

St Matthew Orthodox Church Parish Council

Meeting

Meeting: September 10, 2024

Meeting called to order at 6:01 pm

Opening prayer was given by Father John

Council members attending:

Paul Novak - president

Matt Tomac - vice president

Tom Julian – treasurer

Mark Massopust - corresponding secretary (excused)

Vera Limberopoulos - recording secretary

guest: Jeff Zdrale

Minutes from August 13, 2024, parish council meeting were reviewed. Minor corrections were made to the draft. (Corpus of Christ cost \$400 and shipping was \$226.30 for a total of \$626.30. Kaine Bernarde assisted Matt Tomac with cooking at the picnic.)

Paul made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Tom, approved by all.

Priest's report - Father John:

-There have been some additions to the prosphora crew. Emma Niemi will bake for Green Bay and Photini Roegner will bake for Waupaca.

- Some new servers have been added to the ministry, but more servers are still needed. Father will put together a schedule for the servers.

- Sunday school teachers will be David Neimi, Branden Seefeld, Matthew Hanson, and Mark Massopust. An exception is being made for David Neimi teaching, even though he has been a church member for less than a year and a half. Father John took into consideration that David's mother, who he has met, was a Sunday school teacher for 45 years.

- We need additional readers. Our current readers are Tom, Paul, Noah, Elaine and Rob. Father relayed that it is chant reading and can be learned by practicing with him or another reader and he is open to suggestions for new readers.

- October 5th at 10am, Beth Panella will be baptized, wife to Danny Panella. The godmother will be Whitney Massopust.

-Yes, this past month we have once again been blessed seeing new faces at Sunday liturgies.

-Father John will be attending the Dioecian assembly October 7th – 9th in Ohio. The cost for Father to attend is \$109/night, for 2 nights, plus travel fees. He will be carpooling to keep

expenses down. Paul or Matt will not be able to attend as delegates. Father relayed that “every parish has the right to one lay delegate”, but very few lay delegates currently go.

- Dmitry Shkolnick will not be coming in October.

- The liturgical schedule has been sent out October.

- Ministry Team:

December 18th is the meal for House of Hope.

-The meal that we will provide for St John’s men’s shelter will be in mid-November, after the St Matthew dinner.

- The future photo directory is still evolving. We are looking towards taking photos at the St Matthew dinner, when we anticipate having a lot in attendance. Tentative plans include photos with family members names, phone numbers, emails and possibly birthdays and anniversaries. Father will work on a template to work with. Vera relayed that she could assist with this project.

-Mark Massopust, our corresponding secretary has asked to step down from parish council.

- The October liturgical schedule has been sent out.

guest comments – Jeff Zdrale:

-Jeff went through the bins with his name on an and the remaining items can be tossed out.

-Jeff asked about the projected cost for the proposed new roof cross. Tom reports that the price quote was \$21,000 plus we would additionally need a structural engineer for the project. Jeff stated that if it gets to be a more realistic amount that he would like to offer to pay for it or to contribute largely to it.

Father John and Paul made some suggestions for targeted donations:

- Paul relayed that before we get to that point (of the roof cross project) that we will need to replace two brass candle stands, which are not in great shape, are difficult to maintain and will not last a long time.

- Father also relayed that Dmitry will be looking at the Iconostas Icons, to see if he can do them and give us a quote. The proper icons would be St John the Baptist and St Matthew.

President’s report – Paul Novak:

-Paul Novak, Tom Julian, and Chuck Bayerl will be away in Turkey September 13 – 28th. Noah Becker will be making the bank deposits during this time with Matt Tomac as the backup.

- Plans are underway for the Fall Festival with Chuck Bayerl helping Paul out.

- Dorothy Olson has submitted a rough draft for the kitchen layout, for future renovations.

Vice president’s report- Matt Tomac:

-Matt Tomac received feedback regarding the picnic about changing the location. Pamperin Park is a possibility. It has an enclosed shelter and a place for kids to play. He is also looking into possibilities in De Pere, or if the city might open their shelter that had previously been used.

-Matt will be away the weekend of September 28th, but Doug Bisbee will help. Paul reports that the church has enough supplies for the next three weeks.

- Matt exited the meeting.

