

DIOCESAN COUNCIL MINUTES
Tuesday, September 5, 2006
Christ the Saviour Church, San Francisco

Diocesan Council members present: His Grace, Bishop TIKHON, His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN, Auxiliary Bishop and Chancellor; Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Vice-Chancellor; Archpriests Joseph Hirsch and Matthew Tate; Priests David Lowell, Lawrence Margitich and John Strickland; Johann Morse, Dimitri Solodow and Steve Knowlton

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

Minutes of Tuesday, June 6, 2006 meeting:

At the request of His Grace, Bishop TIKHON, the minutes of the June 6, 2006 Diocesan Council were read aloud. The following corrections were noted:

- Page 1: change “Diocesan Bishops and their diocese” to “dioceses”.
- Page 3: add the words “supply priests” so that it is clear that the 2007 budget will include provision for supply priests for vacationing mission clergy.
- Page 4: from charity report: “receiving” children is changed to “helping” children.
- Page 4: in the section on St. Eugene’s Hermitage, add (after discussion followed): “His Grace, Bishop TIKHON requested that Father Jonah send His Grace a copy of the letter in which a blessing was given to relocated from Point Reyes to the new location in Manton”.
- Page 4: under Framework of Growth, mid-paragraph, “could choose” is changed to “is required to appoint.” The sentence which follows should read: “After the Metropolitan declares the diocese vacant, there will be an election in three months.”

His Grace, Bishop TIKHON’s Remarks:

His Grace extended warm thanks to His Grace Bishop BENJAMIN for traveling to all of the parishes and missions within the Diocese of the West within this past year. This is appreciated by Bishop TIKHON and the faithful as a whole.

His Grace stated that the financial and organizational challenges facing the central administration of the Church are the Metropolitan’s primary concern. They are not our primary concern. The Church and its life in this diocese is stable and growing.

His Grace will write a letter requesting retirement by the end of the month. His Grace will become the Rector Emeritus in Los Angeles and will continue to live on the church property at the invitation of the parish for the time being. His Grace praised the fine work which Fr. Michael Senyo has done and stated that Fr. Michael will be appointed Rector.

In answer to questions raised by the Diocesan Council, His Grace said that of the original allegations of financial impropriety in the central Church administration, the only one the auditors have definitively answered concerns an allegation about the funds for St. Sergius Chapel. This allegation turned out to be false.

His Grace advised that we should look at maturity and commitment of people when forming a new mission.

His Grace has served on this Diocesan Council in one capacity or another (starting out as a Deacon and the Council Secretary) for 34 years. It has been a rewarding and humbling experience, and His Grace thanked all the clergy for their support and patience.

Chancellor's Report:

His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN expressed appreciation to His Grace Bishop TIKHON for the opportunity to serve in this diocese as Chancellor. His Grace said the part he likes best is visiting all the missions and parishes in the diocese.

In the last few months His Grace has visited:

- Menlo Park
- Steiner St.
- Las Vegas
- Denver
- Fort Ross
- Berkeley
- Phoenix
- Tempe
- Santa Rosa
- Middletown
- Merced
- Seattle
- Tacoma
- Kirkland
- Poulsbo
- Port Townsend
- Anza Street

In general His Grace has found the missions and parishes to be in excellent shape. After several months we still have a challenge filling the vacancy in Menlo Park, though many clergy throughout the country have been contacted to see if they might be interested. Unfortunately the current salary at the Menlo Park parish would be a reduction from what most qualified priest are already receiving. We need someone who is both bi-lingual and bi-cultural – able to serve the new Russians, as well as reach out to the growing and educated American community in the local area.

His Grace has been serving at Menlo Park on many Sundays, as has Rev. David Lowell.

In Phoenix, Fr. David Brum has settled in and is doing very well. The by-laws of the parish are the next issue.

His Grace noted the growth and stability of missions in Poulsbo, Olympia, Fremont and Livermore, all of which now have their own space rented and no longer need to set up and take down the iconostasis each week as they did when they did not have a place that was totally their own to use.

His Grace thanked Archpriest John Pierce for arranging the recent visits to the parishes and missions in the Northwest Deanery.

His Grace noted that Fr. Gregory Szyrnsky is still recovering from his stroke. He is in a wheelchair currently. The prognosis is hopeful, that he will be able to serve again, but it will take a number of months. Please remember him in your prayers.

This summer we received Rev. Peter Henry into the diocese. He now serves in Lake Havasu City. He is the first permanently assigned parish priest there in 28 years! During the next two weeks His Grace will be traveling to Montana (Bozeman and Billings) and to Denver for .

Treasurer's Report:

The proposed budget for the coming year was reviewed by the Diocesan Council. Printing costs for the *Orthodox Vision* had been reduced by \$9,100 on the assumption that we will primarily publish the Vision electronically on the Diocesan website. After further discussion, it was decided that we still need the tangible magazine in paper format, for the coming year at the least, and maybe longer. These printing costs will be added back into the budget.

Additionally, the Deans requested that some of the directed outreach funds be allocated more back into the charity and youth departments at the same level as this year.

The next draft of the budget will be submitted to the Diocesan Council for its final review on October 2 and will then be presented to the Diocesan Assembly at our meeting in Las Vegas and Boulder City, October 3 -4, 2006.

Our Treasurer Mary Caetta was unable to attend this meeting, as she moves to Port Townsend, Washington. This is the first meeting she has missed in 14 years. It is the enthusiastic consensus of the Diocesan Council that Mary's work has been fabulous, and we extend our sincere thanks to her!

Deanery Reports: Nothing new to report.

Diocesan Assembly 2006:

The agenda for the Diocesan Assembly was reviewed and will be posted on the website.

Life-Giving Spring:

Our attorneys are still working on the tax situation. Katherine Short has been doing an excellent job as the Director and even succeeded booking some retreats in the hot summer months when there are often none.

Charities:

A letter of appreciation was read from the Children's Hospice in St. Petersburg, Russia for the \$9,881.05 collected from parishes in the Diocese of the West. Much of this money was raised through the activities of the children in our parishes.

Stewards of the West and fundraising appeals:

Fr. Joseph Hirsch volunteered to draft a fundraising letter which we will read at the next Diocesan Council. This will be an appeal letter in support of the Diocese.

Metropolitan Council:

Fr. Matthew Tate reported that not very much information has been given to the Metropolitan Council. The next meeting is September 28 and 29.

Dorothy Nowik has resigned from the Metropolitan Council .

St. Eugene Hermitage:

Two monks remain at the monastery in Point Reyes. The bulk of the monastics are in Manton. His Grace, Bishop TIKHON said that the mold problem at Point Reyes needs to be dealt with. It's important to take care of something like this, not run away from it. His Grace noted that the nuns in Santa Rosa have also had considerable problems their property and are dealing with it.

Steiner Street:

One inspection has been done on the Steiner Street property. Two more - plumbing/drainage and termite inspections – are still needed.

Diocesan By-laws change:

Fr. Matthew Tate moved that the Diocesan by-laws be amended so that all clergy who serve on the Diocesan Council shall be appointed by the ruling hierarch. Fr. Joseph Hirsch seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. This will be presented to the Diocesan Assembly.

The next meeting of the Diocesan council will be held on Monday, October 2 at the Life-Giving Spring Retreat Center in Boulder City, Nevada at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Priest David Lowell

Acting Secretary, *filling-in for the vacationing Nadine Wood, Secretary*

