

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church
Monthly Council Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2026

Call to order and opening prayer 12:20pm

Motion to approve May's meeting minutes by Dan and seconded by Nate, minutes approved.

Rector's Report:

- We have lost some catechumens recently. Some stated that being Orthodox is too demanding and some decided it just isn't for them. Though sad to lose catechumens, the church is still growing.
- Michelle will provide a report on the Diocesan Assembly at our annual parish meeting in September
- Bishop Gerasim is has assumed interim duties as our Bishop for now with the voting in November as to this being a permanent assignment. We are hoping to host Bishop Gerasim next July
- Deacon Vassily was elevated to Protodeacon at the Diocesan Assembly last month
- Reader Tahir will be observing the council meetings in preparation for seminar next year.

Protodeacon's Report:

- Protodeacon was thankful for the support and recognized Father for the parish growth and for having more young men serving at the altar.
- The metrics book was found and give to Father
- More candles are needed
- Protodeacon acknowledged that the fellowship hall is too small for our parish and the A/C units are tripping a breaker.
- Protodeacon will be retiring from his day job at the end on 2027 which will allowing him to dedicate more time to needs of the parish. Being elevated to a Protodeacon comes with more responsibility which the Protodeacon is looking forward to.

Warden's Report:

- Men's bathroom renovation has been completed however, a baby changing table is needed in there as we have many father's sharing in diaper changing tasks. Protodeacon Vassily to handle this task
- Tom's friend donated the gravel to level the driveway. Please do not speed through the driveway as this dislodges the gravel and creates potholes
- Dan is working with Doug Bean sign shop for a metal icon of St Mary Magdalene which will be placed over the exiting icon at the front entrance to the church. The icon will be weather resistant with a UV protective coating. The cost of the sign is covered by an anonymous donor.
- We need more candles. Father will order the tapers and alter candles. Ron will order 6 day / 7 day candles
- Dan will clean out the fire pit so that we can resume fire side chats in the fall
- Tables in the fellowship hall are being repositioned back to the original configuration to accommodate more people

- Thank you to everyone that has been signing up for Tom's projects at the church. Please remember to check with Tom before doing any work on the property.
- Father Stephen will hold a greeter refresher course for the current greeters. If you desire to serve as a greeter, please contact Father Stephen
- The church bulletin font has become too small to read. Father Stephen will look into adjusting the layout to allow for larger font size
- Kristen Somich provided the church with etiquette pamphlets which are on the back of table in the narthex. All are encouraged to take one even if you are not new to Orthodoxy

Treasurer's Report:

- First four months of the year we exceeded our collection goal however, we have not met our collection goal for three months straight and August appears to also not meet our goal.
- Collection as of August 9th is \$109,900 and we have a collection goal of \$175,000. We need \$65,100 to meet our goal with only 18 weeks left in the year which averages to \$3615 per week. Ron will resume monthly treasury reports at the end of liturgy
- A/C in the fellowship hall was \$800 last month. A new fellowship hall would be cheaper to operate and a better investment of \$800.
- Money spent on church expenses has remained as expected.
- The tithe collection during liturgy will be revamped to where two children will pass a basket down each row on each side of the church. This ensures everyone has the opportunity to place their tithe in the basket. Father will be show the children the new process and two adults will supervise for the first few weeks.
- On-line tithing via Zeffy is down. Some people do not like that Zeffy automatically adds a service fee to support them and you have to manually remove the amount. There are other on-line tithing services that Father is looking into. The diocesan as a whole may be moving to one on-line platform. More to come on this

Old Business:

- Coffee teams have entered their second rotation. The new system appears to be working well with a few tweaks made along the way. Meals should be simple and not create a financial burden for anyone serving on a food team. To reduce single use plastic waste, lemonade is being made each Sunday and gallon size water bottles are placed on tables.
- Reader Ron is officially in the Deaconate Vocation Program
- Trailer registration needs to be done by Father as it is officially owned by the church. Father has put this on his to-do list
- Kitchen inventory – Garrett has determined how often supplies need to be ordered and is doing so through his tax free Sam's account. Two additional warming pads, a 100 cup percolator and a meat thermometer have been donated to the church. The old percolator quit working.

New Business:

- Made in the Image Podcast has started recordings this past Saturday. Father has eight people lined up and needs 16 more as the goal is to have 24 podcast released in two week increments. The podcasts will be between 30 and 45 minutes. All the equipment

(cameras, lights, sound board, microphones etc) was donated by various organizations and individuals.

- New Treasurer needed for 2027. Ron's term is expiring and cannot be re-elected due to his enrollment in the Deaconate Vocational Program. A new treasurer will be elected at the annual parish meeting and will train with Ron through the end of Ron's term. Father John will review our financials by end of year as is required by the OCA.
- Bylaws goal for 2027. Our bylaws currently in place are very generic OCA bylaws and not tailored to meet the parish needs. Father will review all bylaws and present the council with recommended changes for approval.
- OCF at GSU – Reader Ron will once again be hosting a bible study at his house this school year. Additionally, Ron has received faculty sponsorship allowing for meetings to be held on campus too.
- New Fellowship Hall - Tom Maty has been working on plans for a new fellowship hall that will be able to accommodate us all with room to grow. Tom is gathering all of the costs to be presented to the council by next month. The current fellowship hall will need to be removed to allow for construction of the new hall. Goal is for the hall to be completed by mid 2027 if not earlier.
- Church expansion goal is to increase capacity to 450 parishioners. The altar will be moved back and the left and right sides expanded outward. An architect will be consulted to ensure the church aesthetics remain in line with Orthodox tradition. Estimated cost between \$200-\$300 thousand. Start date not set but goal is for the expansion to be completed by 2031.
- Website traffic has reached over 1000 clicks per month.
- Next parish council meeting will be September 20th. These meetings are open to anyone who wishes to observe the meeting.
- A motion was made by Dan to accept all the reports, new and old business with Nate seconding the motion and approved by all. Meeting was closed with prayer at 2:30pm