

Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 15, 2005
Christ the Savior Church, San Francisco, CA

The meeting opened at 10:30 A.M. with prayer.

Diocesan Council Members Present: His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN, Vicar Bishop and Chancellor; Archpriest Ian McKinnon, Vice-Chancellor; Nadine Wood, Secretary; Mary Caetta, Treasurer; Archpriests Joseph Hirsch and Matthew Tate; Priests David Lowell, Lawrence Margitich and John Strickland; Dmitri Solodow, Steve Knowlton, Johann Morse, and Carole Shumaik.

Members Absent: His Grace, Bishop TIKHON

Deans Present: Archpriests Bazyl Kalinowski, John Pierce, Lawrence Russell, Matthew Tate, and Basil Rhodes

Guests: Dorothy Nowik, Metropolitan Council

Minutes of the October 4 and 6 Meetings were adopted with no corrections.

Chancellor's Report: His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN reported that His Grace, Bishop TIKHON would not be present.

His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN thanked all for their work on the DOW Council, especially Mary Caetta for her assistance with mailings, etc. His Grace further reported that he will be using San Francisco as his base of operations more in the coming year due to the failing health of Archpriest Victor Sokolov. He reported Father Victor was able to serve the Liturgy on the Feast of St. Herman, but that he is becoming weaker as time goes on. His Grace Bishop BENJAMIN stated that he will not travel as much this year. At present, he plans to travel only two weekends a month. His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, is in the process of moving out of the apartment at LGS. His phone number will be the same.

His Grace further reported that the dollar amount for travel in 2005 is a realistic figure for bishop's travel in future budgets. His Grace has visited all parishes in the Diocese with the exception of Kona (which He plans to visit in February) and the small parish Santa Barbara. There are some issues to be resolved Phoenix and Menlo Park, but, for the most part, things are rather peaceful in the Diocese. Priest John Ramos has been granted leave of absence and attached to Santa Rosa effective December 8, 2005. The monastic communities are doing well. The Monastery of St John is looking at property in San Juan Batista, CA. The Saint Barbara Monastery is a growing community and has made a down payment on a 3-acre piece of property on the outskirts of Santa Paula, CA. Protection Monastery in Lake George, CO continues to be a community of one. The Kazan Skete is a stable monastic community. Mother Susanna is suffering problems with her eyesight.

Relative to DOW Communications, the next publication of the *Vision* is overdue. His Grace indicated Chancellor's Advisory Committee is a very helpful and useful tool, giving him counsel and advice on various matters. The financial crisis at Syosset will be discussed later in connection with the Metropolitan Council report. Bishop Benjamin felt, at the very least, this crisis has forced Syosset to be more transparent regarding financial dealings. His Grace, Bishop TIKHON and His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN are concerned about the increase in the diocesan responsibility for the Central Annual Assessment. He also reported a development position has been created by OCA which seeks, not only to increase special giving to the central administration, but also to teach parishes and diocese ways of developing their own financial base.

Johann Morse informed the Council \$60K was collected for the Father Victor Sokolov Fund, and thanked everyone for their generous donations.

Treasurer's Report: Mary Caetta reported that she will be moving to Port Townsend, WA and hoped to retire from her job in about 2 years. As of the end of November, the DOW is current with fair share responsibilities to the OCA. Over 3000 Christmas Appeal letters were mailed out. Eighty-five came back with updated addresses. \$20K is needed from the Nativity Appeal to balance our budget. Although there is a positive net income for

November, there is a deficit for the YTD. Mary further directed attention to “Operating Funds” (page 1 of Report 4). His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN asked what parishes are falling behind in their financial obligations to the diocese and central administration. He suggested the Treasurer’s report indicate somehow which parishes are continuing to fall behind and which are reducing their debt. Discussion followed.

MOTION: Johann Morse moved the Treasurer send monthly invoices to all parishes. Second: Dmitri Solodow. PASSED

Discussion followed about the increase in the monthly diocesan obligation to Syosset in “fair share” assessment and whether or not the Treasurer should, on her own, determine whether or not to cover payments. Mary expressed her concern about making the decision on her own.

MOTION: Archpriest Joseph Hirsch moved that the treasurer exercise discretion as de facto comptroller to determine whether or not to cover outstanding assessments for the central administration from diocesan funds and, further, that problems in meeting our financial obligations to the OCA be immediately brought to the Diocesan Authority. Second: Dmitri Solodow. PASSED

Discussions regarding growing financial shortfalls from Hesperia, Eureka, Billings and Corvallis followed. It was noted that the deans need to be aware of those parish that are falling behind in their assessments to the diocese and bring this to the attention of their pastors.

Mary noted there was a request at the DOW Assembly that we revisit the method used to compute the DPA. The Chancellor’s Advisory Committee reviewed the computation and determined not to make any changes at this time. The committee felt the current system over all gave the best picture of a given parish’s financial status even though some, at times, had deficit budgets.

Metropolitan Council Report: Archpriest Matthew Tate distributed the following material:

- Draft Amendment to Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan
- Orthodox Church in America Fair Share Calculation
- Statement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman after the report of the Treasurer (Nov. 9, 2006)
- OCA Operating Budget for FY2002 as of December 31, 2002
- OCA Operating Budget for FY2005/Proposed Budget FY2006
- Director of Development, Planned Giving and Stewardship Archpriest John J Dresko

Discussion on the above took place:

- Draft Amendment to Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan:
Action Item: Send letter to Pension Board asking why participation was voted to be optional and the letter from the Pension Board states participation is mandatory.
- OCA Fair Share Calculation:

MOTION: Archpriest Joseph Hirsch moved that the DOW Treasurer notify the parish treasurers the fair share assessment has been set at \$106.00 per capita. Second: Priest David Lowell. PASSED.

- Statement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius after the Report of the Treasurer...
The following Resolution was drafted:

Whereas:

It has come to the attention of the Council of the Diocese of the West that there is a substantial financial shortfall in the operation of the Central Administration; and,

Whereas:

The Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America has adopted the financial “Best Practices” standard for non-profit organizations and we have confidence in the ability of our Metropolitan to initiate such economies as will bring the present crisis under control; and,

Whereas:

It is further evident that this is not a singular occurrence, but has been going on for several years; and,

Whereas:

The Council of the Diocese of the West has for several decades warned of the impending crisis which would result from deficit spending and a failure of accountability and transparency of the Central Administration; and,

Whereas:

The Diocese of the West has throughout this time fulfilled all financial responsibility as requested by the Central Administration:

Therefore:

Be it known that the Council of the Diocese of the West memorialize the Metropolitan Council and the Central Administration that we consider the present financial crisis to be a serious and direct threat to the health and welfare of our diocese and the Church at large, and be it further understood that we do not accept responsibility for relieving the indebtedness which is the consequence of unrestrained and unresponsive budget practice.

[The above resolution was drafted with the intent to submit it to His Grace, Bishop TIKHON for approval. The Council further agreed that the above draft resolution be further reviewed by His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN and the members of the DOW Council and any comments or concerns be sent to His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN, copying Archpriests Joseph Hirsch and Matthew Tate prior to submitting to His Grace, Bishop TIKHON].

Further discussion followed.

MOTION: Archpriest Joseph Hirsch moved the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the West request the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America when gathered at the spring and fall meetings in 2006 and thereafter to scrutinize the income the church has received to date, and to adjust the operating budget to ensure a balanced budget. Second: Johann Morse. PASSED.

Growth Proposal: Dmitri Solodow presented a document “A Framework for Growth” for the Diocese of the West which he and Peter Schwalbenberg developed to specify the next steps in the Diocese’s actively planning its future. (Proposal is attached to these minutes).

MOTION: It was moved by Archpriest Matthew Tate the Council adopt the proposed framework for growth and to establish a work group consisting of the following members to focus on the implementation of the framework: Dmitri Solodow, Peter Schwalbenberg, Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Andre Paez, Priest David Lowell, Priest Steven Soot, Priest Lawrence Gaudreau and Nancy Jones. Second: Mary Caetta. PASSED.

A further report on “A Framework for Growth” will be made at the next Diocesan Council meeting.

Department Changes: Priest Anthony Karbo is now Chair of the Department of Youth.

St. Eugene Hermitage: His Grace Bishop BENJAMIN reported that the building is in need of repairs and the railing needs replacement. Discussion about the Building Fund and the Maintenance Fund followed.

MOTION: His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN moved that \$20K be transferred from the St. Eugene Building Fund to the St. Eugene Maintenance Fund to cover the necessary repairs and improvements. Second: Priest David Lowell. PASSED.

MOTION: Archpriest Matthew Tate moved the following people be authorized as signatories to the St. Eugene account: Bishop TIKHON, Bishop BENJAMIN, Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, and Mary Caetta. Second: Johann Morse. PASSED.

Archpriest Matthew Tate requested that an investigation be made as to the intent of the donors to the St. Eugene's Fund.

