

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY, OCA

November 1, 2017

The clergy and lay delegates of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey met for the annual Diocesan Assembly [DA], at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Endicott, NY, on Wednesday, November 1, 2017. Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at 9:00 AM, and after brunch, prior to the Assembly beginning its proceedings at 1:00 PM, with the singing of “O Heavenly King”, the Very Reverend PAUL SHAFRAN gave a reflection on the anniversary of the 70th year of his priesthood.

Archpriest JOSEPH LICKWAR (Diocesan Chancellor, SS. Peter and Paul Church, Jersey City NJ) intoned “Memory Eternal” for all clergy and matushki who have reposed in the Lord since the last Assembly.

Appointments

Very Reverend JOSEPH LICKWAR announced the following officers appointed for the Diocesan Assembly:

V. Rev. JOSEPH LICKWAR, Clergy Chair

Matushka MARY BRETON (Diocesan Treasurer, Holy Annunciation Church, Brick NJ), Lay Chair

Rev. MATTHEW BROWN (Holy Apostles Church, Saddle Brook NJ), Secretariat

Archdeacon MICHAEL SUVAK (Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York NY), Secretariat

Mr. JAMES KORNAFEL (SS. Peter and Paul Church, South River NJ), Secretariat

V. Rev. STEPHEN EVANINA (St. Gregory the Theologian Church, Wappingers Falls NY),
Credentials Monitor

Rev. IGOR KSENIUK (St. John the Baptist Church, Passaic NJ), Ballot Tabulator

Rev. LEONID SCHMIDT (Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus NJ), Ballot Tabulator

Mr. LAWRENCE BARLOW (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Endicott, NY), Ballot Tabulator

Address of the Hierarchy

V. Rev. JOSEPH LICKWAR then introduced Archbishop MICHAEL, for whom “Eis Polla” was sung, and who presented his address to the Assembly.

Acceptance of Minutes and Report of Credentials Monitor

After the conclusion of his address Archbishop MICHAEL entertained a motion to accept the Minutes of the 2016 Diocesan Assembly. **V. Rev. GARY BRETON (Holy Annunciation Church, Brick NJ) made a motion to accept the 2016 Diocesan Assembly minutes. The motion was seconded by V. Rev. SOPHRONY ROYER (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Bayonne NJ).** Archbishop MICHAEL opened the floor to corrections or questions concerning last year's Assembly minutes. There were no comments. **The motion passed unanimously by vocal affirmation.**

V. Rev. JOSEPH LICKWAR then invited V. Rev. STEPHEN EVANINA, the Credentials Monitor, to give his report. V. Rev. STEPHEN EVANINA reported that there were 1 Hierarch, 47 clergy, and 35 lay delegates, and 8 observers for a total of 91 in attendance.

OLD BUSINESS

Report of the Treasurer

Matushka MARY BRETON, Diocesan Treasurer, offered a few words regarding her written report, which included the positive progress made in transitioning to the proportional giving model for parish financial obligations to the diocese. She then invited comments or questions. There were none.

Report of the Diocesan Auditors

V. Rev. JOSEPH LICKWAR called forward the Diocesan Auditors to make their presentation. Igumen JOSEPH (HOFFMAN) (Transfiguration Church, Pearl River NY) of the Diocesan Audit Committee reported that the members of the Committee had completed their audit and they found the finances of the Diocese in order. He then invited any comments or questions.

Invited Presentation: "By-Laws, Civil Courts, and the Church" – Honorable Judge E. R. Lanier, OCA General Counsel

V. Rev. JOSEPH LICKWAR introduced Judge E.R. LANIER, who spoke on his advisory involvement in recent revising of the Diocesan By-Laws, giving some history and explanation of that work and his endorsement of the adoption of the revised By-Laws.

Floor Open for All Other Reports

The following reports were distributed electronically prior to the DA; some were presented with highlights by the persons reporting:

- *Chancellor's Report by V. Rev. JOSEPH LICKWAR, Diocesan Chancellor*
- *New Jersey Deanery Report by V. Rev. GARY BRETON, Dean*
- *New York City Deanery Report by V. Rev. WIACZESLAW KRAWCZUK, Dean (Transfiguration Cathedral, Brooklyn NY)*

DRAFT PENDING APPROVAL

- *New York State Deanery Report by V. Rev. ALEXEY KARLGUT, Dean (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Endicott NY)*
- *Report on Missions by V. Rev. ALEXEY KARLGUT*
- *Metropolitan Council Representatives' Report by V. Rev. JOHN SHIMCHICK (Holy Cross Church, Medford NJ) and Mr. JAMES KORNAFEL*
- *Office of Communications Report by V. Rev. KEN JAMES STAVREVSKY (St. John the Baptist Church, Rochester NY), Director*
- *Report from the Commission on Liturgical Music by V. Rev. DANIEL SKVIR (Transfiguration Chapel, Princeton NJ), Matushka DOREEN BARTHOLOMEW (Our Lady of Kazan Church, Sea Cliff NY), and Mrs. CAROL WETMORE (Holy Trinity Church, Randolph NJ)*
- *Report from the Commission on Missions and Evangelism by V. Rev. JONATHAN IVANOFF, Chair (St. John the Theologian Church, Shirley NY)*
- *Department of Youth Ministry Report, submitted by Ms. DANIELLE GEEZA, Chair (Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ), read on her behalf by Matushka MARY BRETON*
- *Department of Religious Education Report by Matushka TAMARA COWAN, Chair (Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers, NY)*
- *Diocesan Ministry Network by Ms. DIANA PASCA, Director (Holy Cross Church, Medford NJ)*
- *Diocesan Publications Report by V. Rev. JOHN SHIMCHICK*
- *Report on Saint Andrew's Camp submitted by Ms. DARIA YORK (Director, St. Andrew's Camp), presented by Matushka TAMARA COWAN, Counselor-In-Training Director*

V. Rev. GARY BRETON, as Dean of New Jersey, gave special attention to the newly founded Saint Simon of Cyrene Mission, in New Brunswick NJ, speaking on its progress and its potential for outreach to African Americans. He then invited comments and questions on his deanery report. There were none.

V. Rev. WIACZESLAW KRAWCZUK, as Dean of New York City, opened the floor to comments on his deanery report. Rev. GREGORY WHITE (Holy Spirit Church, Wantage NJ) asked about parish participation in the New York City churches now that more people seem to have moved to the suburbs. Fr. Wiaczeslaw commented on the diversity of ethnic groups in the city parishes – with many more ethnicities represented which are not historically Orthodox than in years past.

V. Rev. ALEXEY KARLGUT, as Dean of New York State, gave a brief oral comment on his deanery report. Comments and questions were then entertained. There were none.

Igumen JOSEPH (HOFFMAN) gave a brief oral report as clergy representative to the Metropolitan Council on that body's work. He then invited comments and questions. V. Rev. PETER BAKTIS (Mother of God Church, Princeton NJ) asked whether there were any plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Autocephaly. Archbishop MICHAEL responded that he would bring it to the attention of the Holy Synod.

V. Rev. KEN JAMES STAVREVSKY gave a report from the Office of Communications. He brought special attention to what he needs from his fellow clergy to help get information disseminated quickly and spoke on upcoming projects planned for the website. The floor was then opened for questions and comments.

V. Rev. STEPHEN EVANINA asked if the Office of Communications could maintain an ongoing prayer list of the sick. Archbishop MICHAEL gave further instructions on how to submit prayer requests, news stories and other information to the Office of Communications for dissemination.

V. Rev. DANIEL SKVIR reported on the activities of the Commission on Liturgical Music and points of success this past year. There were no questions.

V. Rev. JONATHAN IVANOFF highlighted a few points from his written report on the Department of Missions and Evangelism, including the recent Akathist to the African Martyrs hosted by Saint Simon Mission, and the Brotherhood of Saint Moses the Black Conference hosted in October at Mother of God Church, Princeton NJ. He asked if there were questions. V. Rev. PETER BAKTIS noted that over 15,000 viewers accessed the Facebook Live Internet broadcasts of the Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black Conference.

Matushka TAMARA COWAN gave verbal comments on the activities and future plans of the Department of Christian Education, including a new event planned for 2018, the Bible Bowl; and a new curriculum for Church Schools called the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, which His Eminence wishes to introduce in 2018. The floor was then opened for comments and questions. Mr. HENRY DOTTERER (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse NY) encouraged parishes, and committed his own parish, to form teams for the first Bible Bowl.

V. Rev. JOHN SHIMCHICK gave his report on Diocesan Publications, speaking about the upcoming issue of *Jacob's Well* and about the continually expanding collection of video and audio interviews with clergy and laypersons on the Diocesan Website, entitled "Leaving A Legacy Of Faith". Questions and comments were invited. There were none.

Matushka TAMARA COWAN gave a summary of the report on Saint Andrew's Camp and encouraged the assembly to continue its support of the camp. There were no questions.

