

Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

December, 23, 2010

Minutes of the 2010 Archdiocesan Assembly

The 2010 Annual Assembly for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. was held at St. Luke Orthodox Church in McLean, VA on Saturday, December 11, 2010. It was combined with a broader Diocesan Day meant to bring together parishioners from throughout the Archdiocese to worship together and to share a meal and fellowship. The day began at 9:00 with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at which David Phelps was ordained to the Holy Diaconate. This was followed by a wonderful brunch provided by St. Luke.

The formal Assembly meeting began at 1:15 pm and opened with a prayer led by His Beatitude Metropolitan Jonah. The key points and motions are summarized below.

Metropolitan's Address:

- We are called to sanctify the lives we have. We don't save the Church. The Church saves us. We are to love one another. Be patient and kind to each other.
- Washington is becoming my home, though I am still on the road a lot as locum tenens of two other Dioceses (the Mid-West and the South). Beginning in 2011, I'm hoping to be able to alternate weeks between NY and D.C.
- My plan/desire is to relocate the chancery to D.C. shortly after the 16th All American Council.
- I am most grateful to Fr. Gregory Safchuk, Michael Hydock, and Fr. John Vitko for their assistance with the administration of the Archdiocese.
- A major issue confronting the Church today is funding. We need to move away from the 'head-tax' to a tithing (proportional giving) system. Tithing will have its largest benefit for the parish. How we support the Church is a spiritual issue. It is about repentance – a turning to God.
- Lots of things are happening in the Archdiocese. A monastic community is forming. There have been pastoral changes at St. Matthew. A new mission has been started in Annapolis under the newly ordained Priest Robert Miclean. Fr. Robert has been doing an outstanding job with campus ministry.
- The relationship between the OCA and ROCOR has been healed. A joint statement of the ROCOR/OCA history will be published on our website and a planning committee has been formed for a joint liturgical celebration.

- Patriarch Kirill sees the OCA as the root foundation for Orthodox unity in North America.

Appointment of Clergy and Lay Chairs: His Beatitude appointed Fr. Gregory Safchuk and Michael Thompson as the clergy and lay chairs of the Assembly.

Report of the Credential Committee: Fr. John Vitko reported the following participation:

Clergy delegates: 14; Lay Delegates: 17; Observers 19; Total 50

Acceptance of 2009 Minutes: the minutes were amended to change the title from “Summary of Diocesan Assembly...” to “Minutes of Diocesan Assembly”.

Motion 1 (Michael Hydock/Karen Phinney): Approve minutes as amended. Passed.

Treasurer’s Report for 2010 (Michael Hydock): a detailed income/outgo statement was presented. At the top level, the:

Income to date: \$101,463 (includes 1-time transfer of \$46,327) from Diocese of NY-NJ
Expenses to date: \$ 49,438

Auditor’s Report (Michael Thompson): No report since the 2010 books are not yet closed.

Report of the By-Laws Committee (Leda Dzwonzyck, Rosalie Luster, and Dn. Patrick Gariano): A revised set of Archdiocesan By-Laws were presented. These were based on the earlier Diocesan By-Laws and had only minor modifications – the most significant of which was to no longer include Chaplains as Archdiocesan Delegates since they report directly to the Metropolitan in his role as Metropolitan and not in his role as Archbishop of the Archdiocese. A one page summary of the changes was requested and promised. Since there was insufficient ‘lead-time’ to consider these revised By-Laws prior to this meeting, they cannot be formally adopted at this time. We will operate under them as interim By-Laws in 2011 and formally vote on them in the 2011 Assembly.

Report on Processes for Developing Missions (Popadija Kitty Vitko): This report examined the mission development processes of three dioceses (West, Mid-west, and South) and of the Central Administration. Each of the dioceses had very different processes and yet each was very successful. The common elements in their approaches were:

- Frequent contact of diocesan officials with each of the missions
- Support and awareness of each mission – recognizing that each is very unique

- Stipends tend to be of short duration and are reviewed annually so that no mission becomes dependent.

Formation of a Mission Board: In response to the above report, the Metropolitan stated that he would like to form a Mission Board. The following individuals volunteered to be on that Board: Fr. Dennis Buck, Fr. Mark Koczak, Fr. Michael Koblosh, Fr. Robert Miclean, Popadija Kitty Vitko, Wayne Hajos, and Constantine Mitsopolos.

