

Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
2013 Diocesan Assembly, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
January 19, 2013

The meeting opened with prayer at 10:30 am.

Preliminary logistics

- Opening words by Fr. John Kowalczyk
- Call for a motion to approve the agenda with one change: transfer of the Liturgical Life Committee report to be moved to the afternoon agenda.
- Motion to accept the modified agenda was made by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky and seconded from the floor. **The motion passed.**
- The floor moved to approve the assembly officers:
- 1st session chair: Fr. John Kowalczyk
- 2nd session chair: Doug Yates
- Clergy secretary: Fr. Jason Franchak
- Lay secretary: Daria Cortése
- The motion to approve these officers was made by Hieromonk David Mahaffey) and seconded from the floor. **The motion passed.**

Minutes

- Fr. John Kowalczyk called for a motion to accept the minutes from the 2012 assembly.
- Fr. Joseph Martin called for an amendment to the minutes: David Yeosock is from Holy Trinity Church, not Holy Resurrection.
- The motion to accept the amended minutes was made by Mark Linnehan and seconded from the floor. **The motion passed.**

Nominations for Metropolitan Council

- There were four nominations:
 - Fr. John Perich
 - Doug Yates (lay)
 - David Yeosock (lay)
 - Fr. James Weremedic
- Metropolitan council election was moved by blessing of Bp. +MELCHIZEDEK.
- Doug Yates declined the nomination.

- Each candidate spoke about his background and views on important issues facing the life of the Church.

- The assembly voted by secret ballot.
- Fr. James Weremedic won the clergy election by a 35-25 split.
- David Yeosock won unopposed due to Doug Yates' declining his nomination.

Credentials

- 2 hierarchs, 24 clergy, 27 lay, 3 diocesan council, 10 alternates/ observers

Nominations for Diocesan Council (at large):

- Fr. Tim Hojnicky
 - Fr. John Soucek
 - Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk
 - John Buckeye
 - Elsie Herman
 - Doug Yates
- There were also two floor nominations:
 - Mark Linnehan
 - Fr. Daniel Mathewson
- There was a call for a motion to close the nomination list. The motion was made by Hieromonk David (Mahaffey) and seconded by Fr. Stephen Vernak. **The motion passed.**

Address by Bp. +MELCHIZEDEK, *Locum Tenens*

- His Grace spoke briefly about his role in finding a new diocesan hierarch.
- There are 159 potentially eligible clergy in the diocese.
- Hierarchs are going over this list for the "first cut". The Holy Synod will vet the candidates before a special diocesan assembly to elect the new bishop.
- Bp. +MARK is assisting with the management of diocesan affairs.
- His Grace discussed the possibility of combining Pennsylvania into a single diocese and asked for remarks from the floor.
- Mark Linnehan expressed concern that such a move would potentially limit the necessary attention each parish gets from the diocesan bishop and cause harm to both dioceses.
- His Grace discussed the **vetting criteria:**
 - Demonstrated administrative skills
 - Parochial experience and pastoral skills

- It is often unwise to elect someone who has not been on the "front line" of parochial and pastoral work.

- Extent and nature of their formal education and monastic experience
- Approved list of vetted candidates will be distributed with a *curriculum vitae* for each so delegates can know exactly for whom they are voting.

- His Grace also hopes to arrange candidate visits to local parishes.
- Canonically speaking two dioceses cannot be combined unless both have a sitting bishop, so elections must happen one way or another.

- Special concerns of our diocese:

- Philadelphia is the 5th largest city in USA. Our diocese is losing 100 people per year; why?

- The new hierarch must have what it takes to represent the church in a major urban area.

- "Combining two small dioceses" is not a sufficient sole reason to combine the two Pennsylvania dioceses.

Other reports:

- Chancellor's report (See report)
- Dean's reports (See reports)
- Treasurer's report (See report)
- Auditors' report (See report)
- Metropolitan Council report (See report)
- A motion to accept the aforementioned reports was made by Fr. Nicholas Solak and seconded from the floor. **The motion passed.**

Remarks at close of 1st session:

- Fr. John Kowalczyk offered thanks to Hieromonk David (Mahaffey) for his many years of faithful service to this diocese and wished him the best for his upcoming move to Alaska.

- The assembly gave Hieromonk David a standing ovation.
- Free tickets to the enthronement of Metropolitan +TIKHON are being provided by an anonymous and very generous benefactor. Please inquire if interested.

- **The assembly broke for lunch at 12:27pm.**

- Diocesan council met during lunch.

The assembly reconvened at 1:45 pm.

Address by Bp. +MARK:

- See report/ address.
- We must move from a money/ dues mindset to an Orthodox Christian, biblical and authentically apostolic phronema.
- Give according to our gratitude for God's blessings towards us, not only according to what we think the Church needs to scrape by.
- 80% of college attendees who grew up in the Church don't return to the Church after graduation.
- We must not tolerate sub-pagan behavior at Church councils and parish assemblies. If people lose worldly jobs for behaving a certain way or treating others disrespectfully, how much higher should our standards be!

Communications and all other reports

- **See reports.**

New budget proposal

- See proposal online.
- Presented by Fr. Martin Browne, diocesan treasurer.
- Proposed increases:
 - \$5,000 increase in the annual episcopal salary
 - Clergy continuing education
 - Diocesan maintenance
 - Treasurer's salary
- Hieromonk David (Mahaffey) questioned where specifically the increases would go.
- Mark Linnehan proposed:
 - \$1,000 for missions
 - \$1,000 for clergy education
 - \$500 for clergy assistance
- Discussion ensued. Mark Linnehan made the formal motion, which was seconded from the floor. **The motion passed.**
- Matthew Lezinsky made the motion to accept the amended budget. The motion was seconded from the floor. The motion passed with one dissenting vote.
- **THE BUDGET WAS APPROVED.**

Old Business

- Fr. Steven Vernak questioned the diocese transitioning from dues to proportional giving.
- Bp. +MARK made a call for articles to be published in *Alive in Christ* on themes related to stewardship.
- The new issue of *Alive in Christ* is now available. Clergy, please take a batch for your parish before you leave. *Alive in Christ* is also available online at: <http://www.doepa.org/publications.html>

New Business

- Election of Diocesan Council:
 - **Philadelphia deanery:** Doug Yates, Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk
 - **Frackville deanery:** Elsie Herman, Fr. Timothy Hojnicky
 - **Wilkes-Barre deanery:** Fr. Vladimir Fetcho and John Buckeye
 - **At large:** Fr. Daniel Mathewson and Mark Linnehan
- Fr. Nicholas Solak expressed that we should try to have more diocesan disaster relief efforts ready for deployment in the event of future storms and similar events.
- Fr. Martin Watts was welcomed into the diocese.
- Mark Linnehan proposed an offering to the national Church: "Shoo away the dues system by increasing your personal giving to the national church."
- Fr. Joseph Martin called for the election of auditors:
 - Fr. Martin Watt (conditional pending completion of seminary studies)
 - Protodeacon. Sergei Kapral
 - David Yeosock

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY January 18, 2014 (Bethlehem or Wilmington)

The motion to adjourn was made by Fr. Daniel Kovalak and seconded from the floor.

The motion passed.

The meeting was closed at 3:35 pm with the singing of *It is truly meet*.

Respectfully submitted,
Daria Cortése, lay secretary
Fr. Jason Franchak, clergy secretary

PROVISIONALLY APPROVED:
