

MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT

October 2020

Submitted by Joseph Kormos

Key focus areas of the committee are:

- Provide support for existing missions
- Identify fruitful effective locations for future mission plants
- Examine re-planting/renewal efforts associated with existing heritage/legacy parishes within the Diocese.
- Build a sense of mission in existing parishes in the diocese.
- Provide parish development support for existing parishes in the diocese.

The Diocesan Mission Committee includes Gator Greenwill and Erik Hjelle and Frs. Joel Weir, Joel Wilson, Elijah Mueller and Chris Maciolek and Thomas Mueller. Joe Kormos is facilitator and consultant to the committee.

Two online meetings of this committee were held since the last Diocesan Assembly with the last being on January 30 2020. A meeting scheduled for March 26 was cancelled in the midst of the flurry of Corona virus closing/re-opening discussions. Since that time ongoing work of the full committee has been limited.

Since October 2019 (Last report)

Fargo Mission Becomes Parish

Since the last report Holy Resurrection community in Fargo ND (*20 mile radius population ~120,000*) has been designated a “parish” after being originally established 10 years ago. (Per OCA.org). This is the first “graduation” from Mission to parish status in the Diocese in a long time.

Mission Location Explorations

Farmington MO Exploration Ended

An ongoing exploration into the viability of planting a mission in Farmington MO, not far from a dormant parish in Des Loges MO was ended after efforts to attract interested parties via an Akathist services and a set of introductory talks yielded little interest. The Diocese received a letter from the remaining Des Loges parishioners asking to close the parish.

On Going Explorations

Diocesan efforts exploring potential for planning missions/future parishes are ongoing in one form or another in the following areas:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Exploration led by</i>
Aurora IL	300,000 (5 mile radius)	St. Joseph’s parish Wheaton
Bismarck ND	120,000 (20 mile radius)	Minn. Deanery
Muncie/ Hartford City IN	222,00 (20 mile radius)	Fr. Joel Weir
South Bend IN	523,000 (20 mile radius)	Fr. Joel Weir; Benjamin Cabe

Financial support, available clergy, support from existing parishes (inspiring parishes/parishioners with a sense of mission) and an effective methodology for early exploration and momentum/awareness building are among the issues affecting various/most efforts.

Other Efforts

Diocese of South Investment/Loan Program

A teleconference was held with Noel Bush of the Diocese of the South. on a Diocese of the South program in which they loan money to missions/parishes attempting to buy build property churches. This has sparked further discussion on establishing a similar effort in the Midwest Diocese.

Conferences and Conversations

The Greek Archdiocese held an evangelization conference in Columbus OH in early 2020 a portion of which dealt with approaches for establishing missions that grow into parishes . Joe Kormos attended the conference. Conversations on approaches were also held with the OCA's Archdiocese of Washington, the Antiochian Archdiocese and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church USA.

The *Orthodox Christian Leadership Initiative* held its recent conference online with Kormos as a speaker.

Parish Development Forum Online

The Diocese of the Midwest co-sponsors the Parish Development Forum (formerly the Small Parish Forum) along with the Archdiocese of Western PA and the Bulgarian Diocese.

Due to Corona virus, the approach for the 2020 Forum was completely reworked from an in-person to an online event. Theme; agenda structure, hosting platforms, session length, format, style, logo, registration mechanism, attendance limits, cost and session topics were all re-defined.



The online version of the Parish Development Forum was held from 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM on July 9 using the ubiquitous “Zoom” with the theme “*The Orthodox Parish Charting a Course in Challenging Times*”. There were 140 registrants –more than double previous in person sessions. Attendees represented every OCA Diocese as well as the Greek, Antiochian, Serbian, Ukrainian (US and Canada) and Coptic Orthodox jurisdictions. The Midwest diocese was represented by 27 attendees.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, the keynote speaker, was joined on the program by 18 other contributors. Topics included: Re-establishing Community and Fellowship; Using Our Gifts to Expand Ministries; What have we learned?/What should continue; Leading Online Classes; Healthy pastors in Challenging Times, Ministry of Music; Coming back to Church – What are your concerns?

Materials can be found at <https://www.ocadwpa.org/2020parishforumonline>

Consulting/Coaching Assistance

Parish Development assistance has been provided for particular Diocesan parishes at the direction of His Eminence.