

ARCHDIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH AND WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA MINUTES – 2022 ARCHDIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

Saturday, November 5, 2022 ~ St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral ~ Allison Park, PA

The Annual Assembly of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh was held on Saturday, November 5, 2022 at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA.

The assembly opened with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Archdiocesan Chancellor Archpriest William Evansky. Fr. Evansky was joined by the Deans of the Archdiocese.

As the Archbishop was recovering from recent surgery, His Eminence prayed and communed the Holy Mysteries in the Altar.

The meeting was called to order by the Archbishop at 10:42 am.

1. CREDENTIALS REPORT

Archdiocesan Treasure Alexis Parshook presented the Credentials Report.

1 Hierarchy

17 Priests

3 Deacons

7 Archdiocesan Council Members

23 Lay Delegates

6 Alternates

Total Attendance: 57

Total Votes: 51

Parishes represented: 23

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRS AND SECRETARIAT

A. Clergy Vice Chair

Archpriest John Mikita nominated by Archpriest Thomas Soroka. Seconded by Igumen Patrick (Carpenter).

MOTION CARRIED.

B. Lay Vice Chair

Mr. Frank Namisnak nominated by Archpriest Thomas Soroka. Seconded by Seconded by Igumen Patrick (Carpenter).

MOTION CARRIED.

C. Clergy Secretary

Archpriest Michael Senyo appointed by the Hierarchy.

D. Lay Secretary

Priest Andrew Nelko nominated Dr John Schultz. Seconded by Priest John Kotalik

MOTION CARRIED.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ASSEMBLY

Minutes from the 2021 Assembly were previously distributed.

There were no corrections or additions.

MOTION: "To approve the 2021 Archdiocesan Assembly Minutes as presented." Made by Mr. Nicholas York. Second by Deacon Seraphim Truckley.

MOTION CARRIED.

4. REPORT OF THE HIERARCH

His Eminence announced that he would compile and distribute a complete report at a later date, as he is still recovering from an injury and recent surgery.

His Eminence did report that he was progressing well in his recovery and physical therapy and is convalescing at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City.

5. CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Report previously distributed electronically and filed.

Chancellor Evansky noted the following items to the assembled clergy and delegates:

- Cost of living increases for clergy (6%), policies regarding substitute clergy.
- Census numbers and counting methods--which may or may not be relevant depending on various factors-- especially regarding parish financial support of the Archdiocese.
 - There are thirty-eight (38) active communities (Cathedral, parishes, missions, chapels).
 - Of these 38 Parishes: 9 increased in membership over the previous year, 7 remained the same, and 22 lost membership.
 - Parish sizes include:
 - 6 with 100-175 members
 - 5 with 50-99 members
 - 11 with 25-49 members
 - 16 with < 25 members (Approximately 42%)
 - Total *declared* adult membership of 1,756. In 2016, membership was 1,878. It is generally assumed that the declared number of souls served by our parishes is larger than is declared by many parish rectors and parish outreach; in some cases, it may be substantially larger.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka asked a question regarding the ultimate purpose or need to compile such statistical data, with the hope that a standard method of defining a parish "member" could be determined, if needed at all. Constructive discussion followed.

- Announced various retreats and clergy gatherings which are being planned for the coming year. Archpriest David Vernak (retired) is to be coordinating these projects.
- The Youth Committee will reconstitute under the leadership of Archpriest Alexander Cadman as Spiritual Advisor; a laity chair is being sought.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Report previously distributed electronically and filed.

Archdiocesan Treasurer Ms. Alexis Parshook reported:

- A. All parishes are current in their assessments. She thanked the parishes for keeping current with submission of assessments and reports.
- B. A summary of accounts:
 - Cash on hand: \$27,695.00.
 - Investment Accounts: BPU \$1,325,576.00; FNB \$1,256,957.00; LCBA \$93,327.00
 - Archbishop Benjamin Fund: \$128,322.00 (Earmarked in investment accounts)
- C. The net sale of the Boswell Property was \$951.00 after back taxes were paid.

