

Saint Mark Orthodox Church

Archdiocese of Washington DC – Orthodox Church in America

President's Report

October 30, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

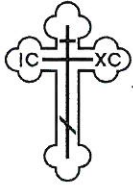
It has been my honor to serve you these last four years. Who could have imagined all that would transpire from the time you elected me to be the president of the parish council back in November 2018 to now? In April 2020 the parish was closed for Pascha – something that would have been unthinkable in 2018. We endured months of services with severely restricted attendance (first, no more than ten people, then 25 – 30 could attend), masks, social distancing, zoom coffee hours, YouTube broadcasts, vaccines, sign-ins, temperature scans.

Fast forward to the Fall of 2022. We have had a wonderful celebration of our 50th Anniversary, implemented by a dedicated committee spearheaded by Jerry Marti and Sarah Borger. Projects completely dormant in 2020 have now been completed – new pews and new carpet throughout the entire altar, nave and choir loft, new bells in a beautiful new structure – all in time for the 50th Anniversary celebration.

We have experienced considerable turnover in our parish membership. Some families moved away from the DC area as the ability to work remotely allowed them to retain jobs here while living elsewhere. Other families who have been active, vital parts of parish life have reached retirement age and have moved or are soon planning to move away. We also must deal with the reality that the way the parish responded to the virus caused some members to leave - some because we were not strict enough, others because we were too strict. We are saddened to lose anyone.

On the other hand, the availability of liturgical services on the internet has resulted in St. Mark being discovered by numerous potential new members – sometimes Orthodox but more often those seeking the True Faith. We continue to attract, and welcome, catechumens into our parish community.

I am happy to report that, through the grace of God – despite shutdowns, limited attendance, and the loss of long-time members – the dedication of the continuing membership in supporting St. Mark has been such that our cash on hand today is significantly higher than the cash on hand at the end of February 2020, just before the shutdowns began. Keep in mind that this is after significant capital expenditures for various aspects of our physical plant that broke down, together with the new pews, carpet and bells. My April 2022 report indicated that we



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were in discussions with our bank to extend our loan. I am pleased to report that the bank extended the maturity date of our loan from April 30, 2023 through April 30, 2030 at the fixed interest rate of 4.5% per annum – a rate that is now significantly below market.

This success takes the efforts of many, many people. First and foremost, we are blessed to have a loving Priest and his wonderful wife to lead us in our worship and to guide us in our parish life. Father Gregory and Matushka Sasha lead by example, not by coercion or exhortation. Second, there are so many individuals who are willing to serve in so many capacities. Among these are our talented choir directors, leading a group of dedicated singers. The choir not only leads our worship during Divine Liturgies, but also at many other services (weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc.). In fact, we had several beautiful wedding services during the limited attendance months after re-opening from the virus shutdowns. The services are vitally important moments in the lives of the married couple, or the parents of the newly Baptized child, or the members of the grieving families. In addition to the choir, altar servers, handmaidens, coffee hour leaders, maintenance and repair volunteers, reading sheet preparers, Sunday School teachers, greeters, clean-up crews, Bazaar leaders and volunteers, candle counter attendants all contributed to the vitality of our parish...the list goes on and on.

Let us rejoice in our many blessings. May God give us the strength and compassion to help those in need and to reach out to those who may be seeking the Lord. I ask that you support our new parish leadership by continuing to work, to pray and to give generously.

I am truly grateful to each and every one of you who made these last four years such a rewarding time, despite the unexpected travails and hardships.

With love in Christ,

Wayne G. Tatusko

Parish Council President