



Holy Myrrhbearers

ORTHODOX MISSION

Annual Parish Assembly Sunday 28 January 2024

1. Opening prayer

The meeting was opened with prayer.

2. Adoption of agenda

Fr Geoffrey Ready presented the meeting agenda.

- Motion to accept the agenda: Irene Cassar
- Seconded by: Milena Djokovic

The agenda was passed.

3. Approval of minutes

The minutes from the previous Parish Assembly on 29 January 2023 were presented, with no calls for amendments or changes.

- Motion to accept the minutes: Milena Djokic
- Seconded by: Lara Hunt

The minutes were accepted

4. Rector's report (review of 2023 and looking ahead to 2024)

Fr Geoffrey gave a report on the growth and development of the mission in its seventh full year, focusing on the six ministry areas: worship, hospitality, teaching, service, stewardship, and administration.

Highlights of **worship** ministry include:

- beauty of the diversity of our community
- so many parishes are one dimensional (mono-ethnic, mono-cultural), Metropolitan John Zizioulas calls that the Eucharist of Demons
- we are organically diverse – how can we ensure our worship experience is inclusive and participatory?

- a renewed effort will be made this year to create the complement volume to the Divine Liturgy book, focusing on the Liturgy of the Hours

Highlights of **hospitality** ministry include:

- welcoming people, making sure they feel welcome and we are friendly
- they have a place here
- no right or wrong of how we get involved
- our fellowship hour is liturgy after the liturgy

Highlights of **teaching** ministry include:

- core part of our ministry, almost our *raison d'être* – including integration with and support for the Orthodox Christian Studies programme at Trinity College
- catechetical and adult education offerings
- children's ministry developing with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd programme

Highlights of **service** ministry include:

- continues to expand
- one of the core dimensions is the formation within our parish of St Hermione's Lay Pastoral ministry
- not just belonging to our parish anymore, but to the whole Orthodox community in Toronto
- it's now a separate charity with separate bank accounts, and its first formal employee
- possibility of using St Anne's place as a base of operations for St Hermione's
- some other parishes are now interested
- we just want ordinary lay people trained to spend time with those in need effectively
- not high level pastoral care, just "being with"
- connections with other programs (external giving including with Toronto Urban Native Ministry)

Highlights of **stewardship** ministry include:

- purview of parish council mostly
- we are doing well but have a ways to go to pay for everything we want to do
- teaching ministry – we need investments to do catechesis etc
- we need to spread out stewardship more evenly (more on this in the financial section)

- we are in a parish discernment process – is it time to relocate and develop as a full parish?
- every single person has something to give in terms of service

Highlights of **administration** ministry include:

- tied in largely with stewardship
- Father took a few minutes to discuss Heart Edge, and how it pertains to parish renewal
- We are in a post-Christian time for of “nones” and “dones”
- how can we renew the gospel and the church’s place in our society?
- Four Cs – commerce, culture, compassion, congregation – more information on this is available for those interested

5. **Financial Report for 2023**

Treasurer Alexandra Nahshon presented the financial statements for 2023 (attached). Some of the key points were:

- Financial picture of this year is fairly similar to last year
- about \$6k up from last year
- Expenses were about \$5k higher than we had budgeted for
- mostly from more money for travel – Archdiocesan Assembly for 2023 and for planned travel for 2024
- we bought some icons (one-time expenses)
- we still have not been charged rent although we continue to budget for it
- we also did twice as much external giving as originally budgeted for 2023, mostly to Toronto Urban Native Ministry, and additional giving to the Archdiocese for the Diocese of Alaska, and St. John the Divine for a new relief house
- we also had investment loss, which is hopefully temporary
- Our top 8 donors are providing 73% of giving
- there are a lot of people not giving at all, which is a problem, and going forward as we look at new ministries, there are going to be new expenses
- we have more expenses than it looks like when you walk in and out
- hopefully more visible projects will encourage people to give

Motion to adopt financial report for 2023:

- Motion: Oleg Perrin
- Second: Rares Marinescu

2023 financial reports are adopted

6. Budget for 2024

Treasurer Alexandra Nahshon presented the budget for 2024 (attached). Some of the key points were:

- reflects the spending from 2023 with a modest increase mirroring the increase we had last year
- following our typical yearly growth
- also accounting for changes we are expecting, and some changes that we cannot specifically predict
- there are a few question marks because we aren't sure how much we will need to budget for them
- we hope St Hermione's becomes more self-supporting

Motion to adopt the financial reports and budget:

- Motion: Irene Cassar
- Seconded by: Misha Drobac

The financial reports and budget were adopted.

7. Election of parish council

Fr Geoffrey presented the following slate of officers for election.

The core administrative members of parish council (as required by the parish by-laws):

- Warden: Joseph Clarke
- Second Warden: Milena Djokic
- Treasurer: Alexandra Nahshon
- Secretary: Irene Cassar

Additional members of parish council (as allowed by the parish by-laws):

- Service Ministry Coordinator: Louise Neville
- Worship Ministry Coordinator: Pegor Danageuzian
- Teaching Ministry Coordinator: Scott Harris
- Small Groups Coordinator: Marina Fanous

Motion to elect the parish council: Mike Dubinski

Seconded by: Lara Hunt
Passed and parish council elected.

In addition to these elected officers, Fr Geoffrey noted that Morgan Singh has been appointed by the Archbishop as a lay delegate to the Metropolitan Council of the OCA (chaired by Metropolitan Tikhon). He will be reporting back to the Archdiocesan Council of the Canadian Archdiocese of the OCA, as well as to Fr Geoffrey as Dean of Ontario, and to our parish.

8. Election of auditing committee

Father Geoffrey nominated Olga Perrin and Arjun Arulampalam for the committee to scrutinise the financial systems and annual preparation of financial reports.

Motion to elect the auditing committee: Lara Hunt

Seconded by: Roshan Carpenter

Motion passed and auditing committee elected.

9. Plan to Protect

- statutory requirement by our insurers
- annually we need to reaffirm our dedication do it
- we will need to revisit it this year due to our new ministries
- keeping track of police checks, etc.
- pretty common sense, normal stuff

Motion to reaffirm Plan to Protect:

- Motion: Irene Cassar
- seconded: Linda Karounos

Motion to reaffirm carried

10. Other business

- Pan-Orthodox Vespers - March 23 – a Saturday, which is unusual, because the Sunday evening is the Eve of Annunciation
- it will be at St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral
- Orthodoxy is a fragile construction in terms of unity
- it's in a Greek church this year because of the Russia/Ukraine issue – technically it was the OCA's turn to host and it was supposed to be at Christ the Saviour, but Ukrainians did not want that
- we are not hosting Archbishop Irénée this year, but he will be at St Maria's Friday July 19 to Saturday July 20 – there will be a diaconal ordination

- Father Geoffrey will be absent for several Sundays this year due to church matters
- as Dean of Ontario he will have to visit some other parishes
- once the ministries are up and running, we will have a list/matrix where people can sign up to contribute based on their own talents and availability
- we also want to revamp our efforts to start the Christian burial society – one of the purposes of St Hermione’s is to enable people to be supported to die at home
- brief discussion of doing food and clothing drives, especially during feasts. Father briefly talked about how we’ve done food and clothing drives for students on campus who are in need. Irene added that most food banks are requesting cash donations above all else

11. Closing prayer

The meeting was closed with prayer.

Fr Geoffrey asked for motion to dismiss.

Motion: Irene Cassar

Seconded by: Pegor Danageuzian

Motion passed and meeting adjourned.