MOTION: "To accept the Treasurer's Report as presented." Made by Archpriest Elijah Bremer. Second by Subdeacon David Leszunov.

MOTION CARRIED.

[NOTE: Due to the change in Fiscal Year, no Audit was presented at this Assembly. The external audit will take place after December 31, which will then be submitted to the Internal Auditors of the Archdiocese for review by the Archdiocesan Council.]

7. DEANS REPORTS

All reports were distributed electronically and filed.

MOTION: "To accept all Reports as presented." Made by Igumen Patrick (Carpenter) Second by Subdeacon Nicholas York.

MOTION CARRIED.

Fr Thomas Soroka expressed thanks to all who helped support Igumen Patrick by donating \$45,000.00 to help with his medical expenses. Ig Patrick responded with gratitude and comments to the Assembly about accessibility for the disabled.

8. REPORTS OF ARCHDIOCESIAN DEPARTMENTS/COMMITTEES/PROGRAMS

A. Archbishop Benjamin Fund

This is no longer a special fund but is now included with the investment accounts. The purpose of the Fund remains the same: It will be retained as an agenda item to maintain awareness of its purpose to grant assistance to those studying for the priesthood and potentially receiving assignment as clergy in the Archdiocese.

B. Pittsburgh District FOCA

District Governor John Schultz provided updates on current programs, particularly motivated by providing assistance for youth programs, education and financial support for seminarians and their families.

C. Metropolitan Council

Presented by Ray Steeb

- Report on the pension plan and related issues.
- Update on relocation of the O.C.A. Central Administration from Syosset, NY, to the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Update on the eventual relocation of the Archives to Saint Vladimir's Seminary in Yonkers, NY.

D. Parish Development

After heading this endeavor in the Archdiocese for ten years, Chancellor Evansky announced that Joseph Kormos will be phasing out his leadership role during the next year or so. The Archbishop and the Council are in the process of evaluating the program, including financial implications and future role in the Archdiocesan structure of departments and programs. His Eminence affirmed the importance of continuing the Parish Forum Conference, expressing the value of meeting again "in person."

E. Child/Youth Protection

Archpriest Alexander Cadman announced full compliance within the Archdiocese, and the offering of a free training program: "Darkness to Light, Stewards of Children."

The Assembly adjourned for lunch at 1:03 pm and reconvened at 2:18 pm.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business to be discussed.

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Amendment to Archdiocesan By-Laws.

Copies to the text were distributed to the parishes in advance and are also on file. The Archbishop summarized the proposal saying its intent is to assure that income from the various endowments will serve to benefit only the parishes in the Archdiocese, even if the Holy Synod might decide to reconfigure diocesan and territorial structures in the future.

See Attachment #1 for the Proposed Bylaw Amendment

MOTION: "To accept the Bylaw Change as presented." Made by Igumen Patrick (Carpenter). Second by Priest David Smith.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Discussion was had on clergy compensation.

MOTION: "That the Assembly request the Archbishop appoint a special Committee of clergy and laity to study the implementation of and the enforcement of salary and benefit standards for the clergy of the Archdiocese. If feasible, these standards would serve as guidelines for every parish community in the Archdiocese. Made by Ms. Katia Hill. Seconded by Mr. John Thompson.

MOTION CARRIED.

11. BUDGET

The proposed budget was previously distributed electronically and filed.

Treasurer Parshook reviewed the general line-items of the budget and discussed some variances from the previous year.

There were no amendments to the budget presented.

MOTION: "To accept the fiscal year 2023 Budget as presented by the Treasurer." Made by Mr. Michael Eckert. Second by Subdeacon David Leszunov.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

12. ELECTIONS

A. Eastern Deanery

Ms. Kira Meholick was elected by caucus by the members of the Eastern Deanery present at the Assembly. Mr. Gregory Sidorick, who did not wish to continue on the Council, was thanked for his many years of good service.

B. Archdiocesan Council – At Large Lay Member Three Year Term

NOMINATION: Ms. Rebecca Danchenko by Priest Andrew Nelko.

