

**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Minutes of the General Assembly
Sunday, November 18, 2012**

Call to Order: President Mark Langford called the Meeting to order at 12:25 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Father Paul Christy led us in prayer.

Appointment of Meeting Chairperson: David Ford nominated Mark Langford. Seconded by Harry Costa. Motion carried.

Mark Langford asked Alyssa Xouris, a GOYAn, to talk about her Gold Award Project: Alyssa said she's 16 and a junior in Green Hope High School. Her family moved here from NJ less than two years ago. Getting involved in Holy Trinity was one the best things about moving. A Girl Scout since she was five, she has earned her Bronze and Silver Medals and is now pursuing her Gold Award, equivalent to the Eagle Award in Boy Scouts. Her project is to produce a 60-page history of the parish with interviews, stories and pictures. She wants to document the meaning of this church and of the old one for people of all ages in the parish. With plans for a new church, we don't want to let old memories die. This is more than a project for Alyssa. It's about capturing the family environment and warm welcome she got from GOYA when she arrived at age 14. She's will be asking for our participation and pictures in about a month. Mark thanked Alyssa.

President's Remarks: Mark welcomed everyone and thanked the GOYAnS and their parents who set up the hall and cleaned the Sanctuary with Philoptochos yesterday. Holy Trinity has had both challenges and blessings in 2012:

Our challenges:

1. We're not meeting our revenue budget and it's reducing our reserves. We can attribute this to having no French Dr. rent for 12 months and maybe to the Capital Campaign, but tardy stewardship payments are a big part of the problem: as of today, 1/3 of our pledging families have paid less than 75% of their pledges in spite of many reminders. Paying in a timely way is everyone's personal responsibility: let's not make the church a beggar. Also, our operating spending will be about \$12K higher than budgeted, with \$5K more going on Archdiocese Support and \$6K more on Maintenance. The 2013 Budget being presented today is solid. It requires an 11% increase in Stewardship, but we managed a 9% increase this year and it has just a 1% increase over our 2012 estimated spending. Our cash and investments continue to grow: at the end of 2008 we had just \$750K, but as of Oct. 31 we've \$1.955K. All but \$258K is due to our Capital Campaign, but the numbers show we are a healthy parish.
2. Maintenance: Several structural and mechanical problems have required attention. Jim Klemes will give us an update and an overview of the last few years.

Our blessings have been far greater than the challenges:

1. We have 150 children in Sunday School and 20 in our Weekday program.
2. Increased stewardship pledges and dollars over last year.
3. The stewardship survey checked the pulse of our community and gives us an opportunity to address concerns.

4. Community events such as the Variety Show, Easter Picnic, A Night in Athens, Movie on the Lawn, Grilling & Chilling, the Oxi Day Celebration, and our 75th Anniversary Celebration have provided a lot of fellowship and fun.
5. A very successful Festival with revenue up 7.5%. Harry Costa will give us the details.
6. Our clergy has held over 250 liturgical services so far this year.
7. We have no debt.

We must thank God for our blessings, for “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights” (James 1:17, New International Version).

Approval of the Minutes: Connie Kledaras proposed, and Harry Costa seconded, that we accept the minutes of the June 10, 2012, General Assembly. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: Don McEnteer. The rept. is for period ending Oct. 31, 2012. We are under-budget in revenue and over-budget in expenses, but we’re in the red, we’re paying our bills on time, and we’ll have money in our Operating Acct. at the end of the year.

Balance Sheet: The Operating Acct. has \$12,367; Capital Campaign Acct. has \$1,697,351; Festival Acct. has \$25,444 pending the transfer of Festival money; Memorial Fund has \$32,361; and Property & Facility Maint. has \$8,015.

YTD Revenue at \$373,251 is unfavorable to budget by \$(46.6K) but favorable to 2011 by 24K.

YTD Expenses at \$441,852 are unfavorable to budget by \$(22K).

YTD Net Income is unfavorable to budget by \$(68K).

