

Archdiocesan Assembly  
Archdiocese of Washington  
Orthodox Church in America  
September 28, 2019  
St. Luke Orthodox Church  
McLean, Virginia

The Assembly opened with Divine Liturgy at 9 AM. The responses were beautifully sung by the choir from the Fairfax Mission Station. At the end of the Liturgy, His Beatitude presented Michael Thompson with a Primatial Gramota in recognition for his service to the Archdiocese and to the parish of St. Mark in many different roles over the years. We then went into the hall for brunch, following which the meeting was called to order with "O Heavenly King" at 11:45 am.

Fr. John welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda which was accepted.

**Metropolitan's Welcome and Report: (attached)**

His Beatitude welcomed all and gave an introduction to the 20<sup>th</sup> All-American Council to be held in Baltimore, Maryland in July 2021. He encouraged everyone to see how they can help. Another upcoming event will be next year, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OCA and the canonization of the first North American Saint. His Beatitude shared his desire to host an event. The Holy Synod has established that there will be three church wide events spread out over the year. In addition each Diocese will have events including pilgrimages to Alaska. Our Diocese has a week reserved but the early bird special is gone. The three church wide events are with the Holy Synod (HS). The first will be the St. Tikhon's Memorial Day Pilgrimage (the first AAC following autocephaly was held there); August 4 – 10 St. Herman Pilgrimage – HS will be going to Alaska; then in November, Liturgy at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in conjunction with the fall meeting of HS. A separate committee will be appointed to create and manage an additional event the weekend of the Liturgy. While this will be a national event, local help will be needed. One event idea is to work with the Finnish Embassy as Finland has a connection with St Herman. Tentative timing is the week of November 13<sup>th</sup> with the Liturgy on Saturday November 14<sup>th</sup>.

His Beatitude reported that the Missions Board has clarified the distribution of stipends and provided ongoing guidance to our missions. The parish highlight this year will be a report by the new Fairfax Mission Station. His Beatitude will be serving at the Fairfax Mission Station tomorrow for their second Liturgy.

His Beatitude thanked Lisa for the YES event. Noting that while this event "did not get off the ground", the Archdiocese needs to make an effort to keep the youth movement going.

His Beatitude noted that the Archdiocese needs more vibrant mechanisms for communication. The first new issue of Kathedra is out and included in your packet. (Fr. John Vitko pointed out that this issue was done completely by His Beatitude.) His Beatitude would like to see this publication out monthly (at least quarterly). He noted that there is an opening for someone to take this on. He thanked Fr. Dennis Buck for the work he did on the original publication and asked for prayers for Fr. Dennis as he is facing multiple surgeries. He requested prayers for Matushka Safchuk, and for all others struggling. Final note on Kathedra: if we can create content, the content can also be posted on the Archdiocesan website. We struggle to update the website due to lack of content. Reports should be sent to the Chancellor (Fr. John Vitko) for posting on the website. Anyone interested in volunteering for Kathedra should contact Fr. John or His Beatitude.

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His Beatitude commended the Finance Committee for the work done this year. Proper stewardship is important and the committee has done extensive and excellent work on the plan that will be presented at this meeting.

At the Metropolitan Council we were represented by Greg Honshul; his report is in the packet. He replaces Michael Thompson due to Michael's recent move. Fr. Valery's first term on the Metropolitan Council has ended and he has agreed to run again. Mat. Kitty also represents us as a church wide representative. Michael Thompson has also been serving us as chair of the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDB). His Beatitude offered condolences on repose of Michael's son Michael, and thanked him for his leadership in the Archdiocese. We will need to make sure the work of the DDB continues.

His Beatitude has sent our Archdiocesan condolences to the family of Archbishop Nikon on his recent falling asleep and has been appointed Locum Tenens for the Albanian and New England Dioceses which were vacated by Archbishop Nikon's repose. These Dioceses will be considered for further action at the November meeting of the Holy Synod. Both Dioceses are solid administratively and His Beatitude is committed to the Archdiocese of Washington, DC but will be juggling needs in all three dioceses.

His Beatitude concluded with hopes for the new ecclesiastical year. He hopes to spend more time in the Archdiocese, working on the Location Committee studying the possible relocation of the Chancery and Archives of the OCA and focusing on vocations and succession planning. In answer to a question regarding the Location Committee he responded that we must be open to all possibilities and that we must do what is best for the church.

