

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church
Rincon/Savannah GA
Monthly Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2025

Members Present: Fr. Stephen Osburn, Mark Guyer, Ron Somich, Sasha Karbovska, Paul McCollum and Dn. Vassily Kocher (guest)

Members Absent: Charlene Griffin

Call to Order:

12:45 pm - March monthly minutes approved unanimously without adjustments
Ron moved to accept and Mark seconded

Rector's Report:

- Fr. Stephen provided updates on his communication and visits with the parishioners who due to life circumstances have been unable to come to church. Fr. Steven will be reaching out to those who are sick proposing the service of Unction.
- 11 baptisms on Holy Saturday, next year new baptisms will take place one week before Holy Week, with the intention to keep the Holy Saturday less hectic.
- 4 Baptisms today.
- New inquirers have been reaching out to Fr. Stephen, and some have been attending church services. Fr. Stephen is working on enabling the RSS feed for Anthony's classes, so that everyone interested can listen to them on their phones. The new website has had 193 clicks/month since its rollout.
- There is a need for new ministries to better serve the community:
 - several parishioners have expressed interest in an AA Meeting ministry, to meet before vespers once or twice a month at the church, rather than attending these meetings at other non-orthodox churches;
 - several parishioners are looking into establishing a Prison Ministry;
- Fr. Stephen will be out on June 15 and August 17, Fr. Michael will substitute on June 15, and subbing for August 17 is TBD. Fr. Stephen will check on the compensation policy for substitute priests.

Warden's Report:

Mark provided updates on remodeling the bathrooms in the church building. Work should be completed by the end of the summer. He informed that there is a need to replace the steps in the back of the parish hall. Council discussed the most cost effective approach, which would be to purchase pre-made steps for roughly \$600 and reach out to parishioners who can help with the job.

Treasurer's Report:

Ron provided updates on insurance renewal, which is becoming more and more difficult with insurance companies avoiding business with coastal properties. The old rate was \$4300 for both the church building and the hall. Insurance has been renewed at \$3400 for the church

building, however the insurance won't cover the parish hall. Ron continues his work on obtaining a new quote for the parish hall. In that regard, it is important to sort out the replacing of the steps.

Since the financial reports weren't physically available at the meeting, they will be emailed. The parish is not meeting the desired budget goals at the moment. Council will vote to approve report via text/email.

The Council has discussed a possibility of establishing funds for specific needs, as well as the need to transparently report back on any special funds and financial health to the parish.

Ron provided an update on the acquisition of new vestments.

Paul suggested a progress report for the parish.

It was decided that on the Sunday of Pentecost, financial reports will be available for the parishioners, and Ron will provide an update on new vestments, as well as the overall budget situation. This will be done after the liturgy during the announcements once a month.

New Business:

- Council discussed the logistics for the kitchen inventory list, to ensure we are not missing items for coffee hour. Fr. Stephen has delegated the maintenance of the list to Susanne Upchurch and will touch base with her to establish the effective way to edit the list, and communicate any shortages. Next year coffee hour items will need to be accounted for in the new budget.
- Paul provided information on Qualified Charitable Distribution. Qualified Charitable Distribution is a way for individuals aged 70 ½ or older to donate money directly from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a qualified charity. Individuals can give up to \$100,000 per year this way.

The tax benefits are significant: the amount donated through a QCD isn't counted as taxable income, which means income tax is not paid on it. Normally, withdrawals from an IRA are taxed, but with a QCD, that money goes straight to the charity without being taxed. Additionally, it can satisfy one's Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) - the amount required to be withdrawn from IRA each year after age 73 - helping meet that obligation without increasing taxable income. This can lower overall tax bill and potentially keep one in a lower tax bracket.

NOTE that this is not tax advice - please consult your tax or financial advisor.

Paul will make an announcement informing the parish about the QCD after Ron's financial report (after the Pentecost Liturgy).

- Deacon Vassily reminded that Parish Feast Day is approaching (July 22), and suggested reviving the Big Kahuna tradition - renting water slides and a splashing pool for the kids. The Council set July 27 as the date for the celebration, Fr. Stephen will be making an announcement to the parish.

Old Business:

Fr. Stephen will email the people on the Building Committee to start the conversation about the new hall.

Deacon Vassily updated that he has had no traction reaching out to land survey companies.

Brainstorming:

New ministries were discussed as a part of Rector's Report (see above).

Fr. Stephen and Ron have been working together on marketing the parish and will continue to do so, all ideas are welcome.

The council discussed a possibility of offering bingo nights in a way that doesn't involve gambling, or D&D night as long as it steers clear of any elements the Church would oppose.

Next meeting was set for June 22.

Call for adjournment/ Closing Prayer: 2:00 PM

Mark moved to end the meeting, Ron seconded. By a unanimous decision the meeting was adjourned.

Signed:

Sasha Karbovska, sitting in for Charlene, the Secretary.