

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Parish Council Minutes
Tuesday, December 11, 2012

Call to Order: President Mark Langford called the meeting to order. Father Paul led us in prayer.

Members Present: Evan Bundros, Toulia Capetanios, Greg Delage, John Demos, Meg Economy, Jimmy Ellison, John Fakiris, David Ford, Fotis Fotiu, Penny Gallins, Jim Klemes, Nik Kamilaris, George Kapetanakis, Connie Kledaras, Leon Kythas, Mark Langford, Frances Mathes, Don McEnteer, George Pappas, Helen Perros, Risa Poniros.

Members Absent: Eve Kantner.

Mark thanked everyone for bringing food and beverages.

Choir: Elia Nicholas thanked everyone for their dedication and leadership. He was hired as choir director in 2000 and he's loved every minute of it. At first he had the help of an organist but for some time now he has been both choir director and organist and he can no longer do it. Fortunately, Tony Thompson is both willing and able to be our organist. A member in good standing of our church, he's a professional jazz musician and he knows Byzantine chant. He used to be choir director in Greensboro. With our budget crisis, Elia proposes that his own contract becomes null and void on Dec. 31, 2012, and that Holy Trinity make a contract for a year with Tony instead, the stipend being paid to him as organist from Jan. 1, 2013. Elia will continue on as choir director but will do this as part of his stewardship. Tony will also be the wedding organist. Dena Byers, a professional singer, music teacher and associate music director in a school in Durham will help Elia as assistant choir director. Jim Klemes, Meg Economy, John Demos, Helen Perros, Risa Poniros and Connie Kledaras spoke for everyone when they thanked Elia for taking the choir to new heights and for his incredibly generous offer. Jim Klemes proposed, and Penny Gallins seconded, that we accept Elia's proposal. Motion carried. (Only current members voted). Mark thanked Elia.

Reading of the Minutes: A motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting was made by John Demos and seconded by Evan Bundros. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Don McEnteer reported:

- Total revenues for Nov. were \$33,451, compared to \$31,754 for Nov. 2011. Budgeted mthly rev. is \$42K; YTD actual mthly average is \$36,972. Stewardship for Nov. was \$29K, \$5K under budgeted amt.; YTD actual mthly average is \$31.6K. Total operating expenses for Nov. were \$44,709 (Winter Youth Rally \$5K; Sunday School \$2K). Budgeted mthly expenses are \$42K; YTD actual mthly are \$44K. Net loss for Nov. \$(11,259).
- YTD revenue at \$406,702 was unfavorable to budget by \$(55K), but favorable to 2011 by \$25K.
- YTD expenses at \$486,562 were unfavorable to budget by \$(24K) and to 2011 by \$(89K). (Irreg. priests' salaries till June 2011).
- YTD Net income is unfavorable to budget by \$(79K).

- Operating Checking Acct. has \$191,025, but actual operating cash is \$1.225 (after transfers of \$177K to Festival Acct., \$15,228 to Cap. Camp. and \$22 to Memorial Fund); Capital Campaign Acct. has \$1,708,097; Fest. Acct. has \$19,306 (the \$177K+/- transfer from Operating Checking Acct. pending); Prop. & Fac. Maint. Fund has \$8,019; Memorial Fund has \$33,063 (up \$700 since Oct.).
- Projected end-of-year cash balance: \$16,775; projected net loss for 2012: \$(62K).

Don said that the Festival money has not been transferred to Festival Acct. yet. Habitat has yet to be paid; we don't have all the bills yet. We are over-budget in Supplies (candles), Maintenance, and Insurance/Ministries (Archdiocese Support, Sunday School & Easter Picnic). Jim Klemes said we spent \$61K on Maintenance this year. George Pappas asked about the cut-off date for 2012 stewardship payments. Mark and Penny said we should give less time than before and make an announcement in the Bulletin. John Demos said that Kelly told him that \$3K came in today. David Ford made a motion, seconded by John Ellison, to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried. John Demos said that Don has done an amazing job as treasurer. Mark also thanked Don.