MOTION: "To close nominations and elect Ms. Danchenko." Made by: Subdeacon Nicholas York, Seconded by Mr. Frank Namisnak.

MOTION CARRIED.

C. Archdiocesan Council – Clergy "At Large"

NOMINATION: Priest Stephan Gresh nominated by Priest Andrew Nelko

MOTION: "To close nominations and elect Fr. Gresh." Made by Igumen Patrick (Carpenter). Seconded by Mr. Gregory Sidorick.

MOTION CARRIED.

D. Internal Auditors – One Clergy Member and Two Lay Members

Nominated: Archpriest Elijah Bremer, Mr. Paul Dille, & Rdr. John Thompson.

MOTION: "To close nominations and elect Fr. Bremer, Mr. Dille, & Rdr. Thompson. Made by: Subdeacon Nicholas York, Seconded by Priest Stephen Gresh.

MOTION CARRIED.

13. MOTION TO ADJOURN

MOTION: "To adjourn the 2022 Archdiocesan Assembly." Made by Protodeacon John Oleynik. Second by Priest Daniel Matthewson.

MOTION PASSED

The Assembly adjourned at 3:29 pm.

14. 2023 ASSEMBLY

The 2023 Assembly will be held on November 4 at a location to be announced.

15. INSTALLATION OF ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL

The oath of office was administered to the 2022-2023 Archdiocesan Council by His Eminence.

Respectfully submitted by:

Archpriest Michael Senyo
Clergy Recording Secretary

Dr. John P. Schultz
Lay Recording Secretary

Approved:

The Most Rev. MELCHISEDEK
Archbishop of the Archdiocese of
Pittsburgh & Western Pennsylvania (OCA)

Archpriest William J. Evansky
Chancellor - Archdiocese of
Pittsburgh & Western Pennsylvania
(OCA)

ATTACHMENT #1

Article XI – Endowment Fund of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

The Diocese shall hold as an endowment fund (referred to as the “Endowment Fund”) the funds in the Diocese investment accounts currently identified as *First National Bank Wealth Management* and *Wealth Enhancement ADV SVC LLC*, together with any amounts that may be subsequently added to the Endowment Fund by the Diocese or by other contributors. The Endowment Fund shall be governed by the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Council and shall be administered by the Diocesan Chancellor and the Diocesan Treasurer. Collectively, the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocesan Council, the Diocesan Chancellor and the Diocesan Treasurer shall be referred to as the “Trustees”. The Trustees may delegate to the Diocesan Chancellor and the Diocesan Treasurer all such powers and authority that may be required to administer the Endowment Fund as the Trustees deem appropriate and necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Endowment Fund. The Trustees shall invest and reinvest the Endowment Fund and shall accumulate and distribute the net income (called "Income") and principal as set forth in the following endowment provisions:

- a. The name of the Endowment Fund shall be the Endowment Fund of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania.
- b. The Trustees shall have the discretion to reinvest the Endowment Fund’s Income each year back into the Endowment Fund, or to make distributions of such Income to initiate, maintain and/or operate one or more parishes within the Diocese. The Trustees shall also have the discretion to loan funds from the Endowment Fund Income to a parish in the Diocese under such terms and conditions as the Trustees shall determine in their sole discretion and the Trustees may subsequently forgive any such loans in their sole discretion. Such loans may be made with or without interest and with security or without security.
- c. Principal of the Endowment Fund may be distributed to initiate, maintain and/or operate one or more parishes in the Diocese; provided, however, that principal of the Endowment Fund may only be used for such purposes if seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the Diocesan Council members and the Diocesan Bishop approve a distribution from principal.
- d. The Trustees shall have the discretion to loan funds from the principal of the Endowment Fund to a parish in the Diocese under such terms and conditions as the Trustees shall determine in their sole discretion and the Trustees may subsequently forgive any such loans in their sole discretion. Such loans may be made with or without interest and with security or without security. Any such loan of principal of the Endowment Fund and any forgiveness of such loan may be made only if seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the Diocesan Council members and the Diocesan Bishop approve such a loan.
- e. If the Diocese is ever merged with, absorbed by, or in any way combined with another diocese (or dioceses), or part of another diocese (or dioceses), of the Orthodox Church in America, the Endowment Fund (including both Income and principal) shall only benefit those parishes that (i) comprised the Diocese immediately prior to the effective date of any such merger, assumption, or combination, or (ii) are founded or established after any such merger, assumption, or combination but within the same geographical boundaries of the Diocese before the merger, assumption, or combination (the “Original Parishes”) and shall not be used for any parishes of the other diocese (or dioceses) or partial diocese (or dioceses). If, and only if, all of the Original Parishes cease to exist, may any of the Endowment Fund be distributed in equal or unequal shares as the Trustees shall determine to either (i) other dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America; and/or (ii) the Orthodox Church America.