Over-budget expenses include Supplies, mostly candles (by \$5.2K); Maintenance (by \$4.8K); and Insurance/Ministries (by \$12.7K) including Archdiocese Support (we got just a \$900 reduction), Sunday School (much needed) and Easter Picnic (anticipated). From a historical perspective, we had a 33% increase in revenue and a 47% increase in expenses from 2004 to 2011, but since 2008 we’ve had a reserve in the Operating Acct. of about \$75K in spite of some losses in 3 of the last 5 years. We haven’t used the Festival Acct. for Operating costs, just for Property & Facility Maintenance. We currently have \$11K in the Operating Acct. but Nov. & Dec. are good revenue months and we should have \$35K at the end of the year.

Questions: In response to questions from Rhonda Milkovich, Don said the transfer of money into the Festival Acct. was in process, and that the balance in our Liability Acct. is \$33K. Rhonda said that if ministries decided to use that acct. we would not have that amt. since we have only \$11-12K in Wells Fargo. Don said that was correct. However, our average Dec. revenue is \$62K and our budgeted monthly expenses are \$42K. Elaine Noulis asked: how do we know this will be true for this Dec.? In response to her questions about the Memorial and Festival Accts., Don said money from the Memorial Acct. had been spent on liturgical items and that the Festival Acct. has not been used for Operating costs.

The Motion made by John Demos and seconded by Nik Kamilaris to accept the Treasurer’s Report carried. Three opposed. Mark thanked Don.

Proposed 2013 Operating Budget: Don MacEnteer thanked the budget committee’s 15 members and said we had lengthy meetings to try to balance the budget. We had two options: (1) Balance the budget with what may or may not be a realistic increase in

Stewardship, or (2) lower our Stewardship expectations and use the Festival Acct. or another source to make up the shortfall. The Parish Council was not in favor of using the Festival Acct. So, to meet our 2013 budgeted expenses of \$520,475, we've budgeted Stewardship at \$442,475 (compared to \$410K in 2012). This may not be realistic, but we didn't think expenses could be trimmed further. We're open to suggestions.

2013 Budget Discussion: Dennis Kekas thanked Mark, Don and the PC. He's been in the community for 33 years, 25 of them on the PC. These financial problems come in cycles and you have to attack them from several angles: (1) Make a financial plea from the Sanctuary and do it more than once. (2) Resist the 9% increase in the Archdiocese and Metropolis support and be prepared to make a case for staying where we are. Parishes like ours (26%) are picking up the slack for underperforming ones. (3) The Festival Acct. should only be used for Building Maintenance and the Capital Campaign. We had to occasionally dip into it in the past but we always paid it back. Don thanked Dennis. George Kapetanakis said he agrees with Dennis and he thanked Don and Mark. He was surprised to hear at the Oct. PC meeting he sat in on that the \$5-6K rebate on the sale's tax from the Festival stays in the Operating Acct. and that our 5-year annual payment of \$5,000 to the Diakonia Center comes from the Festival Acct. He offered to personally provide maintenance and janitorial services so we could remove these items from the budget. Mark said we tried something like this with the PC under Fr. Paul Kaplanis and it failed miserably. John Demos said that he and Fr. Paul have been working on an appeal letter. Dennis said a verbal appeal should also be made in the Sanctuary: it can work on an emotional level.

Stewardship Update: Harry Kledaras asked John Demos whether the 9% increase in stewardship in 2012 reflected an increase in membership. John said that in 2011 we had 267 pledging families and \$314,548 in pledges, the average being \$1,178.08. In 2012 we have 281 pledges and \$344,268.98 in pledges, the average being \$1,225.16. In other words, we've 14 more pledging families and almost \$30,000 more than last year, thanks to both more and larger pledges. Three of the 14 families are new to the area. But 4 other stewards have left the area. This year, we asked all Sunday School and Dance Troop members to be stewards, saying they would get priority if there was a shortage of places, but we don't want exclude anyone.

Current finances: Responding to Sydney Langford, Don said each pledging family would need to pay \$178 before the end of the year to build our surplus back up to where it's been in recent years.

