

St. John of Damascus Orthodox Mission
12989 CR 1113
Tyler, Texas 75709

February 16, 2020

2020 Annual Parish Meeting

The annual parish meeting was opened with a prayer by Fr. David Bozeman.

Fr. David Bozeman called the meeting to order and Secretary Terry Cowan certified that a Quorum was present.

Marnie Barno made a motion and Theophan Alvarez seconded to approve the 2019 Minutes; approved by voice vote.

Fr. David Bozeman's Report

Fr. David opened with a message taken from the August 23rd entry of the "Journals of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann," asking the question, "How do we perceive Paradise?" He noted the difference in how we approach life, this longing and remembrance of Paradise. Fr. David noted that unlike Protestants, we do not stress "a personal relationship with Christ, but rather life in the Church. Our hope for the Church is that it literally becomes Paradise on earth. He noted the corporate desire we had to be the Church, observing that we have something unique and special here and that we must work to preserve it.

Fr. David thanked the members of the Parish Council, noting that Terry Cowan is going off the council at this time.

Fr. David thanked all the Church School teachers: Amy Hook, Deacon Samuel, Dolores Moussa, Colton Carney, Theophan Alvarez, Mat. Tricia and others.

Fr. David thanked Jeff and Connie Russell and all the choir members, noting that our choir music moves our services more towards Paradise.

Fr. David thanked our Readers: Theophan, Nicholas, Anthony, Annie, Jason and Zac.

Fr. David thanked our Coffee Hour Teams.

Fr. David noted that we had 13 baptism/chrisinations and 8 chrisinations for a total of 21 new members this year. We also had 3 weddings and 1 funeral in 2019. Our average weekly attendance was between 90 and 100.

In other highlights, Fr. David notes that we had been paying attention to our liturgical life; services of feast days, services at the missions, adult education, two catechumen classes, Bible studies at his home, etc.

Our iconography program is in progress, with a June installation date expected.

Fr. David commended Bill and Linda Billington, and Johnnie Hoats, for their consistent attention to the landscaping and grounds.

Fr. David noted that the Mens and Womens Groups had met periodically throughout the year.

Fr. David noted that it had been a “full and happy year,” and that we should anticipate having a deacon by the end of the year as Subdeacon Theophan could be ordained at the Diocesan Assembly in Dallas in July.

Fr. David noted ongoing challenges: the need for a church hall, the need for a safe playground area for our very young children, a greater community presence, and providing for our youth.

Jason Milliken’s Report on the Facilities

Jason reported that an ongoing schedule of maintenance for the facilities and grounds had been created. He noted that the hall has real needs already, and that we would have to start setting aside money to eventually repaint the church. He also noted that Johnnie Hoats and Bill Billington may not have as much time to devote as before in this area.

Election of new Parish Council member

Fr. David noted that since we are still officially in mission status, he can appoint parish council members. Terry Cowan is going off council at this time, and Jason Milliken and Michael Williams will be going off next year. Also, Xenia Durham is transitioning out of being the full-time Treasurer. Fr. David nominated Zac Carnes. Summer Richards made the motion and Heather Wilcon seconded and Zac Carnes was elected by voice vote.

Xenia Durham Report on Finances

Xenia noted how the parish had responded to the plea that she made in December, which she referred to as “answering the call.” She said that our goal this next year would be “answering the call sooner.” She noted the generous contributions that had been made, and then went through the 2019 income and expense items line by line.

Phil Letzo asked whether we were trying to pay down the debt or emphasize the iconstasis. Fr. David answered with “Make this Paradise and they will come.”

Phil Letzo made a motion and Zac Carnes seconded that we accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented, and it passed on a voice vote.

Other Items

Fr. David noted that the Diocesan Assembly would be in Dallas this summer, July 21-24th. He suggested Theophan Alvarez as a delegate. Betsy Letzo suggested Phil Letzo as an alternate. Both were elected with voice vote.

Amy Hooks asked a question about the iconostasis and Fr. David explained the scope of the work in detail.

Phil Letzo asked a question about supporting Nasi Kombos in seminary and Fr. David outlined what was already in place in that regard.

Harvey Durham made a motion that we adjourn and Ross Flowers seconded.

Terry Cowan, Secretary