

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST
Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church, Mogadore, Ohio • 7 October 2024

I. OPENING PRAYER.

The meeting opened with the singing of “O Heavenly King” and blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop DANIEL, at 1:15pm.

ATTENDANCE.

- A.** Officers: His Eminence, Archbishop DANIEL; Archpriest Herman Kincaid, Chancellor; Priest Esteban Vazquez, Vice Chancellor; Priest Nikolai Lochmatow, Secretary.
- B.** Clergy Delegates: Archpriests Christopher Rowe, Zachariah Trent; Priests Jacob Van Sickle, Basil Ferguson, William Rettig;
- C.** Lay Delegates: Angela Zekios, Mary Ann Bobulsky.
- D.** Metropolitan Council Representatives: Basil Kochan
- E.** Deans: Archpriests Alexander Kuchta, Nicholas Wyslutsky, Steven Kostoff, Timothy Sawchak, Dusan Koprivica, Paul Wesche.
- F.** Guests: Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Subdeacon Dimitri Pletz, Alice Woog.
- G.** Absent: Archpriest John Baker, Rob Koncel, Lisa Franks, Elizabeth Lemaster, Mark Phillip.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING.

APPROVED.

III. OPERATIONAL REPORTS.

- A.** Archbishop DANIEL: Served at Saint Nicholas in Mogadore for the weekend, glad to meet with everyone. Offered members a preview of his opening address for the assembly, emphasizing statistics and improvements in diocese during the past year. His Eminence discussed positive travels to parishes, increased enrollment from the diocese to seminary studies, and future vocations. A three-day retreat was held in Chicago over the summer for current seminarians to form community and deepen their commitment to the diocese. Introduced Fr. Herman Kincaid as Chancellor, Fr. Alexander Rentel as guest. Archbishop is grateful for staff, is able to focus on pastoral and archpastoral needs of the diocese. Upcoming Canon Law conference for priests regarding spiritual courts. Welcome to Dr Alice Woog, who will present on restructuring of diocesan office.
- B.** Chancellor: Newly assigned, blessed to have this role and work with His Eminence. 23 visits to parishes since July 1. Goal is to offer priests support and help them meet challenges in parishes. Recognizes Fr. Esteban’s efforts in establishing new policies for the diocese. Designing and implementing structure. Deacon Nikola Tambur as bookkeeper. Fr. Herman as chancellor and Fr. Nikolai as secretary. Communications channels will be addressed during this Diocesan Assembly. Grateful for new infrastructure.
- C.** Vice Chancellor: 100% turnover in diocesan personnel as of today – Subdeacon Dimitry Pletz as treasurer. We are in a learning curve, but the business of the chancery is getting done.
 - a. Q: Fr. Jacob Van Sickle – Job descriptions? VC: Yes, and will be published.
- D.** Treasurer Report – submitted by Rob Koncel. No questions. Motion to present budget to Diocesan Assembly body: Fr. Jacob Van Sickle moves to present, all concur.

E. Metropolitan Council: Basil Kochan. No updates at this time. More unified approach to Pension Plan throughout the OCA.

- a. Archbishop Daniel – Diocese will be participating as well, based on information from Michael Steiglitz.
- b. Archpriest Alexander Rentel – participated in pension plan meetings. Everything was clearly laid out and discussed. Numbers of participation are increasing. Diocese of the South promises compliance by January 2025. All institutions, including seminaries and monasteries are expected to participate. Pension board will report to Metropolitan Council by end of this week. Mark Hamilton is new general counsel, who has a pension specialist in his law practice.

F. Communications. See written report.

G. Youth. See written report.

H. Saint Macrina’s Institute. See written report.

IV. DEANERY REPORTS.

A. Chicago. See written report.

B. Cleveland. See written report. Welcome to Cleveland Deanery for the assembly. Thank you to Father Nicholas for hosting.

C. Indianapolis. See written report. Lots of growth. Potential new mission in northern Kentucky in coordination with Diocese of the South.

D. Kansas City. See written report. His Eminence blessed new chapel at Reconciliation Services, they now have new weekday Liturgy.

E. Detroit. See written report.

F. Minneapolis. See written report. Cornucopia parish showing signs of life.

V. OLD BUSINESS.

A. Cemetery issue at Madison IL, need legal counsel to vet proposal. Mark Phillip looking for suitable counsel.

VI. GUEST: Archpriest Alexander Rentel, OCA Chancellor

- i. Office of Pastoral Life is considered for operation as a full-time office. Received two grants from Lily Foundation. Need staff to fulfill them. Will be presented to Metropolitan Council this week. Office of Pastoral Life will need to do some fundraising.
- ii. Preparing for 2025 All American Council – Phoenix, AZ. Updates to youth program. Celebration of the glorification of Saint Olga of Alaska. Remains to be exhumed on November 16. Glorification to be in Alaska, two events.
- iii. 100 years since repose of Patriarch St. Tikhon.
- iv. Metropolitan asking church to reflect on its current presence. Stability, growth, how to move forward. Seeking text that will inspire reflection.

VII. NEW BUSINESS.

A. Subdeacon Dimitri Pletz – concurrence required on Archbishop’s appointment to position of treasurer. Subdeacon Dimitri presents his background and resume. Motion: Fr. Christopher. All in favor.

B. Council membership vacancy – Lisa Franks unable to continue. Three out of five vacancies will be addressed during the Diocesan Assembly.

- C.** Fr. Esteban – Council must decide rules for alternates, who exist in our bylaws but not in parliamentary procedure. Runner-up of each election at every Diocesan Assembly to serve as alternate, but only until next Assembly. All in favor.
- D.** Committee appointments by His Eminence. Motion: Fr. Basil. All in favor.
- E.** His Eminence – recommends having 2025 Diocesan Assembly in Phoenix concurrent with All American Council.

VIII. DATE OF NEXT DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING.

December 9-10, in Chicago, Illinois. Fr. Esteban – can the December meeting be held remotely? All agree.

IX. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Basil Kochan. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm with the singing of “It is truly meet” and a blessing by His Eminence.

Respectfully submitted,
Priest Nikolai Lochmatow, Diocesan Secretary