Chancellor's Report:

Fr. John thanked His Beatitude for all the time spent on Diocesan affairs. He noted that the Archdiocese has helped three clergy with long term health issues this year. The DDB has been able to help financially. Clergy have faithfully covered services and parish needs. Fr. Sean Levine, OCA Chaplain at Ft. Belvoir and Fr. Tim Perry have served regularly at these parishes. The parishes especially have stepped up and supported their priests (including salary).

He noted the work of the committees. The Mission Board meets regularly, the DDB raises money to help our clergy, Financial Committee has built a better understanding of our Archdiocesan finances and will present later in the Assembly.

The Fairfax Mission Station – not even a year old and has grown to include liturgies. Two of our missions have lost occupancy sites in recent years and have been able to relocate.

The Archdiocese continues work on compliance training, doing reasonably well on Sexual Misconduct. All but 10 of 120+ have completed the training. If you have brought on new personnel, just send name and email address to Fr. John, notify them that they must do the trainings. All must be completed by the end of November.

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Fr. John reminded the clergy regarding continuing education. This year's 5 hours of on line training has been suspended due to glitches in the system: it was on Suicide awareness and prevention. It is highly recommended once the system is up and running.

Fr. Michael Oleksa, will be giving a retreat at St. Mark on Nov. 16, sponsored by the Mission Board. The topic will be on baptizing cultures from the time of St. Herman to the present.

Fr. John Vitko spoke on improving archdiocesan communication and referred to His Beatitude's comments. Fr. John Parsells is happy to post on web site. All that is necessary is a picture with two or three lines of caption.

Fr. John reviewed the goals desired for the Youth and Young Adult Committee. It is still in need of leadership. Goals include the need to try engaging our youth and creation of a clear policy on support and outreach at the local colleges.

Fr. John noted that the Archdiocesan articles of incorporation need to be renewed and that work on this is ongoing. He noted that renewals must be done every two years and that due to lack of notification it had lapsed.

Fr. John noted that the 20<sup>th</sup> All-American Council (AAC) in 2021 will be an exciting time and excellent opportunity to showcase our Archdiocese. The AACs are a great chance to get to know people. We will be hosting about 1000 people and will need about 50 or so people to help. We are creating a list of people who might be able to help, "maybes", that can start working and exploring as things come up. He asked that rectors and parish presidents talk this up. We will find roles that match their strengths and time availability..

Fr. John noted that succession planning is the biggest strategic issue the Archdiocese faces. More than half of our clergy are eligible for retirement NOW! We have to think about this. Please encourage vocations. Let your parishes know that we are working on this.

Fr. John concluded by reiterating the Archdiocesan needs: New coordinator for the DDB; Members for Youth and Young adult committee; List of volunteers for AAC; and communication contributors from each parish.

**Appointments:**

Clergy Chair: Fr. John Vitko

Lay Chair: Michael Thompson

**Credentials:**

11 clergy delegates; 17 lay delegates; 7 observers

**Minutes:** Fr. Buck was unable to complete last year's minutes due to medical leave. Fr. John's notes are included on page 11 of today's handout. Please review and let Fr. John know if anything has been overlooked. No motion at this time.

**Parish Highlights: Fairfax Mission Station**

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Deacon Matthew Prentice reported that the Mission Station started with Vespers rather than liturgy at the recommendation of Fr. Marcus Burch. Vespers are held at St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church in Fairfax. October 20 2018 was the first service where 43 attended. Average attendance is 20 – 25. This year the mission station had Presanctified Liturgies with many attending from local parishes. They also celebrated Holy Thursday Matins, had a docent from St. Mary's present and had the first Sunday liturgy in August. St. Mary of Sorrows was a Civil War field hospital where Clara Barton treated Civil war soldiers. Tomorrow will be the second Sunday Liturgy (these are held at the Railroad Museum). The Mission Station boasts a robust choir and a schedule of services set through 2020. Fr. Sean noted that it takes a lot of support to grow and hope that it will become a community. He would like to be able to offer Orthodoxy to the neighborhood but is presently trying to grow the family of believers. He is hoping those in the area will come join us and find the Gospel. He is thankful to be a part of this.

**Financial Report: Matt Matyuf**

Matt thanked everyone for prayers for him and his wife, Susan. Both have had medical issues. He reviewed the financial handouts (attached). He noted that the Archdiocese had some cash flow challenges in 2018 when assessments receipts were slow. He noted that all assessments are now up to date and we have no cash flow issues at present.

