

St. John of Damascus Orthodox Mission  
12989 CR 1113  
Tyler, TX 75709  
21 January 2024

## **2024 Annual Parish Meeting**

Father David opened in prayer.

Parish council members in attendance were Paul Cowan, Anya Hoats, Leif Pierson, and Stephanie Fuller.

32 members in attendance

A motion was made to accept the 2023 annual minutes by Xenia Durham and was seconded by Rdr. Zachariah Carnes. All voted in favor.

### **Fr. David Bozeman Priest Report**

#### Old business

- Saint Ephraim's leased a space in Hallsville, TX that should be ready for services by the end of February 2024.
- Saint John's currently has 22 catechumens and roughly 15 new inquirers.
- In 2023, We baptized / chrismated 20 people. We had one wedding and one funeral.
- We averaged 128 in Sunday attendance for 2023.
- We are growing our men's and women's groups.
- Bill Billington wishes to step down from parish council due to personal obligations and a new parish council member and warden will be appointed by Fr. David per the Uniform Parish By Laws.

#### Updates

- Iconography next phase will be in the altar and to both arches and the work will begin in August or September of 2024.
- Funds have been raised for this phase of iconography and we are waiting on the drawings from our iconographer.

#### Missions Update

- Saint Paisios is fully established and holds full services.

- Saint Ephraim's (Longview Mission) - Father Herman Garrison has been reassigned to parish in Columbus, MS.
- The Longview mission has leased a space in Hallsville TX, and it is being renovated so services can be held beginning in February 2024 hopefully to have Sunday liturgy services at least once per month.

### Facilities

- In 2023 termite activity was found in the church they have been treated and it has been resolved.
- Honeybees were in the dome of the church they were removed, and the soffit was replaced.

### Church Hall

- Father David appointed a committee of four men from the church consisting of Gideon Unger, Bart Fuller, Phil Letzo and Peter Embry.
  - The committee will meet monthly and discuss options on renovating or replacing the church hall to devise the best way forward to have a place to seat roughly 100 people, also with space for possible classrooms.
  - Phil Letzo asked for there to be a line item added to the budget for 2024 so that anyone who wanted to donate to the building fund could do so.
  - Options would be to remove the existing building and replace or add on to the existing structure.
  - After seeking a bid to renovate existing structure the rough estimate came in at about \$1.30 per square foot which would be around \$130,000 to complete.

### Treasurer's Report

- Contributions were \$192,000 in 2023 which was up about 8% above the budget.
- Expenses were about \$209,000, which were also above 10% above the budget.
  - The increase in expenses were due to the mortgage restructure where our mortgage was modified and changed to a fixed loan at 8.5%. St. John's has left the Diocesan Debt Management Program and is 100% responsible for loan amount at this time.
  - Increase in insurance expenses.
  - Increase in utility expenses.
  - About \$5000 was spent in repair and maintenance for our building which included the termite treatment as well as the honeybee removal.
- About \$6000 was spent in parish activities leaving us with a cash balance of \$67,500.
- Our savings account balance of \$27,000.

- Due to new mortgage modification -St. John's will make their mortgage payments quarterly directly to Vera bank which consist of \$11,500 each quarter for 5 years, then can refinance at that time for the remainder of the loan.

#### Proposed Budget for 2024

- St. John's will continue to send St. Paisios Mission \$300.00 per month.
- We will support the Crossman family at St. Tikhon Seminary at \$400.00 per month.
- We will use our benevolence fund as needed for parish members or community in need.
- We will send a parish member to the November assembly with Father David in Midlothian Virginia.
  - Phil Letzo was voted in to be sent as the lay delegate of St. John's to go to the Assembly.
- A motion was made by member Phil Letzo to establish a restricted line item for funds to renovate the church hall and it was seconded by Ross Flowers.
- A motion was made by Summer Richards to accept the 2024 new budget and was seconded by Kaitlyn Carnes. Budget passed unanimously.

#### New Business

- Johnnie Hoats, Ty Richards, and Kaitlyn Carnes will form a small committee to decide what to do in appreciation for Bill Billington's dedication to our church and grounds as our previous Warden and will bring ideas to the Parish Council.
- We will research ideas on how to build and renovate a walkway to the cemetery possibly to be done at the same time as our church hall renovations. This is for safe passage to and from the cemetery.
- We will visit the possibility of including a children's room in the new renovated hall.
- Research opportunities to provide extra shaded spaces outside until the new hall is finished.
- New Business discussion was closed

Father David closed in prayer.