

Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church
Annual Meeting January 22, 2023

I. Welcome and Prayer Father Joel 12:15 pm

II. Motion to Approve minutes from January 2022- Alex Ibrahim

- ❖ Seconded by Cynthia Long
- ❖ Unanimous consent

III. Pastor's Report - Father Joel Gillam –

- ❖ We continued to be blessed with increased growth of the parish in general and Sunday School age children in particular .
- ❖ There are 2 catechumen families advancing in their journey to Orthodoxy. Four weddings of present and past parishioners were performed in the past year
- ❖ Father continues in the role of Orthodox OCF - mentor for Philadelphia area college students from Temple, Drexel, Vilanova and University of Pennsylvania - some of these students have attended services at St. George
- ❖ Clothing Exchange Drive - for children in need - organized by Caroline Becker - in Great room available to parish families
- ❖ Sponsoring “ Meal Trains “ for families with recent loss or new additions (births) to ease stress for families in those circumstances
- ❖ Father attended the Special Convention in Dallas this month with respect to the nomination of 3 candidates to the Holy Synod for the position of Metropolitan Archbishop - new Metropolitan will be selected on February 22, 2023 by the Holy Synod - Father to keep us informed
- ❖ “ 12 Baskets “ project continues the first Thursday night each month in the park across from the Franklin Institute at 8 pm to feed the homeless and underserved. Volunteers welcome

IV. Chairman's Report -Alex Ibrahim

- ❖ Chairman is grateful and encouraged by the growth of the parish and Sunday school over the last years that he and Kaitlyn have been here. With the increase in growth comes increase in responsibilities of the Parish council and congregation and increase opportunities to serve
- ❖ PC looking into addressing some major projects and anyone with questions or concerns are encouraged to contact Alex or any PC member
- ❖ Special thanks to Readers, Greeters and Ministry team leaders

V. Treasurer's Report -Tony Nasr

- ❖ Detailed 5 page report provided for fiscal year 2022 (January thru December)

VI. Budget Report - Gary Sarkessian -

- ❖ Report of Actual and Proposed budgets for 2022 provided on back of agenda
Approved budget for 2023 also provided
- ❖ There is a 5% increase in the 2023 budget primarily related to anticipated need to replace 2 HVAC units for heating and cooling of the church building
- ❖ Some increase in insurance costs and energy costs also contributing to the higher budget
- ❖ Encouraged the parishioners to address any budgetary or fiscal questions to Gary or Tony Nasr

VII. Committee and Ministry Team Reports

1. Choir - Karen Burke, Choir Director

- ❖ Church Music-singing/chanting is an integral ministry across all of our orthodox church services. Members attend rehearsals to study and practice the ancient texts and hymns that we sing.
- ❖ New members are always welcome and no prior musical training is required.
- ❖ If you are interested in being a member of the choir, speak with Karen for more information and to Fr Joel to ask for a blessing.
- ❖ Rehearsals are on Tuesdays evenings and the second Sunday of each month.
- ❖ In the near future, Karen will begin working with the youth of the church in conjunction with the Sunday School program.
- ❖ Many Thanks to Matt Gordon for his years of dedication and hard work as our previous Choir director!

2. Icon Committee - Caroline Becker

- ❖ We commissioned Mr Nick Papas to paint two Icon panels: St. Moses the Black of Ethiopia and St. David of Wales which the Parish Council approved in August 2022. These have been completed and will be shipped soon.
- ❖ There is an ongoing vision of adding other Icons to the East Wall, such as "The Resurrection"; barriers exist to this project due to the condition of the interior stone walls which will require plastering and repairs

3. Sunday School - Caroline Becker

Theme of "Gratitude and Growth"

- ❖ Thankful to the new teachers - Naomi Cardell and Michael Solomon as well as those who have continued on: Cynthia L, Lucy I, Gary S and Sherry San Chirico
- ❖ Thankful to parents allowing their children to attend along with the PC for providing support to attain materials needed for the program
- ❖ Large growth in classes - particularly Kindergarten thru second grade; 40 Sunday School Students enrolled including 15 teens - There are approximately 15 very young - preschool age children who will be encouraged to enroll in the future

- ❖ Last year's Curriculum covered the 12 Great Feasts – this year's Curriculum is reviewing all components of the Divine Liturgy
- ❖ Anyone interested in helping as a teacher or aide in Sunday School is encouraged to contact Caroline

4. Stewardship Committee - Jerome Burke

- ❖ Definition of Stewardship: “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care”; in short, we are all Stewards of St George Church
- ❖ Cited letter sent to Parish families with guidelines for giving and tithing
- ❖ Stewardship involves more than financial support of the Church and includes the giving of our talents and time: Choir, Readers, Cleaning and Maintenance, Sunday School teachers and volunteers, Greeters, Coffee Hour Sponsors, Committee and Parish Council members and welcoming visitors to our community
- ❖ Steady support is needed to maintain and repair the building and meet financial commitments (stipends, Archdiocese dues and insurance)
- ❖ The Stewardship Committee asks that you prayerfully consider budgeting for a scheduled (weekly or monthly) contribution to St. George Church