Appointments: The Metropolitan reappointed Michael Hydock and Fr. John Vitko as treasurer and secretary of the Archdiocese respectively.

Report from the Metropolitan Council (Rosalie Luster): some highlights of the fall meeting:

- A day and a half retreat led by Fr. Tom Hopko in which the MC members got to know each other better and to explore their various roles;
- Metropolitan Jonah's comments on 'the hope for unity' and on the excellent brotherly spirit on the Holy Synod;
- The Pension Plan is quite healthy and looks to be so in the foreseeable future. There is a committee to take a closer look at the assumption of a 7.5% return.
- Major Website development is underway, with the new revised site scheduled for May 2011.
- The OCA budget is back in the black – with an \$80K surplus in 2010 and a projected \$120K surplus in 2011 (including a significant increase in Department funding)
- An Ad-hoc Committee has been formed under Fr. Matthew Tate to look at alternate ways of funding the Church.
- Work on the 16th All American Council continues: expecting diverse attendance, including Alaska and Hawaii; the Strategic Plan will be an integral part of the AAC; there will be a side pilgrimage to Sitka; registration will be via the internet; and there will be an \$11/member assessment on the parishes to pay for the AAC.
- The Alaskan lands have finally been transferred from the OCA to the Diocese of Alaska!

Budget for 2011 (Michael Hydock): Michael presented a draft budget for 2011. Our expenses consist primarily of a housing allowance for His Beatitude and mission support. The following changes were suggested and accepted from the floor:

- Provide \$5000 in mission support for the new Annapolis Mission (see Motion 2 below)
- Breakout Metropolitan Council Travel into 2 bins and increases the budgeted amount: Travel to Metropolitan Council (\$600) and Travel to AAC (\$2500). The revised numbers reflect an increase of \$1600 above that originally budgeted.
- Per suggestion of His Beatitude, eliminate the \$1000 in Episcopal travel

- Add a line for Pension (Housing Allowance) \$2,160 (6% of the Housing Allowance) under Operations: Episcopal;
- Relabel “Housing Facilities” as “Housing Allowance”, reporting only the total figure (no breakouts) and pay directly to the Metropolitan. It is then up to him to pay his various housing costs.

The above changes increased the expenses by \$7,760 to a revised total of \$79,116 vs. a projected income of \$50,838 if the Archdiocesan Assessments were kept at \$55/member. Discussions then followed about raising the assessment to \$85/member so as to meet the projected expenses. This \$85/member assessment was broadly supported (see Motion 3 below) – but there was a minority concern that both a flat fee approach as well as a flat-percentage approach (rather than a ‘means-indexed’ percentage approach) are unfit models for funding the diocese for two reasons: 1) both approaches fall short of New Testament biblical standards (and therefore are theologically unsound models for Christian stewardship), and 2) both approaches are unfair from a financial perspective since the financial burden would fall disproportionately on those areas where the median income is significantly lower.

Motion 2 (Fr. Dennis Buck/David Heatwole): Provide \$5,000 in funding in 2011 to the new mission in Annapolis, MD. Passed.

Motion 3 (Karen Phinney/Ruth Stock): Raise the Archdiocesan assessment to \$85/member for the year 2011. Roll call vote: Yes: 18; Opposed: 7; Abstain: 3.

Motion 4 (Karen Phinney/Michael Hydock): Approve the 2011 budget as amended. Passed with 2 abstentions.

Motion 5 (Fr. John Vitko/Fr. John Parsells): That the Archdiocese forms a Financial Committee to look at the best way to fund the Archdiocese in the future. Passed.

Lisa Mikhalevsky, Mark Phinney and Michael Hydock volunteered to be on this committee

OCA Policies on Sexual Misconduct (Fr. John Vitko): All parishes and missions are urged to comply with the *Policies, Standards and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct (PSP)* and to certify that compliance in writing. The Church will not tolerate sexual misconduct by the clergy or any lay person. All allegations of sexual misconduct will be taken seriously and promptly responded to. Parishes are required to take certain actions including implementing screening programs for all individuals having more than incidental contact with minors; maintaining a “two adult” and/or “open door” policy for all youth activities and designating one person to receive training by local law enforcement or social

service agencies. Metropolitan Jonah requested that screening also be done for volunteer church school teachers. Parish clergy, church school teachers and youth leaders should note that states and localities also have mandated reporting requirements and should learn the requirements for their specific locality. In compliance with its policies, within the next year, the Archdiocese will also set up a training session to deal with the area of sexual misconduct.