Parish Business:

a. Welcome to new PC members: Mark welcomed the newly elected members, Toula Capetanos, Greg Delage, Meg Economy, Nik Kamilaris, George Kapetanakis, Connie Kledaras, Frances Mathes and Risa Poniros. The Metropolitan has to ratify the results before we can all be sworn in. We are going to miss Don McEnteer, Jim Klemes, Jimmy Ellison, George Pappas, John Demos, Leon Kythas and Eve Kantner. It was fun working with you all and I look forward to nominating you for Parish Council in a year's time.

b. Next steps ... General Assembly: Mark said it was a long meeting, but communication is important. About a week ago, Fr. Paul sent out the letter about our financial needs and we've had good responses already. Dennis Kekas recommended sending a delegation to Atlanta to make our case against the increase in Archdiocese Support, and Penny Gallins, Harry Costa, myself, and maybe Dennis, are making a one-day trip next week to meet with the Chancellor and the Metropolitan. We're paying for it ourselves. Your thoughts on the General Assembly? Don said there was some opposition to the budget, but it was accepted. John Fakiris said the process was confusing. John Demos said the budget did pass all three times. Fr. Paul said John Fakiris has a point: given the disagreement over it, a secret ballot from the beginning would have been better. Fotis Fotiu said somebody said that the parish would not have accepted the budget. Frances Mathes said it's up to parishioners to come to the General Assembly if they want to have a say. George Kapetanakis said that the budget committee's recommendation that two budgets be presented to the General Assembly was ignored at the PC meeting in Oct. John Demos said he did mention it. Don and Penny said two budgets were presented at the Parish Council and it voted to present the one without the Festival as an income line item at the General Assembly. Toula said the sales tax rebate shouldn't be in the Operating Acct. since most of it comes from the Festival. Mark said with things as tight as they are, we can't move it. David Ford said he thought Fr. Paul's appeal letter was fantastic. Fr. Paul said he loved it when Don said we are going to have to make up the shortfall. As the letter says, when you break the numbers down, what seems daunting at first becomes much easier and more manageable. Each of our 280 pledging families needs to increase their pledge by just \$3.20 a week for us to avoid a budget shortfall. We *can* increase our Stewardship. People of goodwill *will* come forward. We have to stand up to the negativity whenever we hear it. Festival money should not be used for operating

expenses. Helen Perros said the parish has to decide whether it wants to move forward and be ready for the opportunities and challenges ahead. Do we want to play a leadership role among the other Greek Orthodox churches in the area, or do we just retreat and say it's too overwhelming for us? Leon Kythas said he was shocked to hear that at another GO church in our area the average family pays less than \$800 p.a. and that they've used over \$31K from their Festival account for 3 years in a row. Other communities do the same. Because he doesn't want that to happen here and he believes in this church, he's increasing his stewardship by over 25% for 2013. Connie Kledaras said we must move forward and try to come up with creative fundraisers.

c. Use of fellowship hall and kitchen (Girl Scouts): No longer needed.

d. Wake County Health Inspection: Mark said we have to ask Kelly to take the Food Safety Manager course at Wake Tech. It lasts 3-4 days and there's an exam. It costs under \$200. Risa Poniros said the course is also online. Mark went through the list of violations cited in the Nov. 2 inspection: Store eggs *below* ready-to-eat foods. Wash utensils, including can-opener blade, and pans properly so there's no food debris. Food in the refrigerator has to be date-marked if it's going to be there more than 24 hours: it has only a four-day shelf life. (Be sure to also date each prosero and state whether it has or has not a good seal before putting it in the freezer. Four are used every Sunday.) The chlorine bleach sanitizers should be labeled as such and not as bleach and should have a concentration of 50-200 ppm, not more. Aluminum pans can be used only once. Food items in storage jars should be properly labeled.

e. Candles – cost savings: Mark said that at the 2012 Clergy-Laity he learned of a monastery in California that sells beeswax candles that are narrower and longer than our current ones and cost just 15¢ each. They take 45 minutes to burn. We ordered 1,000 to try them out. They would save us money - we're currently paying 23¢ from San Jose Candle - and we'd produce less waste for the landfill. Toulia said the monastery at Troy also makes candles. For \$7, you can buy a pound of 40 larger candles or 60 smaller ones. We'd have to pick them up ourselves and provide storage boxes. There's a place in Raleigh where you can recycle candles. Fr. Paul said the Diakonia Center plans to produce candles soon. Fr. Michael said the priests go to Troy on a regular basis and could pick up the candles. The discussion was inconclusive.

