

Annual Parish Meeting – Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
February 5, 2017

1. Call to order 11:37 am and determined quorum with 35 members. Sang O Heavenly King.
2. Approval of 2016 Minutes: motion to approve by Julie White, 2nd by Krista Ottinger, unanimous carry.
3. Pastor's Report: (Live) Fr. Chris gave a nice report on our churches strengths. He talked about our goals, accomplishments and much more.
4. Parish Reports: Presidents, Sisterhood, Sunday School, Youth Group, Cemetery Committee (written). Motion to approve parish reports by Michelle Wojcik 2nd Helen Falkenthal, unanimous carry.
5. Treasurer's Report: Good Year overall. The church saved ~\$18,000 in 2016 with Fr. Chris working an outside job with insurance benefits. Motion to approve by Walter Fall, 2nd by JoAnn Schramski, unanimous carry.
6. Auditor's Report: Andrew Savas gave the report. All seems to be in order for the church statements. They have yet to review the Sisterhood financials. Motion to approve by Sharon Fall, 2nd by Melissa Roessler, unanimous carry.
7. Adopt 2017 Budget: Fr. Chris went through the 2017 expenses to come. Capital Improvements: New roof on Parish house, possibly St. Michaels Hall. Motion to approve by Megan Jansa 2nd by Krista Ottinger, unanimous carry.
8. Elections:
 - A. Parish Council: (3 positions; two year terms)
 - i. Nominations Entered: Motion to close by Eugene Fall 2nd by Sally Nielsen.
 - ii. Elected: Jerry Fall, Jerry Kistner & Andy Moskal
 - B. Cemetery Committee: (2 positions; two-year term)
 - i. Steve Dzubay moved to cast a unanimous ballot for Jacob Fall and Jerry Kistner. 2nd by Jake Fall. Unanimous carry.
 - C. Auditor (1 position; two-year term)
 - i. Nominations taken. Motion to close by Mary Sue Moskal 2nd by Walter Fall.
 - ii. Elected: Julie White
9. Old Business: It was brought up about our kitchen and that it is in real need of repair. Will it be possible to make the kitchen a goal for 2017 or at least 2018?
Harvest Festival: It is felt that it is needed for more people to stay around later in the day on Saturday's work day to help with more cleaning and the set up of both dinning rooms.
10. New Business: Wednesday Vespers: Attendance seems low. It was brought up that maybe us parishioners could try to set aside 1 Wednesday a month to attend the beautiful Vespers services.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer (It is Truly Meet) at 12:11 pm; motion to adjourn by Michelle Wojcik, 2nd by Helen Falkenthal.

Respectfully Submitted: Kris Minor, Council Secretary.

Pastor's Report

February 5, 2017

2016 was a wonderful year and an interesting year, and life among us flourishes, adapts, and grows.

As I read the various reports, I was again amazed at the positive energy one finds there. As you read them, you find a treasure of powerful words. Think about this list of terms: **goals, accomplishments, events, wonderful, learning, proud, positive, thankful, improvements, productive, busy, confident, growth, & activity**. These are the words used to describe your parish.

When you look at demographics of rural Midwest churches, we defy the odds. By averages, we should be tanking in finances, membership, and activities. But we're not. We are thriving. Why is that?

I believe our ability to adapt is one reason why a small, rural parish like this is able to defy so many odds and truly thrive. And by adapting, I don't mean changing our faith. Rather, I mean a willingness to change our approach to better engage that faith in our daily lives and in our communities. Sometimes adapting takes real effort and acceptance, and sometimes adapting is relatively simple.

Take for example our Christmas Program this year. First of all, it was fantastic, joyful, and of course, beautiful as always. But it had to be rescheduled because of weather. I'm not sure anyone preferred to have our Christmas program the 2nd Sunday of January, but we adapted to the circumstances, and it was a fantastic event.

Due to economic realities of both income and skyrocketing health insurance costs, I myself have to work an outside job, which means less available time than I would like to have. Do I prefer that? Of course not. But as a parish, we have adapted to this reality with very few difficulties.

But we need to be reminded that adapting does not always mean giving something up. Adapting can also mean seizing new opportunities that were not previously available to us.

Having a willing retired priest in our midst allows us to maintain a more regular Vespers & liturgical schedule throughout the year when I am absent.

One year ago, modern technology began to be used to record and share Sunday sermons not only for those who cannot attend church, but for anyone anywhere in the world who is interested in our faith. And people do listen from places all over.

As you read in your cemetery report, drone technology is being used to help map and catalog our cemetery.

New family situations can require adapting, and with wonderful results. We celebrated the marriage of Chad & Trudi, and the births and baptisms of Ema Lung & John Cuper.

An adaptation we made several years ago continues to edify us – our Advent Healing Service had the best attendance since we started it, and included many invited guests. Our personal efforts to reach out to others with the healing power of our Savior is an indispensable part of spiritual life.

And yes, adapting is not always easy. Sometimes it means giving up something for a greater need. And it always means change. But adapting is exciting when done correctly, because it allows for growth and new life. And over the decades, this 115-year-old parish has always been willing to adapt (yes, sometimes painfully). But in doing so, we engage our timeless faith in both daily life and in our communities. And by adapting correctly, we have allowed this parish community to thrive.