Diocesan Assembly 2006: The location and date of the next Diocesan Assembly was set for Las Vegas, October 3-5, 2006. Nadine Wood volunteered to chair the local committee (with the blessing of Priest Eric Tosi, rector of St. Paul).

July Fourth: His Grace Bishop BENJAMIN expressed his disappointment more clergy from Northern California do not participate in this annual celebration.

Mission Deanery Retreat: will begin on Tuesday, February 14 at 3:30 P.M. and conclude with a luncheon at 11:00 A.M. on Thursday, February 16.

Boot Camp for New Clergy will be held February 16 & 17 at LGS.

Deacon/subdeacon Workshop will be held February 17, 18 & 19 at LGS.

Charities:

Ethiopian Home – His Grace Bishop TIKHON has asked all parishes of the diocese adopt the Gobezie Goshu Ethiopian home as a charitable project during the Great Fast. Archpriest Lawrence Russell asked for prayers for “Ziggy” who is working in Ethiopia.

St. Petersburg Children's Hospice – His Grace Bishop BENJAMIN is asking the children of the diocese to raise funds for this charity and to write letters to the children in the hospice. Further information can be obtained at children.hospice@rambler.ru ; chaplain@mail.ru ; and Children's Hospice, Bol. Pushkarskaya 20, St. Petersburg 197198, Russia.

The Vision: The next publication is going to the printer this week. Material is needed for the next issue.

Website: Improvements are being made to the website.

LGS: Dimitri Solodow reported that Board of Directors adopted a 2006 Budget at their November meeting. The budget is in the black and is balanced. James Monudis is the newly elected Chairman of the Board. His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN thanked Dimitri Solodow for all the work he has done for LGS. A director is still needed.

Deanery Reports:

Rocky Mountain Deanery – Archpriest Joseph Hirsch highlighted his written report. Congregations in Calhan, Pueblo and Delta are growing and thriving. The Cathedral celebrated its 31st Baptism for 2005, which is a record of sorts. Fr. Joseph said there were enough Eritrean families at the Cathedral another parish of Eritreans could be established if an East African Priest could be found to serve them. There is continuing active outreach to the Romanian, Russian and Serbian communities of Denver as well as a deepening relationship with the local Synod Abroad parish. (The written report is attached to and made a part of these minutes).

Pacific Southwest Deanery – Archpriest Lawrence Russell reported that the vacancy in San Diego has been filled and filled well! St. Innocent Church in Tarzana celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2005. Ss Peter & Paul in Phoenix is working at putting its bylaws in good canonical order.

Pacific Central Deanery – Archpriest Basil Rhodes highlighted his written report. Liturgical and pastoral needs at Holy Trinity Cathedral in SF are being taken care of by His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN and Priest David Lowell. Protection of the Virgin/St. Seraphim in Santa Rosa is growing. They currently have 10 catechumens. More frescos are being painted. St. Nicholas in San Anselmo celebrated its patronal feast on December 6th with 9 priests and 2 deacons and a parish filled to capacity. (The written report is attached to and made a part of these minutes).

Pacific Northwest Deanery – Archpriest John Pierce reported that all is quiet in the Northwest Deanery. St. Spiridon Cathedral recently painted the domes.

San Francisco Russian Mission Deanery – Archpriest Basil Kalinowski reported that all is well, except for Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church in Menlo Park. Priest Valerii Bulinnakov has requested release to the Moscow Patriarchate and desires to return to Russia with his family. The dance group at Christ the Savior Church is active and the children's choir made a CD.

His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN commented that the musical life in the diocese is very healthy.

Mission Deanery – Archpriest Matthew Tate reported the following:

- St. Peter the Aleut in Lake Havasu a likely candidate from the Diocese of the South has been found who, upon completion of his seminary education, has expressed an interest in serving as a priest in LHC.
- The mission in Tempe is growing fast – has doubled in size
- The Spanish mission in Phoenix is progressing slowly
- SS. Cyril & Methodius Mission in Chico – Priest Michael Rome will be retiring after Theophany
- Mission of Joy of All Who Sorrow in Culver City is doing as well as can be expected
- St. Innocent Mission in Eureka – vacant at present and will require some attention
- St. Christina of Tyre Mission in Fremont – Priest Michael Anderson is Rector
- St. George the Great Martyr Church in Hesperia is falling behind again in its payments. Reader's services are being held there and we need to find someone who can serve Liturgy on a more regular basis.
- Livermore – St. Innocent Mission has found a building and has moved in.
- St. Mary Magdalene Mission in Merced – still wrestling with its building program.
- St. Susana Mission in Sonora – has a new priest
- St. Nicholas of South Canaan in Billings – good
- St. Anthony the Great in Bozeman – fine
- St. Gabriel, Archangel Mission in Ashland – doing well
- Mission in Bend – is growing
- Church of the Annunciation in Milwaukee – additional parking lot
- Holy Apostles Mission in Portland – Priest Nicholas Letten will be retiring. A new priest has been assigned. The mission will probably have to move to another location shortly.
- St. Catherine Mission in Kirkland – doing fine – need to find their own property
- Mission of St. Herman of Alaska in Port Townsend – recently purchased additional property adjacent to their present lot.
- St. Elizabeth Mission in Poulsbo – doing well – very positive
- Holy Ascension Mission in Olympia – doing well
- Orthodox Mission in Kona, HI – There are difficulties and Priest Sergius and his family may have to seek another assignment. We are, for the present, resolved to continue the mission.

Upcoming Mission Deanery Retreats:

- Mission Deanery Retreat
 - Clergy Retreat
 - Deacon/sub-deacon workshop
- See the DOW Website for details and registration information

Mission Board visitations to seminaries will take place beginning February 6 – 9, 2006

2006 Liturgical Singing Workshop will be held February 17, 2006 – contact Priest Lawrence Margitich for information.

Old Business:

Steiner Street Property – is at an impasse. We sent an offer and letter of intent and are waiting to hear from them. His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN plans to stay at Raphael House for the present time. Archpriest Ian

MacKinnon reiterated the need to find a permanent residence for Bishop BENJAMIN, preferably in Northern California, and ideally in San Francisco. He suggested that we send the word out via diocesan mailings.

Action Item: Archpriest Ian MacKinnon to send letter via Diocesan mailing list requesting ideas for residence for His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN.

New Business:

Stipends for Mission Priests – Archpriest Matthew Tate presented the proposed stipends for Mission Priests:

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Fr. Isaac Skidmore | \$300.00 | Drops to \$200.00 January 1, 2006 |
| 2. Fr. Steven Soot | \$100.00 | Remains (Bend) |
| 3. Fr. Sergius Nauman | \$300.00 | Remains |
| 4. Fr. John Strickland | \$200.00 | Drops to \$100 August 2006 |
| 5. Fr. Damian Kuolt | \$200.00 | Remains |
| 6. Fr. John Tomasi | \$100.00 | Ends Jan. 1, 2006 |
| 7. Fr. N. Kime | \$100.00 | Ends Jan. 1, 2006 |
| 8. Fr. Andrew Jacobs | \$300.00 | Drops to \$200.00 July 2006 |
| 9. Fr. Isodore Mayol | \$300.00 | Open |

10. Chico

11. Redding

12. Eureka

13. Lake Havasu

Discussion followed.

MOTION: Dmitri Solodow moved to give Archpriest Matthew Tate the flexibility to spend monies as needed for mission clergy from the amount budgeted. Second: Priest David Lowell. PASSED

Matushka Retreat: will be held May 6 & 7, 2006 at LGS

Next Diocesan Council Meeting will be held Thursday, May 11, 2006 at 10:30 A.M. at Christ the Savior Church, Anza Street, San Francisco.

MOTION: Motion to adjourn was made by Mary Caetta. Second: Priest Lawrence Margitich. PASSED

The meeting adjourned with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadine M Wood

Nadine Wood,
Secretary

ACTION ITEMS:

Johann Morse moved that Mary Caetta send monthly invoices to all parishes, seconded by Dmitri Solodow. All in favor...so moved.

Send letter to Pension Board asking why participation was voted to be optional and the letter from the Pension Board states participation is mandatory.

Archpriest Joseph Hirsch moved that the DOW Treasurer inform parishes of the fair share assessment at \$106.00 per capita. The motion was seconded by Priest David Lowell.

The Council of the Diocese of the West request the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America when gathered at the spring and fall meetings in 2006 and thereafter to scrutinize the income the church has received to date, and to adjust the operating budget to ensure a balanced budget.

Re: St. Eugene's – Transfer \$20K from the Building Fund to the Maintenance Fund.

The following people be authorized to sign on St. Eugene's account: Bishop TIKHON, Bishop BENJAMIN, Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, and Mary Caetta. The motion was seconded by Johann Morse. All in favor, so moved.

Archpriest Ian MacKinnon to send letter via Diocesan mailing list requesting ideas for residence for His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN.