

**DIOCESE OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
45<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2008  
ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH  
BETHLEHEM, PA**

The Assembly began with the singing of “ O Heavenly King” at 11:10 AM. His Grace, Bishop TIKHON, declared the 45<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Assembly open.

**Agenda**

Fr. John Kowalczyk, Diocesan Chancellor, presented the Agenda for the Diocesan Assembly. Father John Udics moved to approve the agenda as presented. Elsie Herman seconded the motion; and the agenda was approved.

**Credentials:**

Fr. John Onofrey presented the report of the Credentials Committee:

Hierarch	1
Clergy Delegates	27
Lay Delegates	24
Diocesan Council	5
Auditors	1
Observers/Guests	13

Observers and Guests have the right to speak, but are unable to vote.

**Election of Diocesan Assembly Officers.**

Fr. Kowalczyk presented the following slate of Diocesan Assembly Officers:

Clergy Vice-Chair:	Fr. Dionysius Swencki
Lay Vice-Chair:	Mr. Peter Bohlender
Clergy Secretary:	Fr. David Cowan
Lay Secretary:	Miss Mary Sernak

Maria Proch nominated Marie Proch for Lay Secretary. Michael Kuzmiak seconded the nomination. Mary Sernak withdrew from candidacy, and Mrs. Marie Proch was elected Lay Secretary.

**Minutes of 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Assembly.**

Peter Bohlender asked for any comments on the Minutes of the 44<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Assembly, held Nov. 16-17, 2008, also at St. Nicholas Church in Bethlehem, PA.

Fr. John Udics moved to accept the minutes from the 44<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Assembly. Fr. Claude Vinyard seconded the motion; and the minutes were approved.

**Extraordinary Diocesan Assembly, August 9, 2008**

The Assembly reviewed the minutes of the Extraordinary Diocesan Assembly convened August 9, 2008, at St. Stephen’ s Cathedral in Philadelphia. Fr. John Udics commented that at a recent Diocesan Council meeting it had been agreed that these minutes would

include the actual text of the Resolutions. The final minutes did not include the text. Mr. Bohlander said that the text can still be made available.

Fr. Udics moved that the Extraordinary Assembly minutes be amended to include the text of the Resolutions themselves. Dn. Sergei Kapral seconded the motion, and it carried.

Fr. Michael Hatrak moved to accept the minutes of the Extraordinary Diocesan Assembly as amended. Fr. Daniel Mathewson seconded the motion, and it carried.

### **Report from His Grace, Bishop TIKHON**

The report of Bishop is attached to the minutes.

### **Chancellor' s Report.**

The Chancellor of the Diocese, V. Rev. John Kowalczyk, began his report by thanking Bishop Tikhon for his leadership during the most difficult past two or three years. Character and strength are required for leadership; you see these personified in Bishop Tikhon and in the love and prayers he has offered for us as a diocese and for greater unity within the Church.

Fr. Kowalczyk verbally highlighted the events and activities in which Bishop Tikhon has participated over the past year that are not within the bounds of the diocese. These can be found in the Assembly packet.

We have two vacant parishes in the diocese, St. Basil' s OCA Church in Simpson and Holy Trinity Church in McAdoo. Fr. Kowalczyk thanked the retired priests and seminarian clergy who have served at St. Basil' s, and Fr. Claude Vinyard who has come out of retirement to serve at Holy Trinity, in the absence of full-time pastors.

Fr. Kowalczyk reported the following Clergy Awards and milestones, recognized over the past year:

Synodal Gramota: Fr. Daniel Kovalak

Jeweled Cross: Fr. David Shewczyk

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Priesthood and Marriage: Fr. Daniel and Mat. Theodora Ressetar

Prayers for health requested: Fr. John Perich, Fr. Eugene Pianovich, Fr. Theodore Orzolek

Memory Eternal: Fr. Eugene Vansuch, Fr. Stephen Karaffa, Fr. Miroslaw Kulik, Matushka Mary Ann Bohush, Mrs. Anna Martin (Fr. Joseph Martin' s mother).

Changes in Assignments:

Fr. David Cowan, assigned Rector, All Saints Church, Olyphant

Fr. John Russin, released from St. John the Baptist, Nanticoke; assigned to Diocese of the Midwest

Fr. James Weremedic, released from Holy Annunciation Church, Berwick,

He is currently completing a Chaplaincy Residency Program at Geisinger Medical, Danville. Fr. James is attached to St. Michael' s, Mt. Carmel. Fr. Matthew Cantrell, assigned Rector, Holy Ascension Church, Frackville  
Fr. Michael Demko, released from St. Basil' s Church, Simpson; assigned to Holy Annunciation Church, Berwick  
Fr. Adam Sexton, assigned to St. John the Baptist Church, Nanticoke  
Matushka Jenifer Cantrell, appointed Diocesan Auditor, to fill the vacancy left by Fr. John Russin

Anniversaries: 100th – St. Michael' s, Mt Carmel, 90<sup>th</sup> – St. Nicholas, Philadelphia, 80<sup>th</sup> - Holy Trinity, Pottstown, 45<sup>th</sup>- Christ the Saviour, Harrisburg, 30<sup>th</sup>- Holy Cross, Williamsport.

Ordination: The ordination of Jason Franchak is forthcoming, to take place at Holy Trinity Church in Pottstown.

Bishop Tikhon will be looking at some of our parishes without full-time priests, e.g., the parishes in Alden Station, McAdoo, St. Clair, and Lykens. We will try to revitalize those communities to the point where they could have a full-time resident priest.

Fr. Kowalczyk gave an update on the Diocesan Center, formerly the residence of His Beatitude, Metropolitan HERMAN (retired). Bishop Tikhon has given directions, together with the Diocesan Council, that we should begin to look into what would be necessary to have a real title. Right now, the diocese owns the building itself, but not the land. This past year we asked Krisa & Krisa, Attorneys at Law, of Olyphant to do a title search on the property itself. On Nov. 6, 2008, we received a letter from Krisa & Krisa that, based on Wayne County maps, and our review of the matter, the Diocesan Center appears to be located on the property of St. Tikhon' s Monastery, an 86.5 acre parcel of land. Presently, there is a lien on the property, in the amount of \$1,250,000. That represents the Bookstore and valuable items within the Bookstore, such as the Metropolitan THEODOSIUS Museum. Krisa & Krisa directed Bishop Tikhon to meet with the Bank of Honesdale. His Grace will meet with the bank to see if part of that property can be authorized to be released from the bank so we can have a sectioned-off property where we can have access to the Diocesan Center, which would allow us to have a clean title. The diocese owns the house, but not the land. We are working with our attorneys to resolve this. The possibility of securing the land does exist.

We are interested in the possibility of buying two to three acres, including that land, from the Monastery, with access to the road. We have received Metropolitan Jonah' s blessing to continue in this effort, since he is now the abbot of St. Tikhon' s Monastery and President of St. Tikhon' s Seminary.

The Diocesan Center will be used more in the life of our diocese. For example, Bishop Tikhon has determined that on Bright Tuesday, April 21, 2009, the reception following

the Divine Liturgy at St. Tikhon' s Monastery Church will be held at the Center, not the Monastery Dining Hall as has been done in the past. Many of these types of functions will be held at the Diocesan Center in the future.

Fr. Kowalczyk concluded his report by asking for questions or comments.

Fr. Stephen Vernak (Christ the Savior Church, Harrisburg, PA) noted that Fr. Michael Kovach, a retired priest attached to that parish, recently celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Nov. 2, as well as his 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination and marriage.

## **Treasurer' s Report**

Fr. Martin Browne, Diocesan Treasurer, offered comments in addition to his written report. During past year, we' ve continued as a Diocesan Administration, and I as treasurer to improve record keeping and up the transparency and accountability of diocesan finances. To that end:

- Quarterly audits by the Diocesan Auditing Committee. The OCA Statute only requires audits every six months; but the Auditing Committee & Treasurer agreed that we do this. Quarterly audits have proven beneficial for finding clerical errors and building dialogue between the Treasurer and the Auditing Committee.
- We have acquired the services of two CPAs:
  - Paul Berdy, a partner of Kronick, Kalada and Berdie of Kingson, has been approved by the Diocesan Council to serve as External Auditor and advisor. Within a month of his coming abroad, he discovered we had been mis-advised on a previous tax payment, and he recovered those funds in the amount of an \$1100 tax refund. Please note that Mr. Berdy' s services are donated to the diocese.
  - Matushka Jennifer Cantrell, CPA, of Holy Ascension Church in Frackville has been added to Auditing Committee; she has been present at the past two audits.

Fr. Browne outlined a number of financial challenges the diocese is currently facing:

- Accounts Receivable. We face increasing difficulties with parishes making assessment payments. We must meet our diocesan financial obligations irrespective of what we receive. The financial report indicating the parishes in arrears is for the period ending 10/31/08; certain of those arrears have been taken care of since that report was issued.
- These issues are due to a variety of factors, chief among them declining membership in parishes and large increases in costs, especially health care and utilities.

However, not all the factors are strictly financial; they are part of larger issues, including: of evangelization, growth, stewardship, and education. Fr. Browne has recommended

that the diocese establish a health care task force, to research the health coverage options that are available. If implemented, this task force would report to the Diocesan Assembly and would involve professionals from within our parishes, e.g., CPAs, insurance agents, actuaries, etc. Clergy must make diocesan leadership aware of such people in their parishes.

The budget distributed is a bare-bones budget. The packet distributed this morning reflects the final numbers. Previously mailings were tentative.

To improve the budgeting process, we moved the date of the parish census earlier. Previously, the census was not done until October; and we could not prepare an accurate budget.

Fr. Browne proposed no change in the diocesan assessment, because he had expected a change in the national assessment to be passed at the AAC. However, the AAC voted to keep the national assessment the same as before, at \$105. Fr. Browne acknowledged with gratitude Fr. Daniel Matthewson, of St. Mary's Church, Coaldale, PA, for speaking at the AAC in favor of a lower assessment.

Fr. Browne noted that the expenses of the Diocesan Center are now all ours; they are no longer offset by the Diocese of Washington, New York and New Jersey as was the case when former Metropolitan Herman lived and worked there.

The budget reflects cuts in categories where we did not spend money last year. Fr. Browne expressed the hope that next year, the Task Forces on Missions and Education will have issued recommendations that will require some expenditures.

We expect some legal expenses, based on the decision to do the necessary work to obtain a free and clear title on the Diocesan Center.

The budget for the diocesan magazine has been drastically reduced because we are now planning on only one issue per year. The information flow within the diocese will be helped by the electronic newsletter that was started in May 2008.

Travel expenses include funds for car lease, gas, and accommodations. Bishop Tikhon's travel expenses were reimbursed by whomever he was traveling for. The travel budget has been reduced for 2009.

A part-time administrative assistant position is proposed in the budget. Bishop Tikhon needs regular clerical support. The amount proposed is 20 hours per week at \$10/hr.

The proposed new salary for the Bishop is \$14,000. This is \$1000 under the poverty level and is a fraction of what other diocesan bishops receive. The laborer is worthy of his hire.

Seminary Scholarships are budgeted lower, because we will have fewer seminarians in the coming year. We will have three diocesan seminarians.

The National assessment is \$105 for the new fiscal year; the Diocesan assessment proposed in the budget is \$37.

Fr. Martin, along with all the members of the Diocesan Council, received a letter from Mr. Andrew Fedetz, with various questions; most of the questions posed in his letter have been or are about to be answered in the days to come. He had presented another letter last year; Fr. Browne took those earlier questions to heart and some of those items were adopted, although that fact was not communicated in writing to Mr. Fedetz, at that time.

The Assembly broke for lunch at 12:30 PM and reconvened at 1:40 PM. The Treasurer opened the floor for questions and comments concerning his report.

Fr. Browne commented on a question he had received about the prospect of an External Audit. He welcomes the idea but notes that they are expensive; he feels that until the Diocesan Center question is resolved, an auditor probably would not issue a completed, favorable opinion.

Fr. John Onofrey presented the report of the Credentials Committee for the afternoon session.

Hierarch	1
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Lay Delegates	24
Diocesan Council members	5
Observers / Guests	14

The Treasurer's Report continued. Paul Berdie from the auditing firm stated that he thinks it would be overkill to have both external and internal audits at this point. There are not many difficult accounting issues. He reviewed the Statement of Financial Condition-Cash Basis. (Cash accounting vs. accrual allows reports to be completed in time for the Diocesan Assembly.)

Fr. Michael Hatrak moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Dn. Sergei Kapral seconded the motion, and the report was accepted.

### **Internal Auditing Committee Report**

The Report of the Auditing Committee followed. Matushka Jennifer Cantrell read the Auditors' Statement. The Committee examined diocesan financial records and health insurance financial documentation and found all to be fairly stated.

Fr. John Udics moved to accept the report of the Internal Auditors. Fr. Daniel Kovalak (Elevation of the Holy Cross Church, Williamsport, PA) seconded. The report was accepted.

### **Health Insurance Administrator' s Report**

Health Insurance Administrator Matushka Kathy Kowalczyk accepted questions from the floor.

Fr. Michael Evans commented that his parish (St. Michael' s Church, Mt. Carmel, PA) is having a hard time paying diocesan health insurance. He thanked Mat. Kowalczyk and health insurance broker, Glenn Wengrin, for their assistance.

Bishop Tikhon made the following remarks regarding health insurance:

This has been a big issue in the diocese. I plan to form a committee to review the entire insurance situation. I would like Mat. Kowalczyk to be part of it, and I would like several faithful of the diocese with relevant expertise to help. We need to take a serious look at how to address the issue for the entire diocese. Presently the Philadelphia Deanery is on a separate plan; other individual parishes have different plans.

Fr. Andrew Anderson, St Michael' s Church, Wilmington, DE, commented that, as the rector of the only parish in the diocese located outside the state of Pennsylvania, he was not allowed to be part of the health plan. His parish joined two local Chambers of Commerce, which allowed them to be part of very large groups purchasing medical and dental insurance coverage. Coverage through the Chamber of Commerce would be \$300/month.

Fr. Stephen Vernak moved to accept the Health Insurance Administrator' s Report. Peter Bohlender seconded the motion. The report was accepted.

### **Metropolitan Council Representative' s Report**

Fr. John Onofrey, Diocesan Clergy Representative to the Metropolitan Council (" MC" ), gave the following addition to his already distributed report: The MC met following the AAC; welcomed new members and signed the Best Practices and other documents making them fiduciaries.

Fr. Onofrey welcomed questions.

Marie Proch inquired as to the issue of possibly lowering the national assessment. Fr. Onofrey explained that the \$50 assessment promoted by the Dioceses of the Midwest and Western Pennsylvania would have decimated the Central Church Administration. The budget was calculated at the \$90 assessment level. However, in view of the anticipated costs of the enthronement of the new Metropolitan, as well as other travel costs that will be necessary as the " first visit of new Primate" to visit other Orthodox Churches

worldwide, the \$105 assessment was recommended (and passed) as a way to help meet that budget.

Fr. David Shewczyk (Holy Trinity Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA) moved to accept the Metropolitan Council Representative's Report. Mary Sernak seconded the motion, and the report was accepted.

### **Secretary's Report**

Fr. John Udics, Diocesan Council Secretary, had submitted his report as part of the Assembly packet. Dn. Sergei Kapral moved to accept the report. Elsie Herman seconded the motion, and the report was accepted.

### **Deanery Reports**

One addition was made to the Frackville Deanery Report. It was noted that Saints Peter & Paul Church, Minersville, will celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Sept. 22, 2010.

Fr. Daniel Matthewson moved to accept the Deanery Reports. Peter Bohlender seconded the motion, and the reports were accepted.

### **Comments from Bishop Tikhon**

Bishop Tikhon commented on missions, education, and communications:

At the last Diocesan Assembly, I appointed task forces on Education and Missions. Both task forces met; although with the events in the national Church there has been less activity of late. The Missions Task Force focused on revitalization of existing parishes and the planting of new missions. The concrete work that the Missions Task Force undertook was to survey each of the parishes. We don't have results from everyone. Any parishes who did not submit responses, need to do so right away. Missions and Education Task Forces were created with the purpose of expanding education at all levels of the church. Fr. Daniel Kovalak has offered to come to any parish that wants to begin the process of revitalization and offer his help in this area. As part of an overall evaluation of our diocese, we need on a parish level to begin to act right now – to say, “ Our parish is dying; we are losing members, we can't afford insurance; we have no income. What are we going to do?” We need to find ways to grow – and the best way is simply to ask for help.

The Education Task Force met three times. They identified areas where we need to keep the life of the Church with particular emphasis on Education programs for our youth, teens, Orthodox Christian Fellowship chapters and adult education. The Diocesan Lecture Series is another area that is taking shape. We need a more visible presence, not just to the faithful, but to non-Orthodox. .

Missions outside our diocese are also important. Bp. Tikhon commended Fr. Nicholas Solak, Holy Trinity Church, Stroudsburg, PA, for leading a recent mission trip to Project Mexico. He invited Christina Semon, a parishioner of All Saints Church in Olyphant who is raising funds for an OCMC mission trip to Romania, to speak.

Ms. Semon stated that there are two programs in Romania. One is a substance abuse program; the other is the Protection of the Theotokos family center. She will help mothers acquire skills and knowledge and provide love to the children. She must raise another \$13,000, the final 20 percent of her mission budget. She will host a benefit dinner at All Saints Church in Olyphant on December 6; she asks the priests to put this in their parish bulletins.

Bishop Tikhon asked Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, Rector of Holy Apostles Mission in Mechanicsburg, PA, to speak on the status of the mission.

Fr. Hojnicky noted that the Mission received the \$15,000 OCA Mission Grant after an anonymous donation to the OCA restored Mission grant money. This year it was increased to \$20,000. The parish tithed ten percent of their grant, both last year and this year. They have paid off about \$78,000 of the debt on their worship space and foresee a seven-year plan to pay it off. The Mission Council has started to seriously consider how the mission can start the process of tithing to the diocese. Holy Apostles has 71 adult members and two catechumens. There are about 113 souls including kids.

St. Stephen's Cathedral in Philadelphia distributed a report regarding their outreach to Russian-speaking community in Philadelphia.

Bishop Tikhon asked that we reinvigorate the diocese's practice of Matushka retreats. He asked prayers for widowed Matushki especially, and commended the missionary roles of Matushki, as well as those in hospitals and nursing homes, in spreading the Faith.

Fr. John Udics asked to recognize Fr. Andrew Anderson, St. Michael's Church, Wilmington, DE, for missionary work in Dover, DE.

## **Department of Christian Education Report**

Department of Christian Education (DCE) Director Maria Proch gave these updates.

The DCE website has recently been updated. "Saints in Times of Trouble" educational materials are available there.

Kimberly Metz and Tatiana Bohush addressed the Assembly. They have been working since 2003 as an "unofficial committee" to get teens more involved with the Church – specifically St. Tikhon's Summer Camp and a Diocesan Teen Retreat. In 2003 we began to offer a teen program at Summer Camp. The program grew from 30 to 50;

unfortunately we probably won't be able to accommodate that many in 2009. The middle group of teens sometimes gets lost. Our program is predominantly based on cultural activities; we invite several priests to come in to give 1 to 1 ½ hour workshops. No official dates are set for Summer Camp in 2009, but we welcome any priests to sign up.

The Teen Retreat has been held for two years at Pocono Plateau Retreat Center in Cresco, PA. They hope to do an online e-newsletter. Kids have come from upstate NY, NJ, DE, OH; not just from our diocese. The teen website is at [www.thetac.org](http://www.thetac.org).

### **Website and Newsletter Presentation.**

Cindy Davis, Webmaster of the Diocesan web site, gave a presentation on the contents of the site. She also creates the Diocesan e-newsletter, Living Waters. The objective is to publish the newsletter every other month. Parishes are invited to submit news on events that would be of interest across the diocese.

### **Russian-Speaking Outreach in Philadelphia**

Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk spoke on the Philadelphia-area outreach to the Russian community. We have had definite success but a key challenge remains the need for another priest who would be dedicated to the Russian-speaking community. Fr. Gorodenchuk encouraged those assembled to recognize that Russian-speaking parishioners are different from previous generations of Russian immigrants. They need to be educated and shown examples of Christian love.

Fr. Victor also commented on the Diaconal Formation program at St. Stephens. It is an extension program of St. Tikhon's, not a diocesan program, but will likely benefit the diocese by producing deacons for its parishes. The program is in its second year, with 12 students, representing ROCOR, the Moscow Patriarchate, the Antiochian Archdiocese, OCA, and the Greek Archdiocese.

### **Communications**

Fr. Daniel Matthewson stated that he runs a program called the Incarnational Communication Network. He has compiled a small AM radio broadcast system that can be installed in parishes, and broadcast on the Internet.

### **Corrections to Budget**

Fr. Browne noted the following corrections to the Budget.

Line 9 should be \$326,760, not \$316,155.

Line 19 should be \$456,847.

Line 23 should be \$326,760.

Line 81 should be \$456,847 (same as line 19).