Treasure's report- Tom Julian:

-One CD has matured, was moved into the Iconography account with a current amount of \$42,263. In December another CD will mature at just under \$16,000. At that time, it will bring us to having approximately \$58,000 in the Iconography Fund.

- Tom and Paul ran the numbers on the cost-of-living adjustment for Father's salary. While his pension has increased over the past 3 to 4 years, Father's end pocket funds did not go up. The church pays Father's pension contribution and his salary. We have made a salary adjustment plan to increase Father's salary up approximately \$150 weekly. This salary increase would be effective for the next 15 months, until January 2026. Tom made a proposal for Father John's salary increase.

Paul reiterated Robert's Rules which dictate 4 out of 6 members of council be present to vote.

Tom will submit an email to Vera to document the proposal for voting by the council. (see addendum)

new business / old business:

-The subject of the large room renovation was addressed.

Paul made a motion for when the big room renovation begins that the Building Committee is reestablished, a budget is set, and designs are reviewed before we move forward on the project. Also, we want to try to get as many of the younger folks in the parish engaged in this as possible. Tom seconds the motion, approved by all.

-Tom relayed that Father John suggested we put together a service book to include baptism, chrismation, and wedding services. Father could utilize the PDF format that is publicly available from the central church. Half of the books that we have for baptism are in bad shape.

Paul made a motion for Father John to start the process of making a service book containing baptism, chrismation and wedding services, determining the cost, then bringing it back to council to determine if we want to go forward. Tom seconds the motion, approved by all.

-Paul reports that there has been a donation put forward by Mary Peterson to help purchase the colored chalice coverings for the Christmas season.

Paul made a motion to accept the donation from Mary Peterson to allow us to purchase these items. Father John seconds the motion, approved by all.

-The furniture that has been in storage upstairs was from the local woman that was evicted. When placed upstairs Father agreed to store it for her for three months. It has now been in the upstairs for a year and 5 months. Father left a voice mail for her two weeks ago with no response. Father relayed that there might be one piece of furniture that might be worth keeping in case she returns. A question was raised regarding storage facilities and legalities. Since we are not a storage facility, and it is long past the agreed upon time frame, it is now considered abandoned property. Father stated that if she would show up in the future to retrieve those items that would no longer be stored, that we could compensate her \$250, which would probably be more than the value of the items. Father has had no contact with her for 5 months, so it's abandoned property.

Starting September 16th, the City of Green Bay will be having their big junk pick up.

Paul made a motion for the big item pick up in Green Bay which starts on September 16, that Matt finds some help to move the furniture that we've been storing out to the curb, minus the smallest item (the curio cabinet). We can continue to hold that item for a couple more months. Tom seconds the motion, approved by all.

Tom requested Father to write down the dates that he spoke to the women on the back of her agreement, and he agreed.

-Paul received an update from Dmitry Shkolnick. He cannot make the October installation date because he's not ready. There's a work in progress of the sketch of the iconography that will be on the wall in the narthex that was built. As you step into the church you will see St Matthew. On the wall to the left of the bells will be an icon of St Olga. He is doing a lot of large pieces for us, including a large nativity, and twelve medallions. His helper is only with him one day a week. When Paul returns from his trip, he will communicate with Demitry to come up with a date to start the project. Paul would like to book Demetri's hotel ASAP, due to increased hotel rates during Packer season.

- The bi-annual newsletter has been replaced by the weekly Saturday email updates. This seems to be working well.

-A motion was made by Paul to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Tom, approved by all.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21.

Father gave the closing prayer.

Addendum 08.30.24:

Per email from Father John: stored furniture

Dear PC,

Christ is in our midst!

In May 2023 we decided to help out a woman, Ruth Larsen, by storing her furniture for her when she got kicked out of her rental house which was down the block from church.

At that time Ruth signed a paper with us saying she gave us custody of the furniture for 3 months while she was getting into new housing. I have this paper in my office.

Unfortunately, Ruth has not been able to get into housing since that time. She temporarily lived a few places but has not gotten her own place. I was checking in with her most of that time every month or two, or if not, she would check in with me.

