



St Matthew Orthodox Church Parish Council Meeting

Meeting: December 9, 2025

Zoom meeting called order at 5:59 pm

Opening prayer was given by Father John

Council members attending: Father John Thetford - rector

Paul Novak – president

Matt Tomac - vice president

Tom Julian – treasurer

Vera Limberopoulos - recording secretary

Noah Becker – corresponding secretary

guest: Danny Panella, Deacon Spyridon Roegner

The November meeting minutes will be submitted to council in an email for approval.

Priest's report – Father John

- Christmas services are all set.
- The January liturgical schedule has been sent out.
- There will be a catechism class Saturday, December 13th.
- The blessing of the Fox River will be January 11th, unless it's extremely cold.
- Sunday, January 18th, Father will go to St Paul's Monastery after liturgy with a few church members. The monastery is on the old calendar so the visit will be on Theophany. The monastery is in the process of joining the OCA.
- SMOC church calendars will be here by December 10th and available this weekend. We will be requesting a \$5 donation per calendar.
- Around January 15th, we will be starting book study again. The book will be St Arsenios the Cappadocian, written by St Paisios the Athonite.
- The T-shirt money that is coming in should net around \$600.



-Spring Lenten retreat: Father John's father is the groundskeeper at Transfiguration Monastery in PA. One of the nuns (Mother Seraphima) at the monastery comes to visit her sister in Milwaukee once a year. While in PA Father asked Mother Seraphima if she would be willing to do a retreat for us. She said yes but would not be available to do it during Lent. Father inquired if she could come two or three weeks after Lent. It will be a spring retreat, May 1st of May 8th.

- Deacon Spyridon got a letter stating that he cannot have advertised church services at his home due to a zoning issue. There are some alternative possibilities. 1) Father reached out to a local Lutheran church near Deacon Spyridon's home, inquiring if we might be able to have it there. The pastor there gave positive feedback, but it would have to go through their church council for confirmation. 2) The Amberg location was not a good option. Deacon received feedback from members. 3) There is a building available in Stevens Point that had been a Masonic Temple. It would be \$500 to rent. 4) Another option would be in King at a veteran's home where Deacon Spyridon volunteers. They have 5 chapels on the grounds. Recently there has been a staff management change so there may be an opportunity to use their chapel. 5) The fifth option is at a Ramada Inn (hotel and convention center) located at US 10 and US 54. They have a banquet room in the basement that gets very minimal use. It is separate from the rest of the hotel with its own entrance and parking.

While the Lutheran church or the veteran's home chapel would be great options, it might take a while for one to come through. In the interim, Tom and Father suggested renting the Ramada banquet hall for a Sunday in December (before Christmas) and then getting feedback from the attendees. Paul will contact the Ramada Inn tomorrow to make the arrangements and notify council and Deacon Spyridon afterwards with the details.

(Deacon Spyridon exited the meeting.)

President's report: Paul Novak

-ANNUAL MEETING prep: Paul requested that Tom put together a 2026 budget for review at the annual meeting. Also, it is ready to be implemented on January 1st. Tom will pull all the data together and then show Danny P. his progress so that he's on the same page. This will be ready by the January 13th zoom meeting.

-Paul will send documentation regarding refinancing the mortgage to the parish council and the parish for approval at the annual meeting.

-The parish will need to approve the candidate (from church council) for the diocesan council meeting in Chicago.

-Nominations for parish council elections can be submitted up until the day of our annual meeting on February 1st.

-The Novaks will be away December 15th – 28th. Danny will clean for the Novaks the week of December 14th.



Vice-president's report: Matt

-Matt will email the cleaning schedule. It is also on the church website.

Treasure report: Tom

-Documents with account balances were forwarded to council members for review.

-This week we received over \$22,000 in donations. This included a contribution from one individual that gives their total annual donation at the end of the year.

-We were low on seminary donations throughout the year. After a reminder of our love for our seminarian, the parish membership stepped up and donated \$925 towards Deacon Pedro's Christmas gift. We will be paying Pedro \$4200 for tuition for spring of 2026. Tom will round it up \$800 as a love offering thus giving Pedro a check for \$5,000 on Sunday.

-There have been some slight delays with the flooring (for the nave renovation). It will be installed when it arrives. We do not have the final price for the installation.

-All current invoices have been paid. The Iconography invoice will be paid next year (not received yet).

-Some snow plowing has already been paid. This could become a big expense if we get many separate snowfalls since we are charged each time they come out.

-Our revenue for December will exceed \$35,000 which will push us to an annual all-time high income.

-We do not have any major projects on the horizon. Father asked for an increase in the ministries budget. Our ministries get paid primarily by the fall festival, some when we specifically ask for donations and a small amount by regular donations. At the annual meeting, Tom will talk about how far we've come with our ministry and where we'd like to go. He'd like to raise awareness of the funding needed so members can participate. Father reports that he added an option to the shelter meal sign-up sheet. There are five \$50 slots to donate funds to cover the meat for the chili and potatoes.

-We also give \$300 a quarter to five different ministries. This usually gets covered with giving's but with increased allocation for the ministries we need to share what we do for the ministries with our members to increase awareness.

- Last year budget included three scholarships for St Mary's Camp for teens. We are going to have four scholarships in the 2026 budget.

- The COLA for Father this year will be 3%.

new business:



-Door keeper ministry: Tom reports they had a meeting and got the security bar for the door installed. They have six to seven people participating. They will not be making a schedule due to there should always be at least two people there. They will identify each other, and they know what their roles are. They want this group to reach out and meet people in the narthex.

-AEDS- Noah thinks that he found some grants which he believes that we're eligible for. He will meet with Paul to investigate it further.

-This past Sunday we had Typica service scheduled but due to inclement weather, the service was cancelled. Paul made notifications via email. However approximately 6 people showed up to church, not having seen the notification. Father relayed that the deacon is not needed for a Typica service and it could be led by Matt or Noah. Father relayed if he was intown, there can always be a service, and others can use their best judgement if the weather is bad. Clarification from Father John on the subject to follow the church's web site.

- A request for the plow service to ease up the salt on the front walk. If members notice heavy salt by the front entrance, please take a broom and seep it away to keep it out of the church. This past week, a lot of salt got tracked far into the church.

Paul made a motion to adjourn, approved by all.

Father John gave the closing prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10.

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