The Auditors looked at 2019 and found a similar pattern. All parishes met their assessments, but the Archdiocese had to go through a reassessment (significant) and everyone is now covering this year's budget. He noted that DDB monies have been separated and are in a separate bank account. The Archdiocese is currently holding the finances for the Fairfax Mission Station. Note the bolded amounts: Pay Pal monies go to the DDB. About 5K of the 52K belongs to the Fairfax Mission Station. Year to date 2019 is listed; first the Archdiocese, then DDB. Request for Parish data has gone out in order to determine the assessments for 2020. Only 4 parishes have responded. The Archdiocese cannot release 2020 commitments until all parishes have sent in their information. Using QuickBooks for recordkeeping, changes will be made to improve reports.

Matt reviewed and highlighted the numbers on the second handout.

**Questions:**

How was the request for information distributed? The request for information was mailed, sent to clergy. Please see Matt and he will resend to new representative if needed.

What is the PayPal account: It is an account set up with a link on the Archdiocesan website to facilitate online donations for the DDB.

Matt reported that Excel spreadsheets are kept of the DDB and Fairfax Mission subaccounts. These reports helped identify miscategorizations within QuickBooks which have since been corrected.

**MOTION:** Motion made to accept the financial report. By Walter Alesevich, Michael Thompson seconded. Passed unanimously

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**Audit Committee:** Greg Honshul

Greg Honshul, representative for the Auditors reported that Matt's work is in transition and that the auditors are working with him to bring the accounts into more practicable practices. Page 13 is an accounting chart without DDB. Greg thanked the other members of the Auditing Committee, Peter Mazikins and John Jubinski. Collectively they spent an entire day going through what Matt does. QuickBooks anticipates how to categorize, which sometimes leads to miscategorizations. Matt's separate spreadsheets have proved helpful in finding these. Observations and notes:

- DDB has been pulled out into a separate account.
- Looking for a tracking system in QB to track FMS.
- Account Receivable Aging Detail is actually parishes that have not fully paid their assessments. By June it was paid up but this is what creates an issue with bottom line.
- Matt does monthly reconciliations.
- We are about 80% ready to create quarterly reports for circulation.

MOTION: Motion was made to accept the auditor's report by Fr. John Parsells; Wayne Tatusko seconded. Motion **passed** unanimously.

BREAK

Fr. John Vitko announced an alteration to the agenda: Elections will be the first order of business following the break and asked everyone to refer to page 25 of the handout. He noted that the revised OCA statute defines clergy as Deacons and Priests so both are eligible to run today for the clergy representative to the Metropolitan Council. An alternate simply responds when the delegate is unable to fulfill his duties.

**Elections for Metropolitan Council Delegate:**

Fr. Valery Shemchuk, was nominated as Delegate; Deacon Matthew Prentice, was nominated as Alternate for the three year term to end 2022 and accepted by acclamation.

**Elections for Auditing Committee:**

Greg Honshul is willing to continue as a lay member of the auditing committee. Walter Alesevich and Kitty Vitko made and seconded a motion to elect Greg. Motion carried unanimously.

**Finance Committee Report:**

Cooper Pappas thanked everyone for their help, noting that only two parishes are represented on the committee. Findings were presented to Council in August and are contained in today's presentation. There are three decisions to be brought to the attention of the Assembly today:

- 1) First Fruits giving: Cooper explained the difference between zero based budgeting and first fruits giving. A plan was made for assessing parishes based on first fruits. Determining income for first fruits

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giving includes a limited number of “deductions”. Rent, mortgage, priest salaries, may be deducted at 50% of their total. He also noted that certain income categories are not added in such as designated monies and pass through for charities. Missions are given the best avenue for success - established parishes will be asked to donate at 10%. Missions at 1% for the first five years; for years 6-10, each year 1% will be added until the mission reaches 5%. The mission will remain at 5% until it reaches parish status. The total amount attained by the first fruit giving will establish the income for the Archdiocesan budget.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by Cooper Pappas to accept First Fruits giving for the 2020 budget and moving forward; Karen Phinney seconding. Motion passed unanimously.