Diocesan Monasteries (Metropolitan Jonah): The nuns have returned from Greece. There living in the rectory is only a temporary situation. They will be looking for a permanent location in the archdiocese for their monastery (the Entrance of the Theotokos). This monastery is a tremendous resource, especially for the women of the diocese. When queried about added legal liabilities associated with the monastery, the Metropolitan stated that there were none.

Elections: In 2009, the Archdiocese elected a clergy delegate and alternate to the Metropolitan Council and a lay auditor for abbreviated one year-terms so as to allow for staggering of terms in future years. These positions are now up for election to 3 year terms. A nominating committee of Fr. Tim Perry, Dn. Sergius Miller and Donna Karabin contacted all rectors in advance for possible nominations and the floor was then opened for nominations. There were two clergy nominees for delegate to the Metropolitan Council: Fr. John Vitko and Fr. Valery Shemchuk and one lay nominee for the Auditing Committee: Ruth Stock.

Motion 6 (Fr. Dennis Buck/Karen Phinney): Move to close nominations for Metropolitan Council. Passed.

Motion 7 (Karen Phinney/Michael Hydock); Move to close nominations for Auditor. Passed.

Printed ballots were distributed and a vote taken. The results are:

Clergy Delegate to the Metropolitan Council:	Fr. John Vitko
Alternate Clergy Delegate to Metropolitan Council	Fr. Valery Shemchuk
Lay Auditor	Ms. Ruth Stock

Parish Updates:

- Christ the Savior Mission in Delaware will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary, Jan. 1-2.
- It is the 30th Anniversary of the falling asleep of Archbishop Kiprian.
- Request prayers for the new mission in Annapolis.

Discussion of the Strategic Plan (led by Fr. John Vitko): Fr. John provided about a half hour introduction to the draft Strategic Plan and then opened the floor for discussions. The Strategic Plan is being developed in response to a charge from the Special Investigative Committee, the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod to address any needed organizational changes and to focus on the healing and future directions of the OCA. Major efforts have been made to obtain input from throughout the Church: from the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council, the Diocesan Assemblies, the Seminaries, the OCA Department Heads and from parishioners through posting on oca.org on the internet. Based on the feedback received to date, the plan will:

- Recommend that no organizational changes be made at this time. Instead we should focus on re-establishing a sense of trust rooted in mutual love, responsibility and accountability.
- Emphasize 10 major goals focused on building our internal spiritual lives, reaching out to those around us, and working toward Orthodox unity.

Church-wide Working Groups are now being formed to ‘drill-down’ to the next level on these goals to make them more concrete, practical and actionable and to serve as ‘seed or leaven’ for implementation discussions at the upcoming 16th All American Council.

Some of the points made during the ensuing discussion and feedback session include:

- There was a sense that the emphasis on a relational approach, rather than an organizational approach is on the right track;
- Several people voice their like of the emphasis on family formation, youth and moral issues;
- We need to see holiness/sanctification as our baptismal vocation and we need language that connects our activities to our spiritual goals;
- Even in this Archdiocese, and even amongst the senior clergy, we don’t know our stories and we don’t use our resources well;
- One individual expressed concern that the goals were at too high a level to be useful
- Responding to a question about the cynicism that is out there amongst some about the Episcopal Assembly, His Beatitude said he does not think that it is called for. The Episcopal Assembly is a serious too. Per the Tomas, our autocephaly is a tool for the unity of the whole Church in North America.

Several possible ideas were advanced for “Diocesan Pilot Programs”:

- Increased emphasis on “telling our stories”;
- A goal of having a clergy person on every campus in the diocese;
- Emphasis on holiness and inner spiritual life through the stories of saints, pilgrimages, relics and icons;

- Piloting the new Compassion in Action Program – which provides help to parishes in identifying outreach ministries and supports this with clergy and lay mentors as a resource to lay volunteers. As stated by Donna Karabin, “often there is a servant’s heart, but we don’t know what to do about it”. This program is meant to address this.

Motion 8 (Marilyn Swezey/Fr. Robert Miclean): that we as an Archdiocese invite the Compassion in Action Team to run a workshop for us during Great Lent. Passed.

Conclusion of Meeting: the meeting ended at 5:35 with the ensuing celebration of Great Vespers.

DRAFT