

Delegate Handbook

Volume 1

Ver October 6, 2009

Instructions and Schedule



**Diocese of the West
Orthodox Church in America
2009 Diocesan Assembly
October 14 – 16, 2009**

Meeting at

**Protection of the Holy Virgin Church
90 Mountain View Ave,
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
707-584-9491
www.saintseraphim.com**

Version October 6, 2009

The changes in this document from the September 16, 2009 version are as follows:

Replace pages 4/5: Agenda (Thursday/Friday)

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DELEGATE INSTRUCTIONS

DATE: September 14, 2008

TO: All Assembly Delegates and Observers

FROM: 2008 Diocesan Assembly Committee

Please read the contents of the three volumes of this report carefully and well in advance of the assembly. If necessary, print out a copy for your use at the Assembly. Have your questions prepared in advance. The following schedule is preliminary and subject to modifications.

SCHEDULE/AGENDA

Subject to Modifications

Wednesday October 14, 2009	
Time	Event
3:00 PM -7:00 PM	Registration of Assembly Delegates Protection of the Holy Virgin Church Parish Hall (Refreshments provided)
6:00 PM	Vespers
7:00 PM	Joint Choir rehearsal
7:00 PM	Meeting of the Diocesan Council, Departments Heads, and Deans (location to be announced)

Thursday October 15, 2009	Event
8:30 AM	Hours
9:00 AM	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and Moleben
10:30 AM	Brunch in Parish Hall (for registered delegates and observers only)
12:00 PM	Opening Prayers and First Plenary Session
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Welcome to Assembly / Intro of Guests 2) Appointment of Assembly Officers and Secretariat 3) Report of Credentials Committee 4) Review, acceptance of Minutes of 2008 Diocesan Assembly 5) Address of His Grace Bishop BENJAMIN 6) Report of the Chancellor, VRev Ian MacKinnon 7) Review & acceptance of the Report of the Treasurer, Ms Mary Caetta 8) Presentation of 2010 Proposed Budget 9) Diocesan Loan Program, Mr John della Monica 10) Questions on Printed Reports
5:00 PM	End of First Session
6:00 PM	Vespers
6:30 PM	Dinner – hosted by the Protection of the Holy Virgin Church in Parish Hall (\$15.00 all non-registered adults, tickets mandatory)

Friday October 16, 2009	
Time	Event
8:00 AM	Light Refreshments in Parish Hall, registered guests only.
9:00 AM	Second Plenary Session
	1) Report of the Credentials Committee 2) Presentation of Nominees & Election of Diocesan Council Members, Auditors, and Metropolitan Council Representatives 3) Metropolitan Council Report, VRev Matthew Tate -- Strategic Plan, Dr Dmitri Solodow
	End of Second Plenary Session and Assembly
1:00 PM	Lunch in Parish Hall
2:00 PM	Clergy meet with Bishop BENJAMIN Presentation by Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid
3:30 PM	Final Session (if needed)
4:30 PM	Closing
4:45 PM	Brief meeting of the Diocesan Council, including newly elected members

All Assembly Attendees are invited to join the community of Holy Trinity Cathedral in San Francisco on October 17th as they celebrate the 100th of their temple on Van Ness and Green. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30 am, followed by a banquet at the Fisherman's Grotto Restaurant at Fisherman's Wharf. For more information, or purchase banquet tickets in advance (\$35 adult, \$10 child), contact:

VRev John Takahashi
Holy Trinity Cathedral
1520 Green St
San Francisco CA 94123-5102
(415) 673-8565

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2008 DOW Assembly Minutes

Session 1 of 2 October 8, 2008

Annunciation Orthodox Church

Milwaukie, OR

Opening Prayer

- Served after Liturgy in the Temple at Annunciation Church

Welcome to Assembly and Milwaukie

- His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN

Appointment of Assembly Officers and Secretariat

- **Chair Election**
 - Dmitri Solodow
 - Archpriest Joseph Hirsch
 - **Decision**
 - Moved to accept: Archpriest John Pierce
 - Second: Johann Morse
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted
- **Tellers**
 - Archpriest Matthew Tate
 - Archpriest Lawrence Russell
 - Johann Morse
 - **Decision**
 - Moved to accept: Priest Michael Anderson
 - Second: Pr. Peter Tobias
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted
- **Credentials**
 - Priest David Brum
 - Carol Shumaik
 - **Decision**
 - Move to accept: Archpriest Matthew Tate
 - Second: Lois Herring
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

- **Secretariat**
 - Nadine Wood
 - Pr. Peter Tobias
- **Decision**
 - Moved to accept: Svethana Tomson
 - Second: Bernie Worth
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

Dmitri moved to allow Observers to speak (but not vote)

- **Decision**
 - Moved to accept: Mary Caetta
 - Second: Dorothy Nowik
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

