

MINUTES OF THE 43rd DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The 43rd Annual Assembly of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania of the Orthodox Church in America was convened on Friday and Saturday, November 17 and 18, 2006 at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Registration was held at St. Nicholas Church from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday followed by Vespers at 5:00 p.m.

Assembly Session

The Assembly opened with prayers and the blessing of Bishop TIKHON at 6:00 p.m. in the St. Nicholas Parish Center. Fr. John Kowalczyk presented the Agenda. The Election of Diocesan Council Members and Auditors was added to the Agenda. The Nominating Committee of Fr. Vladimir Fetcho and Peter Bohlender was approved.

Credentials

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

Hierarch	1
Clergy Delegates	27
Lay Delegates	16
Alternate Delegates	4
Diocesan Council	3
Guests and Observers	2
Auditor / Observer	1

Election of Assembly Officers

Fr. Kowalczyk submitted the following clergy and laity to be Assembly Officers:

Clergy Vice-Chairman --Fr. Dimitri Oselinsky
Lay Vice-Chairman -- Mr. Peter Bohlender
Clergy Secretary -- Fr. David Shewczyk
Lay Secretary -- Mrs. Marie Proch

Fr. Joseph Martin moved to accept the nomination of the Assembly Officers, seconded by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky. Motion carried.

Minutes of the 42nd Diocesan Assembly

Elsie Herman moved to accept the Minutes of the 42nd Diocesan Assembly as presented, seconded by Fr. David Mahaffey. Motion carried.

Presentation by His Grace, Bishop Tikhon

The presentation of His Grace, Bishop Tikhon is attached to the Minutes.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Bishop Tikhon called for a Clergy Retreat to be held the day after the joint meeting of the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan to be held in December. A lengthy discussion of Bishop Tikhon's report followed including several questions and comments from clergy and lay delegates.

This first session of the Assembly closed for Dinner at 7:30 p.m.

His Grace, Bishop TIKHON celebrated the Divine Liturgy with clergy representing the three Deaneries on Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m.

The morning session of the Assembly was called to order at 11:10 a.m. Peter Bohlender relinquished his position on the Nominating Committee because he was elected to the post of Lay Chairman for the Assembly. Fr. Dionysius Swencki nominated Maria Proch to replace Mr. Bohlender. Fr. David Mahaffey seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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

Hierarch	1
Clergy Delegates	29
Lay Delegates	25
Alternate Delegates	5
Diocesan Council	3
Guests and Observers	2
Auditor / Observer	1

Report of the Diocesan Bishop

The report of Bishop Tikhon is attached to the Minutes.

Report of the Diocesan Chancellor

Fr. John Kowalczyk referred to the Bishop's activity report printed in the Assembly packet. He pledged his support to Bishop Tikhon and to all the delegates that he will continue to work for the good order of the Church. He thanked Fr. Dimitri Oselinsky for his work in coordinating the Assembly at the local parish. The 2-day meeting format will provide the opportunity for serious discussion about the life of the Church. He thanked St. Nicholas parish for their donation of time and talent to make this Assembly a success.

A Lunch Break was taken at 1:00 p.m.

The Assembly was called to order at 1:40 p.m. The Nominating Committee will print a ballot for the election of Diocesan Council Members. Two tellers are needed: one clergy and one lay. Fr. Walter Smith was nominated by Fr. John Onofrey, seconded by Fr. Michael Evans. Motion carried. Michael Weaver was nominated by Fr. John Onofrey, seconded by John Parker. Motion carried.

Two guests were introduced. Igor, an Iconographer from the Ukraine and Mr. Stanley Stoy, CPA were introduced.

A presentation was offered by Fr. Michael Dahulich, Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary. He offered a reflection on the current situation in the OCA contrasting it with the Church in Corinth at the time of St. Paul. He encouraged the delegates to "do everything in love" and reflect His love for us in our love for Him and others. The Lord is invisibly present with us. We cannot be paralyzed in our spiritual lives because there is much work to be done in Mission outreach, vocations and witnessing to the Truth of Christ. He encouraged the delegates to become a model of what the Church is to be.

Metropolitan Council Report

Fr. John Onofrey presented the report to the Assembly. The report is printed in the Assembly report packet. Discussion of the report followed.

Report of the Diocesan Council Secretary

The report was printed in the Assembly packet and offered by Fr. John Udics, Diocesan Council Secretary.

Report of the Diocesan Auditors

Fr. David Mahaffey read the report of the Diocesan Auditors. He recommended that the Diocese follow the Statute of the OCA in preparing a Semi-Annual Report. A question arose as to whether the Insurance Fund should be included in the Audit.

Report of the Diocesan Treasurer

Fr. John Kowalczyk thanked his wife Matushka Katherine for all of her valued assistance during his years as Diocesan Treasurer. Discussion of the report followed.

Following all reports, Fr. Michael Hatrak moved to accept all reports, seconded by John Oliveri. Motion carried.

Proposed Budget for 2007

The proposed budget for 2007 is \$519,370.00. Fr. Deacon Sergei Kapral moved to accept the budget as proposed, seconded by Fr. John Onofrey. Motion carried.

Fr. Timothy Hojnicky presented a report on the Mission in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. The Mission received a \$15,000 OCA Mission Planting Grant. A vote will be taken to purchase property for the Mission. He thanked parishes for donations of liturgical items and money.

The results of the Diocesan Council elections were announced:

Wilkes Barre Deanery – Fr. Nicholas Solak and Mary Sernak;
Frackville Deanery – Fr. Timothy Hojnicky and Elsie Herman;
Philadelphia Deanery – Fr. Dimitri Oselinsky and Doug Yates;
Delegates at Large – Fr. Daniel Kovalak and Marie Proch;
Auditors – Fr. John Russin, Fr. David Mahaffey and David Yeosock;
Metropolitan Council – Fr. John Onofrey and Peter Bohlender.

Diocesan Deanery Reports

The Deanery reports were included in the Assembly packet.

Diocesan Department Reports

All reports were included in the Assembly packet.

Fr. David Mahaffey moved to accept the above two reports seconded by Chris Haritos.

Other Business

John Parker discussed Health Insurance as it relates to Holy Annunciation parish, Berwick.

Additional concerns were raised regarding the medical insurance. Since the monies not audited were over \$300,000 and are not part of the \$500,000 budget, and in light of the problems in the National Church, it was recommended that the medical insurance should be part of the annual audit.

Fr. Protodeacon Sergei Kapral discussed the Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration and other environmental issues.

Fr. Dionysius Swencki offered the following recommendation: “In the spirit of fair-share giving, and in an effort to help restore our entire church to solid financial ground, I recommend that the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania adopt a one-time special collection of no less than \$50.00 / member to be paid in accordance with current established procedures before the end of the current year, 2006. The collected revenue should be forwarded directly to the National Church and only applied to the principal of the 1.7 million dollar loan.”

Fr. Dimitri Oselinsky recommended that the presentations made by Bishop Tikhon and Fr. Michael Dahulich be reproduced and sent out with a letter of thought, as to how Fr. Swencki's recommendation might be carried out.

In closing, Bishop Tikhon expressed his gratitude to Fr. Oselinsky and those of the parish for hosting this Assembly. He thanked all of the delegates for their participation and asked all in attendance to labor for the building up of the Holy Orthodox Church.

Peter Bohlender moved to adjourn, seconded by Fr. James Weremedic. The Diocesan Assembly was adjourned with prayer and the blessing of Bishop Tikhon at 4:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Archpriest David Shewczyk

Mrs. Marie Proch

Approved: Bishop Tikhon