Matushka MARY BRETON asked for a motion to accept the reports. A motion was made by Matushka SHIRLEY LICKWAR (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Jersey City NJ) and was seconded by Deacon JOHN HOLODUEK (Holy Apostles Church, Saddle Brook NJ). It passed unanimously by vocal acclamation.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation on "Protect My Ministry"

Rev. LEONID SCHIMDT presented on his new role as the Coordinator of PSP Compliance for the Diocese and reviewed the background check requirements for clergy and laity as stipulated by the OCA. He then opened the floor for questions.

V. Rev. DAVID GARRETSON asked about vouching for church workers who have been at the parish for many years. Father Leonid replied that there is a form which can be used for the rector to vouch for a longtime parish leader; that form is an appendix to the Abbreviated PSPs on the OCA website.

Rev. GREGORY WHITE asked if retired clergy need background checks. Father Leonid replied, yes.

Rev. VASIL DUBEE (St. Innocent of Alaska Mission, Oneonta NY) asked what a clergyman ought to do if someone run through the sex offender registry comes back with a record. Father Leonid said that the rector should call him.

Deacon JOHN HOLODUEK asked about minors who sing in the choir; how are they protected? Father Leonid replied that any paid choir director needs to have a background check.

Rev. THEODORE GREGORY (Holy Trinity Church, Rahway NJ) asked about the need of a background check for a temporary paid choir director. Father Leonid suggests that person have a background check done.

V. Rev. KEN JAMES STAVREVSKY asked for clarification on unpaid choir directors who work with youth who sing, and other Youth Workers. Archbishop Michael said that these should have background checks as they work exclusively or largely with children.

V. Rev. VOLODYMYR ZABLOTSKY (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Buffalo NY) asked about various levels of background checks that are inquired about by church insurers. Father Leonid said that in our system, there is only one type of background check that is used. He can be contacted for further details.

Adoption of the 2018 Budget

Matushka MARY BRETON reviewed the proposed budget. She gave special attention to the 2% reduction in the Diocese's commitment of financial support of the Central Church Administration and the overall successful transition of our parishes to proportional giving in their support of the Diocese. She also emphasized that the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors funds all the departmental programs.

V. Rev. DAVID GARRETSON clarified that we are not passing a deficit budget in the sense that we are projecting unrealistic income. Rather, in past years, we have consistently under-spent compared to projected expenses and may reasonably anticipate doing so again in 2018. Matushka Mary added that the expense categories and projected expenses need to remain as they are because they fund essential ministries.

V. Rev. DAVID GARRETSON made a motion to accept the budget for 2018 as proposed. V. Rev. ALEXEY KARLGUT seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Archbishop MICHAEL expressed his concern for the low level of Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors donations and emphasized the importance of the DDB Program in funding the Diocesan programs. He encouraged the clergy to promote donations to the fund.

Adoption of the Revised Diocesan By-Laws

V. Rev. ALEXEY KARLGUT made a few select comments on the By-Laws. He continued to thank those who were involved in revising the By-Laws. Rev. JAMES WORTHINGTON (Member, Diocesan By-Laws

Committee) read the Proposal for the Revision of the By-Laws for adoption. **Rev. JAMES WORTHINGTON made a motion to accept the proposed Revised Diocesan By-Laws. The motion was seconded by V. Rev. PETER BAKTIS. It passed unanimously.**

Appointments by the Archbishop

Archbishop MICHAEL reappointed V. Rev. JOSEPH LICKWAR as Chancellor, V. Rev. DAVID COWAN (Personal Secretary to the Archbishop; Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers NY) as Vice-Chancellor, Matushka MARY BRETON as Treasurer, Rev. MATTHEW BROWN as Diocesan Secretary.

His Eminence appointed Rev. LEONID SCHMIDT and Rev. MATTHEW MARKEWICH (Christ the Savior Church, Ballston Lake NY) to the Presbyters' Council. V. Rev. STEPHEN EVANINA is stepping down from the Diocesan Council. In his stead Rev. IGOR KSENIUK is appointed to the Diocesan Council as Clergy Representative from the New Jersey Deanery.

The Archbishop announced that he has appointed Matushka TAMARA COWAN as Chair of the Christian Education Department, and Ms. DANIELLE GEEZA as Chair of the Youth Ministry Department,

Archbishop Michael also reiterated the appointment made earlier in the year of Deacon STEPHAN KARLGUT as Deacon to the Archbishop.

Motion to Close

Matushka MARY BRETON entertained a motion to adjourn the Assembly. **A motion to adjourn the 2017 Diocesan Assembly was made by V. Rev. VOLODYMYR ZABLITSKY and seconded by Rev. VASIL DUBEE.** The Diocesan Assembly adjourned with the singing of "It is Truly Meet" at 5:11 PM.