



The Fellowship of Saint John the Divine Diocese of Worcester and New England

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

Diocese of Worcester Delegates Meeting – Minutes from September 30, 2006

Secretary's Report

Fr. Leonard motions to accept sec. Notes, Bob Laham seconds

Treasurer's report

Rich passes around revised budget and a transaction report from last September through today. We currently have \$6,208.66 in the account. Talks about how much different sized parishes have to pay. Large=500, small=300. He will be sending dues notices in October. Bob Laham asks what the amount was from the parish life conference. Jamil clarifies that this amt was based on the previous year's intake at the conference. Bob Laham asks about the scholarship fund. Jamil explained the scholarship process for graduating seniors. We sent out 27 applications for names that we had and only received 3 applications.

Motion to accept the treasurer's report, Bob Laham so moved, Elizabeth Votruba accepts. Motion passes

Young Adult Retreat

Jamil talks about how he hopes everyone received notices in the parishes. There was a low turnout from our parishes. 85 people total, many drove in/flew in. As successful as the conference was, he was disappointed that we did not have more people from our parishes. We try to come up with activities and programs that benefit our parishes. He urged all of us to encourage those in our parish to get involved because the programs can be very beneficial.

Mission Trip to Alaska

There is a National initiative to promote more mission work. Fr. Michael was asked to talk about the trip. The purpose was to organize and run a church camp. As opposed to the diocesan/AV camp format, the church in Alaska is looking to initiate something. Due to the geographical structure of the diocese, they organized the camp in a village on Spruce Island, near Kodiak. The camp was so successful, the Dean of St Herman's Seminary and Bishop Nikolai are planning 3 sep. camps this summer. We contacted Fr John Abdalah and have submitted a feature article for the word magazine. Fr. Michael's personal journal has been posted on the Fellowship of St. John website online. Next year there will be a mission trip that is sponsored by the fellowship. This year we can promote mission trips through OCMC or other organizations. Fr. John asked about what they did and Fr. Michael explained (notes can be found on the St. John website).

Lynn Hajjar Asked Fr. Michael if there are more local mission trips. They've been working with OYO and OCMC. There's no reason we can't plan something of our own for the summer and do it.

Jamil reiterates that the goal of NAC is more mission work. Whether it's evangelizing or just helping those in need (evangelization through our actions) is the number one more important thing that we could be doing

2006 Conference Report

Elizabeth Votruba presented. Conference was success, see handout for details

Fr. Isaac asked what the reasoning was for separating the luncheon back to the ladies only. Liz said that the ladies enjoy having their own thing, especially since not many other people other than ladies showed up.

2007 Conference Report

We have secured the Radisson in Plymouth for the weekend of June 28 – July 1st. The Diocese will be the overseers of the conference. We're asking that there be participation in the planning process from every parish because of the situation of no one wanting to run it. We think that there will be more turnout from ALL the parishes as opposed to just from the host parish. We have one co-chairperson (Paul Nahass, St Mary Cambridge), currently searching for a second chairperson.

Fr. Isaac is asking for when more info will be available about what's going on. Jamil says that we should have already had a committee together but we still don't have one. Lynn asked if we will be assigning the different activities. Jamil wants it to be a dialogue, i.e. who wants to help with this. The Proceeds from the event will benefit the mission fund for the diocese (both the physical missions and the mission work). Jamil wants a theme for the conference. Instead of an ad book, maybe we can do a diocesan business directory, like a yellow pages for the diocese. We're going to give each parish a challenge/target to raise a certain amount of money for the business. Fr. Dionysius is asking if we are going to limit it to just orthodox peoples' businesses. Fr. Michael said he would have no problem for it. Lynn asks about the personal pages that are usually in the ad book. Jamil says that they were planning on having sep. sections for this stuff. Rich liked the white pages idea. Fr. John asked if we could contact the chairpersons from the last 5 years for their experience and also to act as a liaison for the local churches

2008 Conference Report

Fr Isaac talking about the 2008 conference committee. Salwa Khoury is chairing it. They're in talks with the Providence Marriot. The hotel is almost booked, the committee is up and running. Bob asked if we have a rate yet. Fr Isaac is saying they are still bargaining, trying to get it as close to \$99 as possible. June 26-29, 2008.

Footlamps

The job has passed from Sonia Belcher to Ghada Khouri. The first workshop will be on Nov. 11th at St. Mary Pawtucket with Fr. Eugen Pentiu. He will be talking about Man's Destiny according to Holy Scripture. The flyers have gone out to every parish. As always, we will be recording these and they are posted online. Fr. Isaac is saying that, at the deanery meeting, the clergy talked about canceling vespers on those nights. Vespers would be held at the workshop before the talk. This would hopefully increase attendance. The host parishes are responsible for a coffee fellowship hour after the workshop. Jamil thanked the deanery for their support

Diocesan Calendar

The point is to help to know what other parishes are doing. It's good to support other parishes' activities. If it's a big event (ie diocesan delegates meeting or bishop's visit), we should support it. You can have the secretary at the parish help with that. Jamil and I will be working with that. This will also hopefully prevent conflicts between different parishes. There are about 300 people on the email list.

There are different people who have diff. Ideas about what delegates meeting day should be about. Jamil sees it as a day when all of our groups (parish councils, choirs, SOYO, etc) can come together for a full day for meetings, workshops, social events and other things. There's a lot that we can be doing to help strengthen our communities. They should all start with liturgy or matins followed by meetings, lunch, some kind of activity, vespers and a Footlamps workshop. They've been struggling figuring out how to do this for the past couple of years. The sacred music workshop was postponed, but could be combined with these activities. Jamil sees this as bringing all of us together. Jamil asked for other ideas/opinions. Then he asked if we just want to stay with the morning activities as they have been. Fr. Leonard really likes the idea of a full day. Rich says that without some kind of social activity or something, it just becomes a meeting in the next meeting. Fr. Michael says that hopefully by getting more groups involved, we can increase interest in the other organizations. Lynn was worried that people might be in all sort of groups at once. Fr. Isaac suggested that we make the meetings in a central location to make travel easier and shorter. Jamil says that all the groups need to make the decision as to the dates and location. January 20th is the winter meeting date meeting in Dedham.

Jamil was talking about the miscommunication about today. Jamil was hoping that there was a precedent set that we have a liturgical service, then the meetings, then lunch at a minimum. About a month ago, someone had made a decision that we couldn't do it here. Then Jamil talked to Fr. Ed and found there was no problem so we came back to Lawrence. Fr. John asked for email reminders so that he could forward the info on. Fr. Isaac, was told that the meeting was going to be rescheduled at his church. Jamil and Fr. John will talk later about what kind of service we will be having in January.

Executive Board and Leadership Crisis

Jamil was hoping to step down in June because there was no one to take over. We need more support both during these events and meetings to be able to have some type of constituency that can work their way up and become leaders in this group. We don't currently have a vice-president. We have some committees that do some good work. We need more leaders on the local level. Whether it's a Fellowship of St. John the Divine or a just a local young adult ministry group, or the parish councils, we need more people! We need to bring these groups to have a voice in the fellowship.

Bob was asking who are the delegates to the Fellowship of St. John the Divine. Jamil is saying we need more participation. Bob is saying that we need to change the rules to gain more participation. Jamil is saying we need more participation before we can change the rules. Jamil has been asking for 3 years to bring people to the meetings. He just wants some people here. He's asked for those people to participate. Bob says we need every group of the parish needs to be represented.

Jamil says that it's not up to him to go to the parish and then continue to do the work to get more people. Bob is saying that the people feel neglected. They don't even know what it is. Lynn was saying that she used the Word magazine article to explain this. Liz suggests that we send a letter to the clergy to put in the bulletin to advertise the events. Fr. Michael said that this would be great to have that diocesan day where we have our Fellowship of St. John the Divine meeting in the morning and then go to the breakout sessions afterwards (choir, parish councils, etc).

Lynn was talking about how she is trying to do all the things together (ladies, SOYO, fellowship) in the church. Rich suggested that maybe we have the fellowship meeting first then the ladies. Fr. Michael says that we're working on more of a definition on a national level. Fr. Isaac: Could we accept to continue as interim officers at least until the summer? Jamil says it would be good to have some more helpers. Lynn suggests that Jamil make a list of what he needs help with and send it out so we can help fill those needs. Lynn says she has people that love to do things but they hate meetings. They would rather like to "do." Lynn was suggesting that we have activities afterwards (ie boxes to Iraq) to draw people to the meetings.

Motion to adjourn by Fr. John. No second but we adjourned anyway.

Submitted by George Matook