2013 Budget Discussion (cont.): Kevin Stavredes thanked Sydney, saying this was his approach to the budget: an extra \$200 per each pledging family would solve the problem, less than that if every family attending church pledged, so let's move forward and grow our stewardship. John Demos said pledges peaked in 2006 when we had 325. This is now our goal. We hope the letter will motivate people. Janine Sagris said we should (1) charge \$25 for the Christmas card, (2) encourage ministries and businesses to do some creative fundraising and (3) not budget for luncheons and picnics but have potlucks instead. John Demos said the Easter Picnic costs were for the rental of tents, tables and chairs. Stewardship is at record levels and we typically collect over 96% of it, but other revenues such as trays and Christmas cards are down. Harry Costa said we have a shortfall that can be made up by parishioners.

Motion to accept the proposed 2013 budget was made Harry Costa, and seconded by Risa Poniros.

Fr. Paul said: In my dealings with Greek Orthodox Christians, my experience has been that when there's an appeal without a target, we don't respond well, but when there's a need, a target, we step up. I love what Dennis Kekas said. That's what John Demos and I are doing in our letter. This is what the Archdiocese did seven years ago. They gave everyone the target, the assessment went up, and we met it. In Memphis it went from about \$17K to \$50-60K. We have a letter coming out: Orthodox Christians will meet the target.

Further discussion: Jason Kekas said we've got to go ahead with the budget, but we should have been told earlier that we were beginning to run short. We need month-to-month updates. We need better communication. Penny Gallins said we did make announcements in the Newsletter and Bulletins, and the PC Minutes are posted on the website and here in the hall. People should talk to PC members and ask them questions. Don't wait until Dec. to pay your pledge. Give something every month. We have a shortfall every August, though historically we've made it up. In response to Harry Kledaras, John Demos said about \$60K of this year's Stewardship remains to be paid. But money is coming in, so let's be positive. Kevin Stavredes said yes, but hope is not a strategy. Tod Bradley said he was concerned that we plugged the stewardship amount for the 2013 budget. We should be realistic. What expenses can we defer? Rhonda said we've been depleting our annual \$50-70K surplus. If we start the year with \$35K, we will have problems because our expenses far exceed our revenue. We are looking at our Festival Acct. if people don't come forward. How long can it pay our operating expenses and is that its purpose?

A motion to close discussion was made by Connie Kledaras and seconded by Carol Poulos. The motion carried with 33 in favor and 9 opposed.

Vote on the proposed 2013 budget: 35 in favor, 33 opposed.

Elaine Noulis said that that's too close. The question of proxy votes was raised. John Demos cited Art. 31, Section 5 of the Bylaws: proxies are not permitted at a parish assembly.

Second vote on the proposed 2013 budget: 37 in favor, 32 opposed.

Third vote on the proposed 2013 budget, this time with each person coming forward and having their vote tallied: 39 in favor, 30 opposed. Mark said the motion carried but that it's clear a large percentage aren't pleased. Let us know your ideas: we want to fix this problem. Joyce Kekas said people were against the budget because they want a more realistic view of expenses, especially Archdiocese support, and they don't want to dip into Festival funds for operating expenses. Harry Kledaras said we are not raiding the Festival Acct.

Parish Business:

a. Repairs and Maintenance: Jim Klemes, speaking for himself and Jimmy Ellison, said he has put the information on a spreadsheet that will be posted and updated. In 2009, we spent \$25K (foyer, choir loft); in 2010, \$205K (foyer, HVAC, narthex); in 2011, \$40K (French Dr., narthex, kitchen electrical panels, preschool door, altar AC); in 2012, \$61K (French Dr., walk-in cooler compressor, security cameras, narthex, church roof, sound system, storage room & chandeliers' electrical, hall AC, breaker panels). Money came from Festival Acct., Property & Fac. Maint. Fund, budgeted Maintenance, and donations, and there was a lot of volunteer work as well. The to-do list includes painting the sanctuary (est. \$8.1K), hall (est. \$2.5K), re-surface parking lot (est. \$5K), repair culvert

(est. \$5K), and do a maintenance upgrade on the electrical system and breaker panels. Mark thanked Jim.

