Michael Sekela and Archpriest Bohdan Ostash.
- Lastly, Father thanked Stephanie Burke and the Diocesan Council for their assistance.

Archpriest John Shimchick made an announcement that a parishioner from his parish, Christina Semon, is doing missionary work in Romania, and requested we all help with this endeavor. This program is sponsored by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC).

Reports of the Deans - All Deans deferred to their written reports with the following inclusions:

New Jersey (attached) - Archpriest Samuel Kedala reported that Archpriest Joseph Chupek is having surgery today. Father Kedala also mentioned that the New Jersey Deanery has published a book about accidents in Church regarding the Holy Gifts and the necessary procedures needed to be taken should something happen.

New York City (attached) – Archpriest Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk.

New York State (attached) - Archpriest Igor Burdikoff. Spoke about St. Andrews camp and the dire need for supply priests.

Washington (attached) - Archpriest Constantine White. Nothing to add to his report.

Report of the Treasurer (attached)

Diocesan Treasurer, Lawrence Tosi, Esq., announced that since the last assembly, the Diocese continues to operate within budget and income.

- Chancery status: The eviction process has occurred and Barbara Mohammed has been locked out of the property. The house still has Archbishop Peter's belongings and furniture which was appraised at about \$30,000. There is also a French style clock and bronze statute worth between \$8,000-\$10,000. Religious items were not inventoried. There is an old computer that was left, turns on, that the diocese will buy.
- \$10,000 has been budgeted to do repairs at the center
- Finances: In 2001 he resigned as treasurer with \$60,000 in bank. In 2005, Fr. Igor Burdikoff took over. Forensic accountant should come in and review what happened to \$120,000? The assembly adopted a forensic review which contains a detailed review of all transactions, controls, reviews and includes questioning of personnel.
- Mr. Tosi also asked parishes that are behind, currently and previously, with their assessments to call him and he will personally come and offer assistance. We have \$160,000 cash but short \$50,000. Currently, \$170,000 in bank now that those that were withholding are paying back their money.

- CPA: Harold Libe, from an outside firm, has given us a clean bill of health.
- Mr. Tosi announced there will be an investigation of the diocesan funds from 2001-2005. Someone completely independent will be conducting the investigation.

Archpriest Theodore Boback questioned where the FOCA St. Tikhon married housing project was located. Reply: Never added to the budget.

It was also stated that the New York/New Jersey Diocese finances were in the positive before the merger of Diocese of Washington and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey.

Report of the Diocesan Auditors

Archpriest Sophrony Royer reported the auditors found the records and documentation to be in order.

Motion: Archpriest Theodore Boback moved to accept treasurers/auditors reports; seconded by Lisa Morris. Motion approved.

Metropolitan Council Report (attached)

Robert Kornafel, Diocesan Lay Representative, provided an overview of the September 15, 2008, meeting. Mr. Kornafel explained that the SIC report included thirty-five (35) hours of discussion and forty four (44) pages of notes. He also wished to express thanks to Father Michael Tassos for a job well done with the report.

Reports of the Diocesan Departments and Institutions

Campus Ministries

Archpriest Constantine White announced that mailing letters to solicit information regarding current active chapters in the Diocese as well as what schools are without Orthodox Campus Fellowships (OCF) was not a good idea. The OCF is sponsored by the combined Hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). Father White indicated he would like to reorganize SCOBA and OCF in our Diocese and ask for financial support. There are OCF's located in Canada as well as new ones at the University of Buffalo and Georgetown.

Music Workshop

Matushka Doreen Bartholomew announced that the CD of the eight tones has been delayed as the OCA's Department of Liturgical Music is developing something similar and we want to avoid a duplicate effort. We are currently in the process of drafting a vesper book in "large-type" as there have been quite a few requests. Matushka also requested an update of choir directors on the OCA website. His Grace, Bishop Tikhon added that Archpriest Theodore Heckman is writing 2-part music for the Liturgy that can be found on orth.2partmusic.org

Communications and Publication

Archpriest John Shimchick announced that the new copies of *Jacob's Well* relates to the reclaiming of truthfulness in our Church. Words are used as well as punctuation and the language used in the Liturgy. The next issue will be the art of prayer that utilizes artists and artistic quotes. Father also requested assistant from the Diocese as to what we would like on the website, what kind of books, etc. We can learn from everyone in the Diocese.

- On August 13, 2008, a committee consisting of Father's David Vernak, John Cassar, and Larry Tosi and George Elia evaluated the chancery. The back-up sump pump needs extensive repairs as does the basement access and sidewalks that present a trip hazard.
- Father Joseph Lickwar then announced that there are copies of the first draft of the proposed Diocesan By-Laws. The by-laws include a submitted draft as well as excerpts from the OCA Statutes. The by-law committee includes: Archpriest's Joseph Lickwar, Samuel Kedala, David Vernak and Rosalie Luster.
- Father Joseph made an announcement that the treasurer has to leave early and asked that the budget be moved to the first item after the break.

Motion: Peter Eagler moved to amend the agenda by moving the 2009 budget as the first item after the break; seconded by Archpriest George Hasenecz. Motion approved.

BREAK

The meeting resumed at 2:45 p.m.

Stephanie Burke read the roll-call that indicated 81 accredited delegates returned after the break.

Budget

Lawrence Tosi, Esq., Diocesan Treasurer, proceeded to present an overview of the 2009 budget. Mr. Tosi informed the assembly that that the budget is status quo until the election of a new bishop. Some money (\$10,000) was used for chancery grounds as a tree fell but budget should be ok. Mr. Tosi then announced three proposals to add to the budget for consideration:

- 1. That we establish a committee to set criteria and award scholarships to graduating high school seniors from the diocese. There shall be funded and established four (4) \$1000 scholarships to be awarded in May of each year beginning in 2009.**

A lengthy discussed ensued regarding the particulars of awarding the scholarship and how it will be determined.

Motion: Robert Kornafel made a motion to accept the proposal; seconded by Archpriest George Hasenecz. Motion approved.

- 2. That the Diocese continue to fund St. Andrew's camp in the amount of \$10,000?**

The payments began in 2006 and have continued each year. Father Joseph presented an overview and indicated that the camp is expensive. It is a liability, has poor enrollment and cannot complete with other camps. The clergy co-chair, Archpriest David Garretson, announced that the information provided is incomplete.

Motion: Lisa Morris made a motion to table the motion until next year's diocesan assembly; seconded by Archpriest Michael Meerson. Motion approved.

- 3. That the council and treasurer retain an independent CPA to perform a one-time baseline audit at the cost of \$12,500. This is in addition to the yearly independent CPA review of our books and records and the review done by our internal auditing committee.**

The current report we receive at this time is only a snap-shot document of the diocese.

Motion: Archpriest David Vernak made a motion to hire a CPA; seconded by Peter Eagler. Motion unanimously approved.

- Archpriest Theodore Boback stated that the FOCA St. Tikhon married housing project should be budgeted.

Motion: Archpriest Theodore Boback then made a motion to accept the budget; seconded by Father Aaron Archer. Motion approved.

Old Business

Archpriest Paul Shafran made a moving speech about the OCA problem. Father expressed that the Church is not a political club. We should have love and compassion and express Christian love and charity. We should acknowledge the contributions of Metropolitan Herman.

Motion: Father then read the following motion:

The assembly gathered at St. Peter and Paul Church in South River, New Jersey on September 15, 2008, draft a resolution to acknowledge Metropolitan Herman for his accomplishments and to thank him for his many years of service as Priest, Bishop and Metropolitan in the OCA and we pray the Lord God will keep him and grant him good health for many years. Axios! Axios! Axios!

Seconded was by Archpriest Michael Meerson. Motion defeated.

New Business

The election of Diocesan Council members then took place conducted by Archpriest Igor Burdikoff. Nominations came from the floor and the following positions were filled:

New Jersey Deanery Representatives

- Rev. Stephen Evanina
- Peter Eagler

Upper New York State Deanery Representatives

- V. Rev. John Chupeck
- Scott Anderson

New York City Deanery Representatives

- V. Rev. Daniel Degyansky
- George Elia

Washington Deanery Representatives

- V. Rev. Gregory Safchuk
- Rosalie Luster

Metropolitan Council Representatives

- V. Rev. Alexis Vinogradov
- John Kozey

Auditors

- V. Rev. Gary Brerton
- David Maliniak
- William S. Rentz

Resolutions

Archpriest Samuel Kedala then read the following amended resolution from the New Jersey Deanery to separate the diocese of New York and New Jersey from the Metropolitan See:

WHEREAS the combining of the former Diocese of Washington and the former Diocese of New York and New Jersey have created a single diocese that is unmanageably large and inaccessible for diocesan wide retreats, meetings, assemblies, etc., and

WHEREAS the diocesan boundaries, as stipulated by the OCA Statutes (Art.ii, Sec. 7c) are solely within the competence of the Holy Synod, and

THEREFORE The New Jersey Deanery, meeting the 9th day of September 2008 at the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul. Manville, New Jersey resolves that the Diocese of Washington and New York respectfully request the Holy Synod to reestablish separate dioceses for the former Diocese of Washington returning it to its former status as the Metropolitan See, and the former Diocese of New York and New Jersey.

Motion: Archpriest David Vernak moved to accept the amended resolution; seconded by Archpriest Igor Burdikoff. A lengthy discussion ensued. Motion approved.

His Grace, Bishop Tikhon stated he would pass this to the Holy Synod as written. His Grace also mentioned that there are pastoral issues to consider such as, who is the Bishop and who is his Diocese. As a member of the Holy Synod, he appreciates the comments.

Motion: Archpriest David Garretson then proposed the following resolution:

Parishes that withheld as a matter of conscience due to the OCA be forgiven, case by case, at the discretion of the Diocese.

The motion was seconded by Priest Yakov Ryklin. Following a discussion, the motion was defeated.

- Archpriest David Vernak announced that Mr. John Kozey should be thanked and commended by the Diocese.

Adjournment

Motion: Archpriest James Jadick moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Archpriest Joseph Frawley. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m. with the singing of the closing prayer.

Submitted by

Rosaline Luster