5. Long Range Planning Committee - Marcia Ibrahim

- ❖ Committee has been meeting monthly to prioritize needs of an aging facility -
- ❖ Survey among members taken and common themes to be addressed . Plans include phases of renovation -
 - IA. Renovation of the Men’s and Women’s Bathroom
 - Improvement of the Church Hall - floor, walls, heating and air conditioning
 - 1B. In coordination with 1 A is a need to upgrade the electric service - from current 200 AMPS to 400 AMPS to adequately supply the facility
 - 1C. Renovating the kitchen
- ❖ Subsequent projects that are being explored include facilitating handicap access, making the annex functional, and adding available church parking
- ❖ With respect to funding these projects Father Joel made the distinction between “ Annual Giving “ - addressed in the Stewardship talk which addresses the the year budget and routine Church operations and Major Gifts for Special Projects which is a separate entity. Other terms for this include “ Capital Campaign “ with timelines set to accomplish goals (Vision for St George in 2030 or St George 2035)

6. Adult Christian Education - Kerry San Chirico

- ❖ Vision of the ministry is to “ engage the parish in spiritual life in our hearts and minds as disciples of Christ unto life everlasting “
- ❖ Goals directed toward attaining this overarching vision of growth for our parish:
- ❖ “Since one cannot love what or Whom he or she barely knows or understands, it is necessary to grow each member of the parish intellectually and spiritually. The

education committee thus works to impart the knowledge of God, the Church, and His cosmos through critical and faithful reflection, since *both* piety without learning and learning without piety is injurious to the Body of Christ.”

- ❖ Retreat Spring 2022 Professor Peter Bouteneff from St Vladimir’s - on the arts and religious life - (That Which We Have Seen, Heard and Touched: Encountering God through the Sacred Arts)- program was well received.
- ❖ We had a book study examining tradition, patristics, and scripture, and how we relate and participate in our Orthodox heritage.
- ❖ The book study is continuing now, every Wednesday night, with our reading of St Gregory of Nyssa’s *Life of Moses*. We are just starting, and I’d love you to join us from 7:15-8:30 here at the parish.
- ❖ Finally, we have another retreat coming up in April. *Into All the World: A Survey of Apostolic Mission Among the Nations. 21-22 of April*, with speakers representing the global nature of Orthodoxy.
- ❖ I would love it if you would participate in these events AND let me know if you’d like to serve on our education committee.

7. Hospitality Committee - Ed Donahue

- ❖ Aim of the Committee is to “create an environment whereby everyone who enters our Church feels welcomed and loved “
- ❖ In past year - we have resumed get togethers for coffee hour after liturgy and schedule a “PotLuck” Coffee hour the last Sunday of each month
- ❖ Work with other ministries to arrange special events: October - combined “Chili Cook- Off Contest” and “Trunk or Treat” for Sunday School children. Aim to do similar events during the course of the year
- ❖ Encourage parishioners to sign up as “Greeters” and to help clean the Great Hall after coffee hour

8. Teen Soyo- Dr Kate Ibrahim and Alex Ibrahim

- ❖ Growth of the group in recent years acknowledged
- ❖ Encouraged the group to be involved in the life of the Church and Fellowship events
- ❖ Activities have included Christmas Cookie Bake Offs, Phillies watch parties
- ❖ Day of Service performed in Philadelphia
- ❖ Organized Fundraiser on “ MeatFare “ Sunday for the teen SOYO and charitable causes

9. Maintenance Committee - Gary Sarkessian

- ❖ Vision is to provide a “safe, functional, beautiful and efficient working space and environment for our Sunday School and Hospitality gatherings to operate “
- ❖ Budgeted funds set aside for building repairs and maintenance

- ❖ Cleaning days scheduled several times per year - all encouraged to join and help on these days - next day will be in March -
- ❖ Annex was cleaned in the past year and dehumidifiers placed to improve air quality in the building
- ❖ Maintenance Envelopes for anyone who wants to make a special donation
- ❖ Encouraged all to treat and care for the Church as you would your own home
- ❖ Lastly, a Reminder regarding the restroom toilets: push down and hold the handle for a longer period of time when flushing the toilets to prevent backup odors

10. St. Katherine's Women ~Cynthia Long

- ❖ St. Katherine's Women's Group is a sisterhood of love, service, and education for the women of St. George Church to support one another and share the love of God with the church and community. We take St. Katherine of Alexandria as our patron who is, as we proclaim when singing her troparion, "our aid and our help."
- ❖ In January 2022, we hosted a women's brunch with Bishop THOMAS.
- ❖ Every year in March, we participate in Antiochian Women's Month as Epistle Readers and Greeters.
- ❖ Our annual Palm Sunday Bake Sale in April 2022 raised over \$1000.00, which we contributed toward Archdiocese dues, the parish icon fund, and the Antiochian Women of the East project to build a Cathedral at the Antiochian Village.
- ❖ In May, the Book Club came together with brunch to discuss *Mary As The Early Christians Knew Her* by Frederica Mathewes-Green.
- ❖ St. Katherine's Women follow the example of the Myrrh-Bearing Women who stood by Christ's cross and prepared His tomb by decorating the epitaphion (bier) on Holy Friday. Please join us for this sacred honor and responsibility this year on April 14, 2023. Mark your calendars now.
- ❖ We look forward to offering another Bake Sale for Palm Sunday 2023.
- ❖ We are also planning a trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to view their religious art collection this Spring. We hope you can join us.

VIII. New Business - Election of Officers to the Parish Council

- ❖ Nominating Committee asked five individuals to run out of which three accepted the nominations, they are: Tony Nasr, Gary Sarkessian and Michael Solomon
- ❖ Alex Ibrahim - motion made to accept this list of candidates
 - Seconded by Caroline Becker
 - Unanimous consent

IX. Motion to Adjourn - Cynthia Long

- ❖ Second - Alex Ibrahim
- ❖ Unanimous vote 1:10 pm

X. Closing Prayer - Father Joel

Respectfully submitted,
Jerome Burke