

Meeting Minutes: Christian Orthodox Council of Akron

Date: Monday, May 20, 2024

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

Call to Order: President Judge Kathryn Michael called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

Welcome & Opening Prayer: Fr Nick Manuel

Roll Call:

1. St George - Judge Kathryn Michael (President)
2. St George - Bob Snyder
3. St Elia - Joshua Wherley (Vice President, temporary Secretary)
4. St Elia - Mary Marcin
5. St Nicholas - Basil Kochan
6. Presentation of Our Lord - Maria Waterhouse
7. Presentation of Our Lord - Debbie Morgan
8. Annunciation - Fr Nick Manuel
9. Annunciation - John Bober
10. Annunciation - Lou Poplos (Treasurer)

Secretary's Report – John Bober motioned to accept the April 2024 meeting minutes as read by Joshua Wherley, Basil Kochan seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Lou Poplos reported that the current balance is \$14,323.94. Three expenditures are pending approval: two Bright Week radio spots (WAKR totalling \$240 & WHLO totalling \$250), and Orthodox Web Solutions totalling \$150. Combined, these will drop the balance to \$13,683.94. Poplos also plans to give the two seminarians their respective checks in the near future. Debbie Morgan motioned to accept the report as read by Poplos, seconded by Maria Waterhouse, motion carried.

Parish Updates

Presentation updates:

- The Primavara Romanian festival held on May 18th was a success.
- Fr Ian's mother reposed in the Lord. Archbishop Nathaniel helped lead the funeral service earlier Monday morning.
- Orthodox Christian Fellowship hosted a dance for college students.
- Bike ride to school for local school children started at church and was well received.
- Parish Sunday school fundraiser for the OCA Diocese of Alaska has concluded.

Presentation updates, continued:

- Association of Romanian Orthodox Ladies' Auxiliaries of North America (ARFORA) conference to be hosted at the parish.

Annunciation:

- A dinner for underserved residents of Akron from outside the parish is being held May 28th. A similar event (soup dinner) will be held June 13th.
- Good Samaritans Food Pantry is active and always looking for volunteers to help. Bober recommended looking at the Sign Up Genius.
- Young adult Vespers & social scheduled for June 15th beginning at 4:30 PM.
- \$1,400 raised & donated to Akron Snow Angels, benefitting local homeless people.
- Two people were chrismated on Holy Saturday.
- Camp Nazareth summer camp is coming up, 12 kids are registered so far.
- Vacation Bible school scheduled for August 5-9, 19 kids are signed up so far. The topic is the Parables of Jesus and runs daily from 9 AM - 12 PM.

St Archangel Michael: No representation.

St Elia:

- Orthodox Christians for Life "National Baby Shower" supplies drive completed and delivered to ZOE for Life! in Cleveland, OH.
- Elias Ivan baby baptism on May 12th.
- St Elia's Day coming up in July. The Sisterhood is planning a parish social.
- Hosting the diocesan conference in October. Subd Innocent (Aaron Gray) will be ordained to the diaconate.

St George:

- Two adult baptisms since the April 2024 meeting.
- Young adults meeting May 22, 2024, at 6:00 PM. Food will be provided.
- June 6-10 Christian Education Conference at Antiochian Village in Bolivar, PA.
- Diocesan conference for the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest will be held June 19-23 in Chicago, IL.

St Herman: No representation.

St Mary: No representation.

St Nicholas:

- Parish hosted the OCW Lenten Retreat, it went well.
- Bright Saturday lamb kabob parish social was well received.
- "Blessings in a Backpack" program wrapping up for the summer.
- Parish hosted the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians of America retreat, it went well.
- June 4th is the next drive up dinner, cabbage rolls will be served.

St Nicholas updates, continued:

- Parish will host the FOCA convention for July 26-29, attendees will include Met Tikhon, and Bishops Daniel of Chicago, Gerasim of Dallas, & Michael New York & New Jersey.
- Clothing drive for St Herman's House of Hospitality was a success. Annual golf tournament benefiting the charity is scheduled for Monday, July 15th and will feature a silent auction.
- Nine baptisms recently, five adults & four children.

St Thomas:

- No representation.

St Demetrius: No representation.

OCW:

- May 7th Liturgy for St Irene was enjoyed by attendees. The pan Orthodox choir (with members from 3 parishes) received compliments.
- June 20th is the next Board meeting.

Akron Summit County Clergy Association: Next meeting will be at Waterloo Restaurant, June 11th at 11 AM.

New Business:

- John Bober presented an agenda for the 2024-25 season, only one date (Bright Monday) was moved to April 28th to avoid scheduling conflicts. John Bober will contact St. Herman to determine whether they are willing to host the April 2025 meeting.
- Proposed slate of officers remains the same, only change is Maria Waterhouse nominated as Secretary for the 2024-25 season. All nominations were approved by acclamation.
- Another point to consider is that giving directly to seminarians is consistent with the COCA objectives since this supports parishioners who are obtaining an Orthodox education and some of them may eventually serve in the Akron area.
- Distribution of funds to charities discussion was reopened. An emphasis on promoting pan-Orthodox unity in Akron was voiced. Another point to consider is seminaries since this helps train priests, some of whom may serve in the Akron area in the future. Kochan mentioned how being visible in our giving may encourage other parishes/organizations to consider giving to similar efforts. In general, the council seems to agree that we ought to narrow our focus regarding to whom we give. The Clergy Association has not had any discussion on this matter.
- Bober reiterated that COCA is not a Federally-recognized non-profit organization (501c3), so people may be hesitant about giving to the organization since their direct donations cannot be legitimately claimed on their tax returns. Some people give their donations to their parishes which are then sent to COCA. Judge Kathy Michael confirmed this and is working on applying again for COCA's tax exempt status.

New Business, continued:

- COCA supporting a joint young adult event was mentioned.
- Wherley motioned to give \$750 each to ZOE for Life! & St Herman's House of Hospitality, Marcin seconded. Motion carried.
- Mission Walk is tentatively planned for Saturday, October 19th.
- St Constantine School Zoom meeting tonight at 8 PM.

Next Meeting: Next Meeting: June 17, 2024, at Presentation of Our Lord Orthodox Church, begins at 6:30 PM. The annual potluck picnic will be held at this time.

Closing Prayer: Fr Nick Manuel

Minutes submitted: Joshua Wherley – temporary COCA Secretary