b. Greek Festival Report: Harry Costa said it was a great Festival: we had a \$135,000 net profit. We haven't written the check for Habitat yet. We worked very hard. Thank you to those who cooked, set up and tore down. A special thank you to Penny Gallins, Jason Kekas and Rhonda Milkovich, who all really, really helped this year. The challenges for 2013 are:

1. Deacon Gavriilo can no longer do the lamb shanks. For over 10 years he's taken a week's vacation to prepare them from 8-3 from Sunday to Saturday. We did 1,344 lamb shanks this year. We'll need 3-4 volunteers a day for a week in 2013.
2. More evening cooking: We've had great ladies up to now, but health issues are becoming a challenge. We can bring in more people by working in the evening. Food preparation begins with the lamb shanks on May 12, Mother's Day. The Festival is on Sept. 20, 21, & 22. The contract has been signed.
3. Federal health regulations go into effect in Jan. 2013. Points will be deducted from our permit if we don't comply. The requirement that an environmental manager has to be on site whenever food is being prepared or served presents a challenge. We have 3 options: (1) Have 3 or 4 people pay to take the class online and receive the required certificate. (2) Ignore the requirement and take the 3-point deduction: we would start off with 97 points. (3) Do away with our restaurant-type permit and have a 2-day festival instead. Non-profits can have one 2-day fundraiser a month. It would reduce costs as well as revenue. We could spend Thursday and Friday setting up. We don't need the permit for the pre-school.

Terri Fotiu said we could have something like Albany NY's mini festival. It's held outside on the premises. They sell souvlaki and ice-cream for half a day Friday and for a full day Saturday and bring in \$25K. They also have a large Festival.

Harry said our 2013 Festival will be 3 days, the last he'll chair. Dennis Kekas and Mark thanked him for doing an outstanding job.

c. Stewardship Update: John Demos gave this earlier: see above.

d. Status of Capital Campaign: Penny Gallins said we have \$1.7M in the bank. Don't let the Capital Campaign affect your stewardship. We need to commit to both. After Dec. 31, we will tally the pledges and other sources of income and we'll hold a special General Assembly in January to give an update and decide on a timeline.

e. Nomination of Candidates for Parish Council: Tamara Costa said the following have been nominated: Toulia Capetanios, Greg Delage, Meg Economy, Nik Kamilaris and George Kapetanakis. The following were nominated from the floor: Risa Poniros, Frances Mathes and Connie Kledaras. Connie made a motion to close the nominations, seconded by Harry Kledaras. Motion carried with none opposed.

f. Audit Committee Elections: The following were nominated: Tom Mathes, Dennis Kekas and Elaine Noulis. Motion to accept those nominated carried.

Comments: Fr. Paul Christy said it's disturbing to have divisions, but the intention is good. We've a zeal for God's Holy House. We love and are passionate about our Church. Of course, Christ is invested in His Own Church. It will go on. And we will hash things out. We'll be okay. It would seem from the survey that there's a percentage who don't think I'm Mr. Wonderful. I've tried to look at it objectively and not become defensive. I consider those who criticize me benefactors and friends. I thought some of the concerns were legitimate, but some were not. I don't have the luxury of not being on the phone. Someone

is in a life-threatening situation at the moment. I want to be there for my people 24 hours a day. Some comments were insulting and came from a spirit of anger. If you are hurt, why do you get angry and not just stay hurt? Some of this hurt and anger comes from the loss you've experienced. You have anger toward the bishop and I represent the bishop. That's some of it. My replacement in Memphis didn't last a year. People become very attached to their priests. That's why there's the Feast of the Three Hierarchs. All Three had to be honored. It's not unusual to feel hurt, but, sometimes, hurt people hurt people. Don't let your feelings fester. Come to me, talk to me. I will never turn anyone away. As I said to Fr. Michael when he said "Yes Sir" after I once reluctantly criticized his behavior, I don't want your obedience. I want to be in a relationship with you. Give me that privilege. If you have any thoughts or concerns, I can assure you, I will be a gentleman.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Mary Wehbie thanked the Parish Council for all their work.

Adjournment: At 3 p.m. Connie Kledaras made a motion to adjourn.

Closing Prayer: Fr. Michael led us in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Perros