



St Matthew Orthodox Church Parish Council Meeting

Meeting: December 10, 2024

Meeting called to order at 6:02 pm

Opening prayer was given by Father John

Council members attending:

Father John Thetford - rector

Paul Novak – president (excused)

Matt Tomac - vice president (out @ 6:49)

Tom Julian – treasurer (in @ 6:06)

Noah Becker – corresponding secretary (assisted in recording minutes)

Vera Limberopoulos - recording secretary (in @ 6:17)

guest: Jeff Zdrale

Choir Issues

-Jeff Zdrale noted the presence of numerous babies, toddlers, and young children in the choir area. Father John noted this as well and believes that older children and adults are frequently distracted by the young children's presence in the choir area. Father John also noted that the eight chairs closest to the choir may have to be children free chairs to minimize distraction and unnecessary movement in the choir area.

-It was suggested that a single row of used pews against the south (liturgically) wall may improve seating concerns by members of the choir. Father John agreed to investigate these concerns and their solutions.

After a quorum was established, Father John made a motion to approve minutes from October 8th and November 12th parish council meetings. The motion was seconded by Matt Tomac and approved by all present.

Priest's report – Father John

-The church is doing well with the number of volunteers, as well as their activity.

-Approximately 12 people are estimated to be attending the new series of catechism classes, to begin on Sunday, December 15th.

-Multiple rugs were purchased and installed on and around the balcony level.

-The lower-level nave rearrangement, with the relocation of the choir and several chairs, was largely successful. Little negative feedback was provided initially, and none since the first Sunday.

-The liturgical schedule has been sent out for January, including services for Theophany involving the public blessing of the Fox River.



-Two shelter meals are being prepared: the December House of Hope meal, being catered, with a \$200 estimated cost; and the St John's shelter meal in January.

-The church photo directory is still being updated. After Christmas, Father plans to be more direct in asking individuals and families if they wish to update or add information.

-Furniture that was stored in the large room upstairs was returned to its owner.

- We are exploring potential possibilities for an alternate chapel location for St Macrina Chapel to rent, giving them a more structured setting. Dan Elsinger (from Stevens Point) was looking, per Father's request, into possible rental locations in Stevens Point. Two potential options were found, one in Stevens Point and the other in Amherst. The location in Amherst would be using the worship space of a Methodist church where Peter Parry knows the pastor well. Father John and Paul Novak will look into meeting with Deacon Spyridon and people who attend the chapel to evaluate the options.

President's report – (update given by Father John in new business)

Vice-president's report – Matt Tomac

-The weekly cleaning team is looking for additional volunteers. Two new families have joined the team, but additional volunteers are still needed.

-Smoke detectors have been replaced in the kitchen and upper bathroom.

-Furnace filters will be evaluated for replacement.

Treasure's report – Tom Julian

-The financial report of all Assets and Liabilities has been sent out.

-The CD will mature in 10 days bringing the Iconography Fund to over \$58,000.

- We are trying to build the Building Repair and Maintenance Fund with assets from operations and anticipating the need of funds for snow removal.

-Since the SMOC dinner, we have been able to pay off over \$5,000 toward the Roof Loan Fund. Much of this was from dedicated donations. By the end of the year, we are anticipating no more than \$5,000 that we will still owe. We are trying to pay off the Roof Fund before Paying off the Mortgage. Thus, when we refinance the mortgage, we will have to refinance as little as possible.

- We would like to make our 2025/2026 goal at retiring the mortgage.

-Very little funds will be need for the Big Room makeover.

- We are looking at using an online payroll service for Father John. Father would have to decide if he would prefer to deal with his taxes as a 1099 or as an employee with a W2 with withholdings.

- The Big Room:

-Tom recommended that during phase two of the big room makeover, we rename it Founder's Hall. We would be able to recognize our founders: Jeff Zdrale, Bonita Zdrale and Pat Mantgan. Father John relayed that it would be



appropriate paralleling Herrick Hall downstairs, also stating, “It takes 40 years of effort to get to where we are today”. Parish council would need to approve of this before going forward. We could find a way to recognize the founders inside of the room.

-Father John and Tom met and discussed installing pine tongue and groove wood from the Oneida Nation on the east end wall. This would be a location to display our excess Icons as Father see appropriate.

-Funds have been donated to purchase carpet tiles for the east third of the room.

new business:

-The big room tables: Father John reports that Paul Novak researched purchasing round tables for the big room.

He found the following: 6 ft diameter (72”) at \$170 each, seats 10 adults, to order 2 for total \$340

5 ft diameter (60”) at \$115 each, seats 8 adults, to order 3 for total \$345

This would give a combined seating capacity for 44 adults (or slightly more youth) with a sum total of \$685 + tax

Tom confirmed that we would have the funds within the next couple of weeks.

Q & A: “Outside of Pascha, will we get use out of them?” If we keep growing, we will need to use it every Sunday within two years. Also, currently new people might not be staying for coffee hour because it’s crowded. “Can we save money or space with round tables?” It (round tables) would be a less efficient way of seating.” The space would have something different, a different feel. Round tables are more conducive to conversation, it offers a softer feel, aiding in communicating for all seated.

It was suggested that images are shared when voting on purchasing expenditures.

Father shared images of the heavy granite white plastic folding tables.

Father John made a motion to purchase these five tables, not exceeding \$800. Matt seconds the motion, approved by all with a quorum.

-2025 Budget: Father John requested that our 2025 budget be reviewed at our next meeting. Tom will have the draft ready.

- Annual Meeting: the annual church meeting will be held on February 2nd, after liturgy.

old business:

-Iconography: Paul talked with Dmitry Shkolnik two weeks ago. Dmitry is currently unable to give us an exact date to start work on site. For this phase of the installation, all of the details are on canvas, so more work is done ahead of time and less time will be spent here. There is a chance that they may not be able to come in January.

-The Petersons donated a brand-new couch for the large room.

-Work days are scheduled for the large room on January 24th and 25th. Spread the word. The more hands the lighter the work, and the more engaging for all.



- Council positions: Paul, Tom and Matt will have their first term as council members ending on February 2, 2025. We must confirm that they want to return in their capacity as council members. Vera and Noah will be ending their first year on the council on February 2nd also.

-January 14th will be our next council meeting.

- Noah inquired about when and how the council meets. Asking: Could we have a hybrid meeting? Would it be more inviting if it were in person? Could it possibly be on Sundays after liturgy? He would like to have a discussion on this during the January meeting.

(Council responses) It was brought up that some don't want to stay at church until 2pm on Sunday. Not having it remote would currently limit those able to attend, and ultimately could limit a potential future council member from volunteering for those positions. Tom suggested that we could possibly have it in person once per quarter.

A motion was made by Father John to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Tom, approved by all. The meeting was adjourned at 6:51.

Father gave the closing prayer.