

**ANNUNCIATION / ΕΒΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΝΟΡΙΑ
ΕΒΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ**

Rev. John L. Johns, Presiding Priest



Monday, February 17, 2025

Dear Beloved Faithful:

We cordially invite you to participate in our Spring General Assembly on Sunday, March 9, 2025, at 12 p.m.

The Spring Parish Assembly is our opportunity to review last year's accomplishments and coordinate our new year's goals. Enclosed, you will find the following:

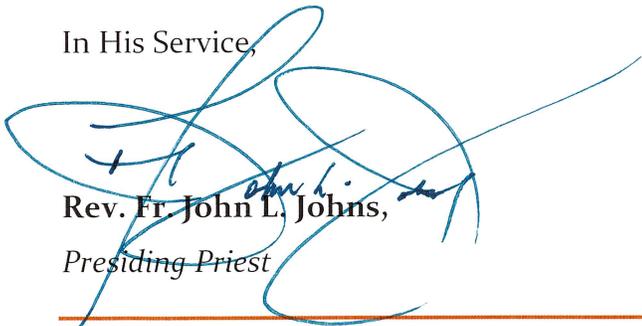
1. The Meeting Agenda
2. The Fall 2024 Assembly Minutes

A quorum of 30 individual Annunciation stewards in good standing is required to convene the meeting. Per the Archdiocese Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) and Annunciation Parish By-Laws, to vote at a parish assembly:

- I. Members of Annunciation who fulfilled their 2024 Stewardship Pledge but have not pledged for 2025 shall submit a 2025 Stewardship Pledge *on or before the Assembly's Day* (Sunday, March 9, 2025).
- II. Members of Annunciation who did not fulfill their 2024 stewardship shall complete their 2024 Stewardship Pledge "with a payment" and submit their 2025 Stewardship Pledge by Sunday, March 2, 2025.

We look forward to your participation in our Spring Parish General Assembly.

In His Service,


Rev. Fr. John L. Johns,
Presiding Priest


Mr. Peter Gouris,
Parish Council President

GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF PHILADELPHIA
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΕΙΑΣ
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7921 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA, 19027, USA.
Tel.: 215-635-0316. Fax: 215-635-8301. www.anngoc.org

ANNUNCIATION/EVANGELISMOS SPRING PARISH ASSEMBLY

Sunday, March 9, 2025

AGENDA

1. Invocation
2. Call to Order
3. Quorum
4. Election of Assembly Chairman
5. Appointment of Assembly Secretary
6. Approval of Minutes of the Fall 2024 Assembly
7. +Fr. John's Pastoral Report
8. President's Report
9. Treasurer's report – 2024 full-year financial statements
10. Parish Council Reports
 - a. Stewardship – 2024 EOY Report and 2025 Outlook
 - b. Capital Improvements and Betterments
11. Old Business
12. New Business
 - a. Presentation of 2025 Amended Budget for Approval
 - b. Other
13. Announcements
 - a. Great Lent (starts March 3) and Pascha (April 20)
 - b. Annunciation Feast Day and March 25 Celebrations
 - c. 2025 OPA Festival Dates and Scope
14. Adjournment
15. Benediction

Parish General Assembly Minutes
Monday, October 21, 2024

1. **Invocation**, Fr. John Johns
2. **Call to Order**, Review meeting procedures
3. **Quorum** - the meeting successfully reached a quorum with 30 attendees online and in person.
4. **Assembly Chairman**: Peter Gouris elected and accepted. Nominated by Mitch Papakirk. Seconded by Jim Papacostas.
5. Appointment of **Assembly Secretary**: Jim Papacostas, who accepted.
6. **Approval of Minutes of Spring 2024 General Assembly**
Peter G. asked for approval. Motion to approve: Mitch. Seconded: Dean. No additional comments from the attendees.
7. **Fr. John Johns' Pastoral Report**
 - He extended his Eminence's wishes to our community at this meeting. His Eminence has announced a new patron saint: St. Iakovos of Evia. Father John encouraged the attendees to learn about this modern-day saint and his life, including visions of being visited by St. Paraskevi and details surrounding Iakovos' recent canonization. His feast day is Nov 22.
 - **Youth ministries** are extremely vibrant. A wonderful new team has been assembled. Within Greek School's youth ministry, a recent youth event led by Effie Patounas was attended by 75-80 children and parents. I am excited about the energy. Greek School, headed by Debbie Sourias, is also highly successful.
 - **Outreach/philanthropy** is strong. Philoptochos had an excellent attendance for a recent speaker, Kelly Gallagher, CEO of a nonprofit who ensures that mothers whose infants are in the NICU are supported. Philoptochos purchased technology called Angel Eyes which was placed in the NICU. Great ways to support community outreach. Homeless, Mathew 25 continues to do annual work. Mathew 25 turkey drive. Homeless is going to serve the homeless again. List of yearly engagements.
 - Church attendance is good, but many are arriving late. Father John stressed the importance of timely arrival.
 - There will be no bible study this year. Father is now in charge of the Delaware Valley Youth Commission (DVYC), so he will not be able to dedicate the prep time necessary for bible study. He'd like to offer the

sessions again and will revisit this after he gets his bearings with the new responsibilities.

- A DVYC focus is a plan on how to successfully encourage our youth to participate in archdiocesan youth camps in the summer or fall.
- George Dalagelis will offer a class on church history and will announce this in the bulletin to determine a good evening to present the class. Father has reviewed the syllabus and approved it.
- Finally, we have ongoing struggles with meeting our expenses through stewardship. He stressed the importance of stewardship. Preaching to the choir about this since the people in attendance are active stewards. We have a lot of participation, but it hasn't translated into monetary support.
- In closing, Father is grateful to serve this community and hopes to be here for many years.

8. President's Report, Mr. Dean Dalson

- Dean thanked all those in attendance and thanked them for their continued engagement/participation/generosity.
- A few things to highlight:
The impact on our communities and those around us is substantial.
This year our Annual Report will include:
 - Donations from Philoptochos, Mathew 25, and Homeless Ministry.
 - OPA Festival tips have gone to the Ukrainian relief fund, Cheltenham EMS, Jenkintown food pantry, and, most recently, the Cheltenham Police Department. The police department used the donation to outfit a van that would provide several community-benefiting services.
 - Youth programs are exhibiting lots of energy. Church attendees have been impressed by the number of kids present. Our parish has many kids 15 and below.
 - We also have financial challenges: two OPAs with two nights of cold and rain making it difficult to meet the budget. We tried a dollar-a-day campaign so that we didn't need to plan to have a fall festival this year. However, although 93 people participated in the dollar-a-day initiative, about 200 families did not. If they had, we would have had 70K more dollars to work with and we'd be in good shape. Please encourage people to participate!

Some final remarks from Dean:

- The vast amount of the OPA work falls on the same 20-30 people all the time, and it is hard. However, having younger people take leadership roles is a good sign for the future. One of our goals is to be financially independent from the OPA festivals. We are gearing up to set the stage for a good, strong festival this spring.
- For the 200 people who haven't participated in the dollar-a-day initiative, let's encourage them to do so.
- Our biggest constraint is space. Having appropriate facilities for our growing youth is critical and we need to embark on critical upgrades.

Dean also commented that greeting parishioners at the close of the service has proven to be a very positive experience.

Peter thanked Dean for his service to the community.

9. Treasurer's Report, Mr. Mitch Papakirk

- 2024 Profit and Loss Statement presented.
- Operating side: Project expenses are about \$30K over last year. Roof leaks, upgrades, security. Church activities are up 11.2%, but the projected deficit of ~\$50K is an increase of ~\$15K over last year's deficit.
- 2024 Estimate vs 2024 Budget (slide 2). The Stewardship budget is 396K, but we're at 343K.
- Final slide presented: 2024 Balance Sheet.
- **Please review Mitch's presentation for the full details of these slides.**

Peter thanked Mitch for his work.

Olga asked, "Have we considered using dollar-a-day as another means of fundraising without stewardship?" Dean responded that new ideas are welcomed.

10. Stewardship Committee Report - Mr. Paul Fisfis

- Some stats: Usually, about 300 stewards donate. Year to date: 281 stewards this year. Last year: 309 total stewards. ~\$309K pledged so far this year. Last year ~\$314K. 93 stewards increased a dollar a day. Of 231 stewards, 93 participated in a dollar-a-day increase. The total increase in pledges was ~\$24K. Some people decreased pledges, driving the net

increase to about \$104 per steward instead of the needed \$300. Also, 70 stewards who pledged last year have not pledged yet this year.

- Paul showed the communication to go out soon, with a theme focusing on Protecting and Nurturing the Church. The theme comes from two feast days this month: Holy Protection of the Theotokos (veil of protection) and St. Demetrios (protecting and guarding the church). We still need ~\$270K from pledges to meet the pledge goal of \$580K.

11. Old Business

Dean Dalson proceeded to discuss a few items:

Chris Papadeas, Chris Avgiris, and Yanni Grigorakakis chaired the May 2024 OPA. They implemented extensive social media marketing and invested in equipment, which will be useful next year.

Challenges:

- Weather. Wreaked havoc. In May, Friday was washed out, lost about \$40K in revenue.
- Aging parishioners. Fortunately, we had lots of younger people take on responsibilities.
- Cooking skills/recipes need to be passed down to the next generation.
- Layout. The layout amplified the Sound. People wanted to stick around, but the music was way too loud, and people left the event.

Fall one-day OPA event as an experiment. Thank you to everyone. We wanted to see if we could manage operating in one day. Could we drive a certain amount of business?

Lessons learned:

- Took so much work to do it.
- Weather was a failure.
- Interest of the neighborhood is there, but we marketed strictly using social media, and we know that we need a banner.
- Was there interest in even a small takeout menu? The event did not work out as hoped.

For our Spring 2025 OPA, we need to think through the date and stick to a consistent date so it's a yearly predictable date.

Facilities improvements: The biggest constraint is space. How do we satisfy longer-term needs?

Multiple phases presented. We want to initiate phase I, we kicked off the architectural phase already. Want to do the work during next summer.

Phase I slide:

- **Remodel main floor bathrooms.** We will have additional information sessions on Sundays. Need the following: fundraising committee, youth ministry committee for classroom concerns, interior design committee, construction management committee, disposition of antiquities. Need to determine how to remove these things. Books, icons, old furniture.
- **Relocate the entrance** from the side to the back wall (at the vestibule). Create a handicap accessible entrance. Reflective space, New bathrooms.
- **Renovate the main hallway, offices.**
- **Renovate the classroom level.** We have 71 kids, but don't have enough space for the kids. New storage space in the far end of the classroom area, currently unused. Classroom levels: windows, no seals, freezing in winter, no A/C, very hot in Sept/Oct. Also, in phase I, plaster, paint the full church. Over 30 years since last paint job. Can't tell where the new roof leaks are. Dean presented a picture of Phase I.

These upgrades will make a big difference for our elderly parishioners. Quality of life, safety. **Grand opening in Fall 2025.** We'll need a construction loan and pay the loan off over a period. Our hope: people will see the improvement and be energized.

Question from Sally: Any plans for the downstairs restrooms? This led to next slide discussion.

Phase II slide:

Addition onto the building, centered where the fountain is today, would connect to the social hall and the Narthex, and have an elevator. The area would have a large men's room and ladies room near the elevator. We would rip out the current downstairs bathroom and expand the kitchen area.

Question from Katherine Limberakis: is there a plan to present to the wider community? The idea is to present to Greek school families, other ministries. Poster boards upstairs for people who leave immediately to see.

12. New Business

a. Presentation of preliminary 2025 Budget- Mitch Papakirk

From 2024 we have a 50K deficit. Planning for 2025, we are trying to balance to zero dollars.

- Proposed budget assumptions for 2025:
- General inflation rate to be 3-4%.
- Only 1 OPA in May, continue to place \$4.8K in reserve account as emergency and investments savings.
- Break even budget- no surplus or deficit planned
- Expect 45K increase in stewardship, year over year.
- Mitch presented a historical operating income slide showing stewardship, candles and trays, general and memorial donations. The total operating income will be \$502.6K, almost 10%, year over year.
- Operating expenses, salary and benefits up 3.4%
- **Please see Mitch's slides as presented, also attached.**

Question from George Sardis: has the increase by archdiocese been factored in? Yes, was about 5% increase.

Question from George Dalagelis re: stewardship. What is the picture nationwide. We're at 58%, how is everyone else doing? Response: Wasn't covered at clergy/laity. Archdiocese would have that info.

Additional question: Is the construction factored into the forecast? Response: Money would be raised separately, outside the budget.

Peter Gouris summarized: lots of good stories including growth numbers re: ministries. Example: 70-80 students in Greek school program, one of the most successful programs in the metropolis. We have growing pains. Stewardship very important as we go forward. It's critical to update our church. Need to step up to help with the maintenance and remodeling. Physical structure needs help to accommodate our growing community. Exciting capital campaign to begin.

Dean: as far as the budget, ballpark approximately \$400K-500K for phase I. From the recent capital campaign, some money is already earmarked for the elevator. Just getting started on how to market this whole thing. Phase II: probably \$1.5-\$2M is realistic.

- b. **Election of 2025 Parish Board of Electors** – three (3) plus alternate (Nominations Close on Nov. 11. Elections are December 8. Today nominations are open.)
Dean, Peter nominated Maria McNally. Accepted.
Dean, Peter nominated Diane Saphos. Accepted.
Diane and Maria will find the third plus alternate as per by-laws.
- c. **Election of 2025 Parish Board of Auditors** – three (3) plus alternate TBD.
- d. **Election of 2025 Endowment Fund Directors** – two (2)
Jimmy Verros, Demetri Hatzopoulos are the current directors. TBD.
- e. **Nominations for 2025 Parish Council Members** – six (6) are open).
Nomination from Peter, Paul seconded: **Anthony Limberakis**. Accepted.
Dean nominated, Paul seconded: **George Sardis**. Accepted.
Parish council members whose terms are up: Mitch nominated **Paul Fisfis**. Peter seconded. Paul accepted. Mitch nominated Jim Papacostas, who declined. Paul nominated **Yanni Fisfis**. Peter seconded. Yanni accepted. Ted Malitas nominated Paul Malitas who was not in attendance. Other nominees TBD.

13. Announcements/upcoming events

- a. OXI day program 10/27
 - b. IOCC banquet 10/27
 - c. Nov 3 – Ambassador Archdiocesan awards
 - d. Philoptochos bid and buy on Nov 7
 - e. Advent Retreat Nov 16
 - f. Christmas pageant – 12/22
 - g. 12/31 New Year’s Eve Party
 - h. MDF (music and dance festival) – February event. Entire metropolis. At the Sheraton, Friday – Sunday (President’s Weekend)
14. Closing Prayer and Adjournment
15. Mitch motioned to adjourn, Jim seconded.

Respectfully Submitted by James Papacostas