

MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT

October 2021

Submitted by Joseph Kormos

Key focus areas of the committee are:

- Provide support for existing missions
- Identify 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.

Committee Expanded

The Diocesan Mission committee includes Gator Greenwill and Erik Hjelle and Frs. Joel Weir, Joel Wilson, Elijah Mueller and Thomas Mueller. Joe Kormos is facilitator and consultant to the committee. In the past year three members were added: Larissa Thornton, (St Mark's Rochester) David Short St Paul's Dayton) and Fr John Kennerk (Holy Assumption Canton.)

Five online meetings of this committee were held since the last Diocesan Assembly.

To assist in the orientation of new (and existing) committee members a written committee charter was created along with status summaries of Missions. To better understand facilities, ministerial, clergy and financial status and needs at missions meetings now include live reports from clergy and lay members of various missions.

Lake Geneva Chapel Elevated to Mission Status

Holy Theophany community Walworth (Lake Geneva) WI has existed as an outreach of Ss. Cyril and Methodius parish. Over time attendance and membership has been growing. In late 2020 the chapel community inquired as to what it would take to be elevated to mission status. After various administrative, ministry related and financial interactions with the mission committee His Eminence blessed this community to become Holy Theophany Mission.

Mission Location Explorations

Diocesan efforts exploring potential for planning missions/future parishes are ongoing and progressing nicely 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 First outreach liturgy recently held
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
St Michael's St Louis MO	(Existing parish; renewal effort)	Fr. Mathew McDonald

Plans and Priorities

His Eminence has asked the committee to identify and develop priorities that turn into plans and costs for tools, methods, services, support, assistance etc. for strengthening the Diocese' mission program.

These plans can be used to provide well defined requests and justifications for the use of Diocesan Special Project fund and to provide priority proposals to be used by potential future Diocesan development efforts.

This planning is ongoing with over ten (large and small) ideas having been identified. Two projects –a mission operating manual/ resources directory and informational videos on the Diocesan mission effort - are under further development.

Capital Projects

One of the critical needs of missions is financing for capital projects. The mission committee is exploring this in two ways.

OCCIF (Orthodox Christian Capital Investment Fund) –Large Capital Projects

OCCIF is an outgrowth of the mission efforts of the OCA’s Diocese of the West. It is a registered 501c3 entity and has strong financial status. In plain terms OCCIF is essentially a “friendly bank” - making loans to Orthodox parishes and missions for capital programs. It offers tools for parishes to evaluate reasonableness of loan requests, a clear structure for handling loans, no requirements for counter signatories and a smaller spread of loan to interest rate than most banks.

Online meetings have been held with the Diocesan Administration, the Mission Committee and OCCIF. *Pending endorsement from the Diocesan Council* it is probable that a relationship between the Diocese and OCCIF can be established to benefit Diocesan missions. This could take the form of the Diocese investing certain funds in OCCIF, a recommendation for parish to consider investments as well.

Modest Capital Projects

For smaller capital projects the Diocese has considered partial (matching) funding for specific mission projects from the Diocese’ special projects fund. Discussions are ongoing concerning a critical project need for St. Nicholas Mission Lawrence KS.

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.

Once again the Forum was held online in July 2021. 120 attendees represented every OCA Diocese as well as the Greek, Antiochian, Serbian, Ukrainian (US and Canada). Many attendees were from the Midwest Diocese.



With the theme *Awakening to Opportunity* feature speakers included Fr. John Jillions (*Opportunity and Opposition: Learning From Jesus and the Apostolic Church*) and Dr. Nathan Jacobs (*Engaging Spiritual But Not Religious -the ‘Nones’*). Remaining content included three tracks: “Personal Spiritual Resilience”; “The Back-to-Better Parish” and “Being Fishers of Men”.

Materials can be found at

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1BPQ6h7LZkvJuGSwKavS49OF-GPUN1TRq>