Rdr. Seraphim on behalf of the Church of the Annunciation

- Thanked all for coming
- Recognized members of the Annunciation and St. Nicholas parishes for their hard work in hosting this year's assembly

Credentials Report

- Archpriest David Brum collected Session 1 Tickets
 - 1 Hierarch
 - 47 Clergy
 - 39 Lay Delegate
 - 18 Observer

Dmitri Solodow – 2007 Minutes accepted by DOW council

- No motion from the floor required
- Available to anyone for review

Bishop BENJAMIN's Opening Address:

- Copy unavailable due to hardware crash

Chancellor's Report – Archpriest Ian MacKinnon

The spirit of The Diocese of the West is very good. The worshipping life of our parishes, the strong monastic witness, the deanery camps, the work of both Raphael Houses and of Martha & Mary House, the charitable outreach in our parishes....these are but a few examples of why we should give thanks. In addition, the Diocesan Council is an "engaged" body, as is the Advisory Committee.

A formal Episcopal residence has finally been established at Holy Trinity Cathedral. Many thanks to Fr. John and the faithful of Holy Trinity for helping to make this possible. Many thanks also to Fr. David and the staff of Raphael House for accommodating Bishop Benjamin for these past three years.

This year saw the sale of the St. Eugene property at Pt. Reyes. The chapel built by the late Constantine Chekene has been reassembled at the Monastery of St. John in Manton...an important undertaking. The Diocese also received a new residence property on Duboce Street in San Francisco from the Synaxis of the Theotokos Parish in San Francisco, where Fr. John Takahashi and Matushka Robin now reside. Life Giving Spring in Boulder City, NV is now listed for sale. Hopefully it will sell in the coming months.

An important development....the first steps have been taken in establishing a Diocesan Loan Program to assist parishes in building improvements. Think of all the hundreds of thousands of dollars in interest parishes have given to banks over the past 50 years. Hopefully by the next Assembly the Program will be able to start accepting applications.

In the coming year, may I suggest that we try and establish stronger communication channels throughout the Diocese. This includes the web-site, the vision magazine and the ongoing dispersal of information from the diocesan office. The more constructive information and news the clergy and faithful receive the better. Also, let's try and be more helpful to our Matushki. Most often they labor without notice so that their husbands can be full-time priests. We have had no Matuska Retreat for a number of years now. Perhaps we can join with other jurisdictions on this endeavor.

A number of clergy have moved to other dioceses. We will surely miss Hieromonk Jonah who has left for the Diocese of the South, and will soon be consecrated to the Episcopate. We will miss Father Eric Tosi and Christina, formerly Priest and Matushka of St. Paul in Las Vegas and now the Secretary of the OCA. Father Eric's twelve year tenure in the Diocese was exemplary and tremendously productive. And we will miss Father Thomas Allesandroni and Mathuska Angela who both labored with such selfless devotion at the Synaxis of the Theotokos parish in San Francisco and at Raphael for so many years!

Memory Eternal to Archpriest Gregory Szrynski of Holy Myrrhbearers Church in West Sacramento! Father Gregory was much beloved by the faithful of his parish.

I want to thank, as I must do every year, dear Mary Caetta for her tremendous work as diocesan treasurer and unofficial secretary. What would we do with her?

Johan Morse – Sokolov Family

- Spoke about Mtkka Barbara's cancer and the Sokolov Fund to help the family during Mtkka. Barbara's terminal illness

Treasurer's Report - Mary Caetta

Gross proceeds from the sale of St. Eugene's Hermitage at Point Reyes in July of 2008 were \$1,350,000. After commissions, fees, escrow charges, and taxes, the Diocese realized \$1,307,818.22. The funds were initially deposited in the Washington Mutual Checking account and then transferred to the Washington Mutual savings account on July 21st. On July 23, funds were rolled into twelve 8-month CDs at \$100,000 each and one 8-month CD at \$70,000. The CDs are earning 4% interest and mature on March 23, 2009. The balance was left in the savings account and is identified as having been received from the sale of the property.

The checking account with Washington Mutual was closed on Monday, August 25, 2008, when

8 fraudulent checks were discovered to have been cashed against that account on Friday and Saturday of the previous week. The Diocese will recover the amount taken, just over \$9,400, as soon as the investigation into the fraud has been completed by the bank. The images of the checks cashed showed checks that were not diocesan checks, but they had the checking account number and my signature on them. The checks were made payable to two people and were cashed at different branches of Washington Mutual in Los Angeles, California. A California driver's license number appeared on each check as well as verification of a Visa card. In addition, each image showed that a thumbprint had been applied to the fraudulent check. In the opinion of the Jefferson County, Washington sheriff's deputy who took my report, the identities were probably stolen and the thumbprints were smudged and thus probably useless. As a result of this experience, I am now paying bills electronically, whenever possible. The chief lesson learned is that all accounts must be reviewed on-line frequently.