- 2) There is a need to determine who will make recommendations for insufficiencies in the giving versus budget items when there is a shortfall of contributions.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by Cooper Pappas that the Finance Committee will recommend payment methodology to Archdiocesan Council whenever operations account is underfunded. Walter Alesevich seconded. Motion carried unanimously

- 3) Budget: Changes in the methods for categorizing budget items were reviewed as handouts were discussed. Income will be based on assessments (first fruits). This budget is presented based on estimates as many parishes have yet to submit their financial statements. It is anticipated that assessments for 2020 will go out at the end of November. It was noted that our fiscal year is the calendar year (January to December). Notes:
  - a. Mission Board will be able to reserve money (accrue) if desired for purpose of building missions. They will be able to set money aside for future use (and as an emergency fund).
  - b. If a budget item does not have leadership to disperse the funds by February, it will be removed from that year’s budget and the funds will go into the Archdiocesan reserves.
  - c. Only two churches are represented on the Finance Committee. The goal is that all parishes will participate.
  - d. Autocephaly event noted on next year’s budget – this is the Archdiocesan contribution, not necessarily the entire budget for the event.

Motion: a Motion was made by Wayne Tatusko to strikeout Georgetown University from line 17 (OCF funding in 2020) and add TBD along with St. Johns, USNA; Walter Alesevich seconded.

Discussion: This creates inconsistency with grayed out areas on the proposed budget. The motion was amended for line 17 to be divided with a second line 17A and read

Line 17 USNA/St. John’s \$3000

Line 17A: \$1500

The change to the motion was agreed to by motion makers. The motion carried unanimously

- e. Line 19 Episcopal expenses will be reviewed for the 2021 budget by the Finance Committee.
- f. Based on the current estimate next year’s budget will have a slight overage which will go to the reserves.

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**MOTION:** Motion was made by Cooper Pappas to accept 2020 budget as proposed and amended.

Wayne Tatusko seconded.

Discussion: Fairfax Station Money will continue as a pass-through until they get a bank account. The reserve amount will be monies not expended.

Motion carried unanimously

**20<sup>th</sup> All-American Council:**

His Beatitude noted that parishes should start thinking now about sending delegates and priests. Fr. Ted presented an overview of the work done thus far. The first Preconciliar Commission (PCC) meeting was held this week. The hotel was toured and rooms were reviewed. Items discussed included the local committees and the theme was set: Hope in an Age of Despair: Healthy Parishes (healthy clergy, healthy parishes). Skeleton structure (agenda and activities) of the Council was fleshed out. October 26<sup>th</sup> was set as a date for a meeting of the Local Committee Leaders, representatives of the PCC and potential volunteers. We hope to have representatives from all parishes attend. Fr. Constantine indicated that St. Matthew would be willing to host the meeting. Fr. Ted circulated a sign-up sheet to create communication list.

**Mission Board:**

Fr. Gregory referred everyone to read the report. He noted that the Board has determined there will be a soft stop to mission stipends after 10 years so missions know when support will end. He congratulated Fr. Robert Miclean on his work with the OCF and Annapolis mission and 15 years of the Annapolis Campus Ministry (ACM). He reminded the Assembly that on November 16<sup>th</sup> Fr. Michael Oleksa will present a retreat at St. Mark from 10 AM to 4 PM.

**Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors:**

Michael Thompson noted that Matt Matyuf was able to have Bank of America charges reversed. Based on the survey from last year, the DDB will focus on youth activities. Matt added that funds come in from various sources; parishes, individuals, PayPal, etc. Checks should be made out to the Archdiocese of Washington, DC and a note in the lower left to designate the funds to the DDB.

**Youth Committee:**

Fr. John Vitko reiterated the need for leaders. Duties would include planning activities for youth and managing OCF budget distributions. He would also like the Youth Committee to determine the need for seeding and initiating OCFs versus ongoing support. Anyone interested should contact him directly. His Beatitude noted that Dimitrios Rentel did great a great job this summer with his survey regarding desired youth activities. One of the results indicated a need for local activities, especially at parish level. Hopefully we will get some energy going within our Archdiocese. Fr. John asked that this be taken back to your communities. Age appropriate individuals should be recruited.

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**Compliance:**

His Beatitude discussed the PSP, continuing education, and bylaws for parishes. All are in need of attention as we do not yet have 100% compliance in any of these areas. He noted that continuing education is about clergy health. It should provide something educational and helpful to an individual's ministry. Parishes need to budget funds to send clergy to events, online programs, etc. This is important for the clergy as healthy clergy equate to healthy parishes. He also noted that 100% PSP compliance is mandatory but that this should not have to be: compliance should be a given and a natural part of parish life. The bishops are constantly reminded that we need to be at 100%.