The last few months I have not heard from her though. Ruth had used two different phone numbers with me in the past (that were on prepaid services it seemed) but currently neither number is working. I called her last week and left a message asking her to call me back. I called her today and the one number was disconnected, and the other was answered by a man who had no idea who Ruth was (so she must not have that number anymore from that prepaid service).

I have had no contact from her since around April 1, when I last saw her and helped her out with a gas card from our parish benevolence funds.

Now that it has been 15 months total, and 5 months without contact, and we need the big room space, we have to go ahead and move her furniture.

I want to make a motion:

- that we get rid of almost all of the furniture (large curio cabinet, small desk, small very beat up piano, two very beat up couches)
- that we store for another 12 months, in the balcony closet, the smaller glass curio cabinet (which if I recall was her grandmother's) (I measured and it will not be a problem; it has a 20"x36"footprint) that if we hear from her again, we compensate her \$200 for the loss of the furniture. (this certainly is more than it is worth, but some of it did have sentimental value to her so we have to take that into account... and we can see this as charity).

That being said, the large curio cabinet could possibly be cleaned up well enough and stay where it is for the big room remodel. And then if she did reappear, we could give it to her if she wanted it. We will see. It's hard to tell right now what shape it is in because it is in the back.

Ok, please give your yay or nay for this motion.

As Debra pointed out to me today this should be done soon because the city pickup for big dump items in our area is about 10 days from now.

In Christ, Fr John

Addendum 09.10.24:

Per email from Tom Julian: COLA proposal for Fr. John Thetford - Approval request

It was brought to Tom's attention that Fr. John's Salary, Housing, Employee Pension contribution and SS/Medicare compensation had not been adjusted for the required cost of living adjustments in 2023 and 2024.

Fr John's total compensation met the Diocese prescribed COLA. However, a large portion of the increase was from the required Employer contribution to the OCA pension. Although this increase from 13% to 20% for pension contributions was factored into the total compensation package it did not allow for salary + housing to be credited to the COLA.

After reviewing the Priest earnings and the required OCA COLA for 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 it was determined that for our parish to meet the OCA compensation standards we needed to increase the priest salary for 2024.

Our calculations determined that to be in line with these compensation guidelines we need to increase Fr Thetford's salary by a fixed amount of \$602 each month for the next 15 months. At that time the salary will be once again reviewed to reflect the 2025 required COLA adjustment.

Proposal to SMOC Parish Council is to increase the Priest salary by a fixed amount of \$301 each two week pay period during the remainder of 2024 and all of 2025. A total of 15 months beginning with October 1st payroll. Father is paid twice a month on the 1st and 15th of each month.

Proposed by Thomas Julian SMOC treasurer and submitted to Paul Novak SMOC President for council vote.

Addendum 09.12.24.

Per email from Father John: parish council corresponding secretary transition

I spoke with Noah Becker yesterday and again today, and Noah has accepted to take on the role of corresponding secretary.

As reported last meeting on September 10, Mark Massopust gave me his resignation from parish council effective that same date of September 10 due to his time constraints with coaching sports and other things. Thank you, Mark, for your service. Please email Noah and me and Paul the template doc of the newsletter so that he can start working on it for December.

Per the bylaws, in the case of a vacancy, the Parish Council simply must vote on a candidate to finish the course of the vacating person's term. So as the first item of business at our next

meeting, we can make a motion and approve Noah to fill this vacancy and complete the rest of the term. Paul, please put this on the agenda. Noah, please attend the October meeting on Zoom so that you can begin participating right away.

In Christ, Fr John

Addendum 09.13.24:

Per email from Father John: update on furniture in the big room

Hello PC members, Ruth Larsen called the church phone last night from a new number and I got back to her today. She had lost my cell number because her old cell had been broken.

She finally has guaranteed housing starting December 1 (it's a 3 month wait once you get on the legally homeless list) and says she will want to take back all 6 of her furniture items then. She is extremely thankful toward us for being so patient with her. She profusely thanked me over and over again.

I told her she is very lucky that she called just now because we were going to remove all her items next week!

So, at this point I think we have to just hold on to the stuff until December 1.

The big room remodel will be an indoor winter project and we won't start painting or anything like that until after New Years I imagine. We can still start some electric work or ceiling work with those items in there if we are going to start any of that work before December 1.

Ok, thank you all for your patience with this.

In Christ, Fr John