

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church Monthly Meeting

September 14, 2025

Call to Order/ Opening Prayer: 12:18 PM

Father Stephen opened with prayer, Mark called to order.

Approval of June 2025 Minutes

Council approved minutes - Mark moved and Ron seconded

Prior to Rector's report, council discussed accessibility of financial reports – whether a password should be introduced on church website for the financials page, or only high-level financials should be shared with the general public. Need to reflect on this and discuss again.

Rector's Report

Father Stephen shared the positive dynamics: at present there are 35 catechumens, church is growing, people of different backgrounds express interest, young adults are bringing friends. Church website usage is growing. Father is working on new landing pages, which will allow for ranking and keyword analyzing.

New Wednesday class attracted 9 people, in addition to Anthony's class.

Father Stephen has been working with Fr. Thomas on restarting Orthodox Christians Fellowship group - a Bible study for college students. Ron suggested a location near “on campus “ Chick-Fil-A located in the student union.

Youth group has been organized into 2 subgroups: young adults and kids. Eventually the teens group will turn into it's own church school.

There is a new Instagram account now for the church, Father Stephen encouraged everyone to share as this is effective marketing.

Warden's Report

Mark informed that the popcorn ceiling in the narthex will be scraped, likely on Saturday, he will be calling volunteers with pickup trucks that are registered in Chatham county in order to be able to use the Chatham county dumpsters.

Treasurer's Report

There is a positive dynamic in the collections for 3 months in a row, August has been the best month so far. Income YTD is almost 85K.

There was a considerable online donation from a parish member at the end of August that put us in range. All newcomers are willing to help support the church.

There was a special collection last year for altar boy robes (\$3K). Vestments were to be purchased from Ukraine for a third of the average price in the US. Due to the war, the prices increased, becoming prohibitive. Ron suggested to source vestments from Slovakia and check on price/turnaround, while Fr. Stephen will check the same with Fr. Nazariy in CA, as he also has been sourcing their vestments from Ukraine.

Reports on Parish Activities

- Parish Feast Day

People had a great time, we need to have events like this more regularly

Fr. Stephen will reach out to Fr. Thomas of St. Paul's to see how we can help with their Greek festival. Last year Mark and Tom cooked all the souvlakis at the festival.

New Business

- Land for Sale

Mark provided the council with the details regarding the bank loan and family situation around the property being sold. Council discussed possible estate complications, usage of the easement, prospects of the investment and decided to look for a real estate attorney who would be able to advise on feasibility and best strategy to acquire the property next to the church. Dan is to reach out to their real estate attorney for an estimate.

- DVP Psych Exam

Ron is applying for diaconal training program so that our growing parish can lean on adequate number of clergy. This is a 2-3 yr program. This has been welcomed, and the recommendations have been collected. Next step is a psych exam and a fee of about \$1K. Council discussed whether this expense should be taken up by the parish, as it's important for our community. Dan moved to have the parish cover this expense, deacon Vassiliy seconded. All present members voted in favor except Ron who recused himself from this vote.

- Security Measures

In the light of the shooting of Charlie Kirk and the recent Catholic church shooting, the council discussed the importance of security in the church. We could organize and train the parishioners who carry to protect the church during the services. Dan shared information about existing training programs and offered to train volunteers. Call for volunteers to be added to the bulletin.

Old Business

- New Hall (council decided to postpone this discussion).

- Land Survey

The cost is \$1700, but will hold off for now.

- Kitchen Inventory List

Susanne and Matushka Lindsey are taking over the inventory and coffee hour sign-up.

- AA Meeting Ministry

Fr. Stephen to follow up with Savannah and Michelle.

Brainstorming – will hold off as there were plenty of items discussed at current meeting.

Call for Adjournment / Closing Prayer – Meeting Adjourned 13:35.

Next meeting: October 19th, 2025.