Question: What is acceptable for continuing education topics? This is discretionary but flexible. Must relate and improve your ministry.

Question: Will parishes receive a signed copy of their by-laws (or feedback) as part of the approval process? The end result will be a signed set of by-laws returned to each parish with His Beatitude's signature as approved.

**Report from Metropolitan Council (MC):**

Greg Honshul attended his first meeting which was shorter than usual. They met at Immaculate Conception Seminary. Tuesday morning began with liturgy at the Chancery. It is worth a trip to see the Chancery – it is the largest plot of undisturbed land in Nassau County, New York. The OCA Chancellor gave a report where he noted that there has been some turnover in Chancery staff and support through resignations and deaths. The Chancellor noted a need for an OCA Secretary and additional IT help. Two new employees have been added: Andrew Smith, Treasurer and Susan Wisnewski as Accounting Assistant. Greg noted that the MC received an update on the Relocation Committee: there is a three part problem and a variety of solutions will be reviewed. Everything is on the table! His Beatitude would like to be closer to his diocese. Archpriest Kyrill is managing the internal governance committee which is working on condensing the MC committees. Human Resources and Ethics were combined; Financial Development (Fundraising) was added; Charity dissolved and the budget placed into discretionary; Technology Equipment was formed; as was Relocation. Treasurer's report noted that the position is not full time and that he has accomplished a lot in a short time. The Chancery will be moving from Black Baud to QuickBooks over time for accounting. QuickBooks represents a significant savings. Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky presented on external affairs and noted that global Orthodoxy is going through a difficult time now. Fr. Leonid noted several highlights including His Beatitude concelebrating in second position with the Ecumenical Patriarch and also as Primate with Patriarch Kyrill. The Relocation Committee noted a feeling that Chancery has served its purpose but there is a cost to moving. A review of the deed to the property noted no restrictions to selling. It also noted no zoning or incorporation issues for transferring the nonprofit offices to another state. They noted that preservation of the Archives in the Chancery basement is a problem – no vapor barrier, media will be digitized; paper will be retained. An OCA museum was proposed and St. Tikhon's was mentioned as a possibility. A prayer petition was held for Michael Thompson on death of his son. The Stewards of the OCA (SOCA) Sunday will be Sunday October 27 and is coming up. Dimitrios Rentel Youth project will help determine if a youth director is needed. Survey results were discussed. It was noted that



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campers feel they go through withdrawal when camp is done. Data continues to be compiled and the next report due in February. A need to promote next year's Alaskan pilgrimages was presented.

**Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA)**

Walter Alesevich, Colonial District Chair, gave an overview of Colonial District and local chapters. FOCA is an official organization of the OCA. The 2021 FOCA convention will be on the front end of the AAC in 2021. He asked that parishes go back and consider the formation of a chapter.

Question: Has there been any effort given to moving into Diocese of the South? Walter noted that there have been some additions in Florida and Georgia and referred to [orthodoxfellowship.org](http://orthodoxfellowship.org) for additional information.

**Next meetings:**

The 2020 meetings were announced as:

February 22, 2020 Diocesan Council Meeting

August 22 Diocesan Council Meeting

September 26 Diocesan Assembly

**New Business**

David Heatwole, St. Catherine's, requested the Archdiocese consider Sunday Lenten Vespers which would rotate throughout the Diocese. It was noted that this is done in other areas. Baltimore does this on a Pan-Orthodox basis. This could be established with two or three parishes to start. His Beatitude noted that he supports scheduling additional services and that perhaps this could be done with youth in mind. Fr. John Vitko will send an email to see if there is interest.

His Beatitude reviewed some possible suggestions for youth activities such as a camp or a "day with Youth" where youth could experience monastic life. He noted that he is hoping to extract results pertinent to our diocese from the national results.

Archdeacon Joseph spoke on the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (SOCA): He shared experience with Mission Vespers which can be very important to mission growth and noted that SOCA met its goal last year. He reminded the Assembly that October 27 is designated as SOCA Sunday and asks that parishes take a donation for SOCA. Additional information will be forthcoming. SOCA is focusing on three areas: Youth, Evangelization and Music.

Motion to adjourn was made by Walter Alesevich and seconded by Karen Phinney. Adjourned at 4:48 PM with the Hymn to the Theotokos.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Mikhalevsky, Recording Secretary