- f. For purposes of the administration of the Endowment Fund, Income shall include cash dividends and interest earned from principal. Principal shall include all capital gain dividend paid by mutual funds, capital gains on the sale of Endowment Fund assets, stock dividends and stock splits. All other determinations of principal and Income shall be made under the provisions of the Pennsylvania Principal and Income Act or such similar statute as may then be in effect under Pennsylvania law.
- g. The Trustees shall have the following powers in the administration of the Endowment Fund in addition to all other powers granted by law:
1. To receive and retain any assets, real or personal, which the Trustees may deem for the best interest of the Fund without being required to sell those assets.
 2. To invest and reinvest in any securities that a prudent investor of intelligence and discretion would buy for himself for investment, and not for speculation, giving due regard to the safety of the principal and the adequacy of the income.
 3. To register or carry any investment held by the Trustees in the name of the Endowment Fund, the Trustees or in the names of one or more nominees including that of a member firm of the New York Stock Exchange, a clearing house, a depository, in book entry form, or to retain any investment unregistered or in a form permitting transfer by delivery; provided, however, that all such investments shall be so designated in the records of the Trustees.
 4. To vote by person or proxy any and all stock held in the Endowment Fund and to participate in any reorganization or merger of companies or corporations whose stock is held in the Endowment Fund. The Trustees may exercise any and all conversion, subscription and other rights of whatever nature with respect to any stocks, bonds or other securities held in the Endowment Fund.
 5. To employ investment counsel, accountants, depositories, custodians, brokers, attorneys and agents whenever their employment shall be deemed necessary or proper and to pay them the usual compensation for their services out of the principal and/or income of the assets held in the Endowment Fund.
 6. To receive any amounts payable under any life insurance policies and to execute any claim forms and/or other documentation deemed necessary by any life insurance company in order to receive the proceeds from any policy. The Trustees are empowered to take whatever steps are required by any life insurance company to qualify the Endowment Fund to receive any amount due under any life insurance policy.
 7. To receive any amounts payable under any individual retirement account, annuity, pension, profit sharing or other employee benefit or retirement plan or account and to execute any claim forms and/or other documentation deemed necessary by any administrator of such account, annuity or plan in order to receive the proceeds from any account, annuity or plan. The Trustees are hereby empowered to take whatever steps are required by any such account, annuity or plan administrator to qualify the Fund to receive any amount due under any such account or plan.
 8. The Trustees shall have no liability for any mistake or error of judgment made in good faith.

9. The Diocese and/or others may add to the Endowment Fund in cash or such property in kind as is acceptable to the Trustees.

Article XII – Amendments

3. Notwithstanding the prior paragraph, no amendment shall be made to Article XI of the Bylaws without first receiving the approval of seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Bishop. If the Diocese is ever merged with, absorbed by, or in any way combined with another diocese (or dioceses), or part of another diocese (or dioceses), any amendment to Article XI (“Endowment Fund of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania”) must not only be approved by seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Bishop and a two-thirds vote of the then-existing diocesan assembly (or equivalent body), but also by a two-thirds vote of those representatives in that diocesan assembly (or equivalent body) from the Original Parishes, as defined in Article XI. Further, any future bylaws of such a combined diocese must contain an article equivalent to (or, insofar as legally permissible, equivalent to) Article XI and this Article X.