f. American Cancer Society prevention project: Mark said that the ACS, that Foti partnered with for A Night in Athens, are gearing up for a Cancer Prevention Study-3 involving people from different ethnic backgrounds. The goal is to wipe out cancer. They would like to enroll 30-65 year-olds who have never been diagnosed with cancer and are willing to commit to a 20-30 year-study. Wake Co. enrollment will be March 12-23 and involves paperwork, a waist measurement and a small blood sample. After that, participants will complete periodic surveys at home. It would be good for our Church to participate. The PC or Philoptochos could sponsor a coffee hour and have ACS speak.

g. Final distribution of Church directories: Mark asked: how do we want to distribute them? Suggestions: Our priests should have a stack to distribute and the Stewardship Committee also for any additional pledging families. The cost for any extras is \$5 each. A discussion developed about welcoming newcomers and about bridging the gap between the Welcome and Stewardship Committees. Fr. Michael said Fr. Paul had him follow up with new people and that we need to cultivate a welcoming culture in the parish. Mrs. Vallas was exemplary when she introduced John Demos's wife and sister-in-law to everyone during the coffee hour. We should make sure to invite newcomers to social events like the Chili Cook-Off.

h. Coffee Hour for Ambassadors: Penny said it is on Dec. 23. Please bring a Lenten snack. Risa Poniros asked about the protocol for having a coffee hour, and Mark said there's still a sign-up sheet in the foyer but also let Kelly know.

The members of the 2012 Parish Council reflected on their year or, in many cases, years of service. Some comments: enjoyed working as a team, as a family, visualizing our huge new sanctuary on Lead Mine, the important General Assembly in January to discuss this, enjoyed the fundraisers, the 75th Anniversary, feel more connected to the past, enjoyed the learning process, seeing the inner workings, having a voice and voicing your opinions, accepting decisions and moving on, have greater spiritual awareness, attended more services than would have otherwise, the responsibilities involved, seeing it in terms of Star Wars, learning about our faith, attracting both good and bad comments, dealing with conflicts, it's humbling, it forms friendships, you have to respect and to forgive, can disagree without being disagreeable, we all want the church to grow, what's best for the church, giving and getting back, we welcome the new parish councilors, the progress being made in stewardship, the hard work and teamwork of the executive board, the great leadership of the president, and being blessed to have and work with priests of the highest spiritual and intellectual caliber.

Comments/services/events/other: Father Paul said that he likes the concept of being a family. We have to work through our differences, to adapt to change and yet keep the thread from the past. When that doesn't happen, the church suffers. I'm impressed with everyone's willingness to keep working and helping. You are a very classy group. God bless you and your families. I'm thinking of forming a committee to come up with fundraisers. If it weren't for Foti, we wouldn't have any. Bob Krantz, who has written a new book on Holy Week, might come here for a Lenten lecture. There's a liturgy tomorrow for St. Spyridon. We should congratulate Sydney Langford and Philoptochos on a magnificent Bake Sale. I've never seen anything like it! Fr. Michael and I gave tours of the Sanctuary to non-Orthodox attendees. It was a great event and a lot of fun.

Old Business:

- Toula said in Jan. Alyssa Xioris will be asking for 100 interviews for her parish history.
- Toula said that the Dessert & Dance will be on March 16, 7-11:30 p.m. (Since changed to March 2.) Costumes are optional. Tickets, on sale from the end of Dec., will be \$25 for adults and \$20 for students. There will be a cash wine-and-beer bar.

New Business:

- John Demos said that we already have 108 Stewardship pledges for 2013 and \$161,872 pledged. That's over \$1,500 more than last year,
- John Fakiris said that the lighting of the psaltery is very bad. There are also problems with the mikes and wires. Nik Kamilaris concurred saying that it's extremely hard to read there at night. Mark asked John if he could look into it and coordinate with Jim Klemes, who has worked with the Stoners on electrical problems at Holy Trinity.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by John Demos, seconded by Don McEnteer.

Closing prayer: Father Paul and Fr. Michael led us in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Perros