

Meeting Minutes: Christian Orthodox Council of Akron

Date: Tuesday, February 19, 2024

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: St Demetrius Serbian Orthodox Church

Call to Order: President Judge Kathryn Michael called the meeting to order at 6:48 PM.

Welcome & Opening Prayer: Father Don Freude

Roll Call:

1. St George - Judge Kathryn Michael (President)
2. St George - Bob Snyder
3. St Elia - Fr Don Freude
4. St Elia - Joshua Wherley (Vice President, temporary Secretary)
5. St Demetrius - Milorad Jovich
6. St Nicholas - Basil Kochan
7. St Nicholas - Lori Kochan
8. Presentation - Debbie Morgan
9. Presentation - Maria Waterhouse
10. St Thomas - Stephanie Marszal
11. Annunciation - John Bober
12. Annunciation - Lou Poplos (Treasurer)
13. Annunciation - Jen & John Matheos
14. Annunciation - Jim Salem
15. Annunciation - Mark & Karen Horattas

Attendee Introductions – President Judge Kathryn Michael

Secretary's Report – Lou Poplos motioned to accept the January 2024 meeting minutes as sent out by email, Stephanie Marszal seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Lou Poplos reported that the current balance is \$7,952.94. No proposed expenditures at this time.

Parish Updates

Presentation updates:

- March 14th begins a video series about spiritual disciplines (i.e. prayer, fasting and almsgiving) based on writings by Fr Evan Armatas. This will be four sessions spread out over five weeks.

Presentation updates, continued:

- March 28th movie during Lent showing the film (“Luka”) about St Luke the Surgeon of Simferopol (Crimea). Doors open at 6:15 PM and the movie starts at 6:30 PM.
- OCF members volunteered to help with a dinner attended by Archbishop Nathaniel.

Annunciation:

- Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers – March 24, 2024
 - A conversation regarding the Sunday of Orthodoxy booklet followed. Some details are still to be determined, such as who will manage this effort, what information will be included, and when contents need to be finalized.
- John Matheos from the Good Samaritans Food Pantry spoke about the group’s activities, such as a soup kitchen which serves dinner on the second Thursday and last Tuesday nights each month. The pantry has also been expanded to include suitcases, backpacks, clothing, toiletries.
 - John Bober added that there is always a need for volunteers. A SignUp Genius link is on the parish website for those interested in volunteering. Jen Matheos commented that the youth group got involved with serving at some events.
- John Matheos mentioned Loads of Love, which is a way organizations can help pay for people to do their laundry. Annunciation parish has gotten involved and contributed a few hundred dollars in a short span of time. The group meets on the second Monday of each month.

St Archangel Michael: No representation

St Elia:

- Feb 10 was the Bingo Salad Supper, hosted by the parish sisterhood. It was well attended and received good reviews.
- Catechumen was received into the Church Feb 17, 2024.
- March 1st “Vecherinka” dance, covered dish and open to all who are interested. The event runs from 6-9 PM. Those interested in attending may contact Joshua Wherley for more information.

St George:

- Friday night fish fries for the duration of Western & Orthodox Lent. Dinner is from 5-7 PM and costs \$15.00.
- Young Adults meeting Feb 21, 2024, at 6:00 PM. Food will be provided.

St Herman:

- John Bober is awaiting a response as to whether a parishioner there will step forward as a COCA representative for future meetings.

St Mary: No representation

St Nicholas:

- Akathist at 6:30 PM this Thursday night to the Mother of God on the occasion of the visitation of the Tikhvin Icon. This icon is the protectress of the OCA Diocese of Chicago & the Midwest.
- Fish Frys Feb 16th & March 29th, order online.
- March 5th is a pierogi drive thru, order online.
- Men's group clothing & boots drive for Lent, benefits St Herman's House.

St Thomas:

- March 5th begins a Lenten Zoom book study, Tuesday nights at 7PM. Email the secretary if interested.

St Demetrius:

- Milorad Jovich attended the meeting and showed visitors the new iconography in the nave, as well as parish memorabilia in the hallway.

OCW:

- An all-day retreat with Fr Barnabas Powell is planned for April 20th. The \$20.00 registration cost includes breakfast & lunch.

Akron Summit County Clergy Association:**Lenten Vesper services:**

- March 24 Annunciation - Sunday of Orthodoxy with Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh. Booklet material to be submitted to Presentation office, deadline: March 1, 2024
- March 31 – Presentation at 5:00 P.M.
- April 7 – St Elia at 5:00 pm
- April 14 – St Thomas at 5:00 PM.
- April 31 - St Nicholas - Unction Service at 5:00 PM.

Akron OCF:

Feb 3rd "Cultures of Orthodoxy" banquet and dance at Annunciation was well attended.

New Business:

- Mark & Karen Horattas from Annunciation parish introduced the St Constantine School. This is a franchise model system for a pan-Orthodox School with a Classical Christian Curriculum. The intention is to start with Kindergarten through eighth grade. A discussion about general structure, funding, and the overall mission followed. Basil Kochan voiced serious concern about using government funding to support the school. John Bober recommended reviewing the St Constantine School website for a more in-depth look into the general premises in the meantime. A meeting at Annunciation will be held May 19, 2024 at 3 PM and is open to any who are interested to attend. This will be for people to learn more about the school. Mark Horattas added that he wants to

hear all ideas and comments, whether supportive or not. Mark also talked to the headmaster, Fr Jonathan Cholcher, of the St Nicholas Orthodox School about their past efforts and was supportive of our effort.

- An upcoming pan-Orthodox choir after Pascha is not feasible at this time, per Basil Kochan. Sometime closer to Advent/Nativity is still possible.
- John Bober mentioned that some parishes have updated their websites to include the COCA website, others have not.
- John Bober clarified that since COCA is not an IRS tax exempt organization, direct donations to COCA should not be claimed on your tax returns.

Next Meeting: March 18, 2024 at St Thomas, begins 6:30 PM

Closing Prayer: Fr Don Freude

Adjournment: Basil Kochan made a motion to adjourn at 8:06 PM; Fr Don Freude seconded.

Minutes submitted: Joshua Wherley – temporary COCA Secretary