Line 26 = Bishop' s salary. Last year this was \$17,000 because he was given money to pay for his car lease. This budget shows \$14,400 for the year. No car payment comes out of that amount.

Bishop Tikhon has expressed his preference to use different persons as Aides. Previously the aide was Gregory Hatrak. At this point, he says he will use different people according to availability and he will compensate them from whatever parishes give him for visitations.

There are not many places to make cuts. This is as bare as can be.

Religious Education and Youth Budget: We subsidize the Teen Retreat. Another problem we have is that there is no facility large enough so all teens who want to come can come. We need such a facility.

Missions are budgeted at \$15,000; this should meet our current obligations. \$600 per month goes to Holy Apostles Mission in Mechanicsburg; \$200 to Holy Trinity Church in Stroudsburg (down from \$300 per month previously); and \$200 to the Russian outreach in Philadelphia.

Harry Sysak, from Christ the Saviour Church, Harrisburg, recommended that the Bishop' s salary be substantially increased and a " tithing line" of \$2500 inserted, just as a starting point. He moved that the Bishop' s salary line item be increased by \$2500. Fr. Stephen Vernak seconded the motion.

Larry Skvir, St. Stephen' s Cathedral, stated that United Appeal envelopes should have a guideline for giving; people do not know what to put in. He commended St. Mark' s Church in Wrightstown for their generous contribution to the United Appeal.

Harry Sysak commented on the new element of trust and hope in the direction of the Church should encourage everyone to give more generously, and we should recognize that with action.

Peter Bohlender agreed that we need to recognize Bishop Tikhon; the issue of his salary indicates a bigger problem. We should have goals and objectives to use as we develop the budget and get the rest of the budget in line. We need to fund mission, charity, love of Jesus Christ, and each other. That takes more than \$37 per person. It takes hundreds.

Fr. Daniel Kovalak noted that part of the reason the Bishop' s salary is low is because the national Church was subsidizing bishops. Were the Bishops' stipends reinstated?

(Fr. Dennis Swencki, now serving as OCA Controller, said no.) Fr. Kovalak said that if the Church leadership communicates a vision, the people will respond.

Fr. Browne said that the problem with the United Appeal is not the amount per giver; it's the percentage of people who actually respond. For the United Appeal to be a complete success, raising a total of \$15,000, would require \$5 from each person in each parish. Fr. Browne agrees that the Bishop's salary is inadequate.

Fr. Swencki asked Mr. Sysak to consider withdrawing his motion and submitting a new one for a \$1 increase in the Diocesan Assessment.

Mr. Sysak complied, withdrawing the earlier motion and moving that the diocese increase its "Fair Share Giving" by \$1.00 to \$38.00 per head.

Fr. Stephen Vernak seconded the motion, and it passed.

A motion was needed to adopt the budget as revised by \$3,112, with the \$38 assessment. \$2,500 would go to the Bishop's salary line item. The remainder (\$612) would go to payroll taxes. Peter Bohlender made the motion. Fr. Andrew Anderson seconded. The motion passed.

Fr. John Soucek, St. Michael's Church, Old Forge, PA, raised a concern with assessments. Currently parishes take the census annually, at beginning of the year. The assessment stays the same all year, in spite of the parish's loss of members, typically due to deaths. This causes concerns to parishes. Perhaps changing the census parameters would improve attitudes toward giving.

Fr. Browne agreed that the current system is inadequate. If we were to change the census negatively, that would impact our income here, and nationally. For stability, the census has to be set.

Fr. Soucek withdrew the motion and noted that his comments were in context of the reality of the current "assessment" system.

Old business: Resolution from last year – Fr. Kovalak

The Diocesan Council will set the date of the next Diocesan Assembly and post it on the web site.

A Clergy Retreat is scheduled for Thursday, Dec 11, 10:30 AM, at Holy Trinity Church in Wilkes-Barre, with the theme, "The Prayer Life of the Clergy."

Bishop Tikhon remarked in closing: Thank you for your prayers, support and confidence. I have complete confidence in you. Despite the discouraging signs we have seen in the past years, we have a new outlook and hope.

Fr. Timothy Hojnicky moved to adjourn. Russ Switchko, Holy Trinity Church, Stroudsburg, seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. David Cowan, Clergy Secretary

Mrs. Marie Proch, Lay Secretary