As I begin my 17th year as Treasurer of the Diocese of the West, I will be fine-tuning the Financial Policy and Procedures Manual. I will also finally update my website for parish treasurers.

After October 18, 2008, I will be asking that all assessment checks and other payments to the Diocese be directed to the Diocesan Office in San Francisco. Barry Migyanko, our new administrative assistant, will be responsible for opening mail, endorsing and recording information from checks into a log and depositing those checks. I will then use that log to record and categorize payments in QuickBooks. This separation of responsibilities has been recommended by various audit committees.

Proposed 2009 Budget changes presented by Dorothy Nowik

- New Budget and Finance committee created by DOW Council to help Mary Caetta
- Members
 - Dorothy Nowik -chair
 - Archpriest Matthew Tate
 - Sub Deacon Dmitri Solodow
- Dorothy Nowik presented highlights of budgets changes
 - **Decision**
 - Moved to accept changes to the budget: Archpriest John Pierce
 - Second: Priest John Tomasi
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted
 - **Discussion:**
 - Archpriest Stephen Soot asked, "Did the mission parish stipend increase from last year?"
 - Dorothy Nowik: Yes
 - Deborah Tomasi, "Are there extra funds to help mission parishes during hard times?"
 - Archpriest Matthew Tate, "We have flexibility in how we spend the mission deanery funds and Annunciation Church has funds set aside for helping mission parishes in difficult times."

Second Plenary Session

(Started on October 8, 2008 -Session 1 business completed early)

- *Credentials tickets not collected--carried over from Session 1*

Diocesan Elections

Nomination Committee: Archpriest David Brum, Archpriest Basil Rhodes, & Johan Morse

- Archpriest David Brum presented nominations:

Council Nominees - Clergy

- Priest Michael Anderson
- Priest Damian Kuolt
- Archpriest Lawrence Margitich
- Priest John Strickland
- Priest Christopher Swanson
- **Decision**
 - Moved: Fr. Gabriel
 - Second: Deacon Alexander Valens
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

Council Nominees -Lay

- Paul Pilipenko
- Carol Shumaik
- Nadine Wood
- Floor Nomination: Svethana Tomson
- **Decision**
 - Moved to accept: Mary Caetta
 - Second: Dorothy Nowik
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

Audit Committee Nominees - Clergy

- Archpriest Michael Regan
- **Decision**
 - Moved to accept: Ruth Burkett
 - Second: Dorothy Nowik
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

Audit Committee Nominees - Lay

- Daniel Leney
- Hennok Soot
- **Decision**
 - Moved to accept: Dorothy Nowik
 - Second: Svethana Tomson
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

- **Election Results**
 - Diocesan Council -Clergy**
 - Priest Michael Anderson – 3 year
 - Priest Damian Kuolt – Alternate
 - Archpriest Lawrence Margitich – 3 year
 - Priest John Strickland – 2 years
 - Priest Christopher Swanson – 2 year
 - Diocesan Council Lay**
 - Paul Pilipenko – 3 year
 - Carol Shumaik – Alternate
 - Nadine Wood – 3 year
 - Audit Committee – Clergy**
 - Archpriest Michael Regan – 1 year
 - Audit Committee – Lay**
 - Daniel Laney – 1 year
 - Hennok Soot – 1 year

Proposed Change to Diocesan By-Laws

Article V Section 7:

- **Change from:** The Diocesan Council shall meet on a quarterly basis.
- **Change to:** The Diocesan Council shall meet at least quarterly in order to discuss and enact its affairs. Meeting attendees may be present in person, by telephone or by means of telephone/web conferencing. The meeting venue selected should facilitate reviewing, discussing and decision-making.
- **Purpose:** To clarify that a variety of methods currently available may be used to conduct meetings and make decisions in addition to physical presence, proxy or pre-written votes.
 - **Decision**
 - Motion to accept Priest Barnabas Powell
 - Second: Priest Michael Anderson
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted
 - **Discussion**
 - Archpriest Stephen Soot, *“Does this mean all meetings could be held electronically – as it’s worded now, someone could not reject to meeting online if he felt it necessary for all to meet in person.”*
 - Bishop BENJAMIN *“This change is not to replace meeting in person, just to help those attend who can’t physically be present.”*
 - Dmitri *“This does not change normal operating procedures for TDOW council.”*

Article V Section 10:

- **Change from:** All actions of the Diocesan Council shall be by majority vote (unless otherwise authorized by the Diocesan Assembly), such a vote shall be taken only at a duly constituted meeting of a quorum of members. A simple majority of the elected members of the Diocesan Council shall constitute a majority.
- **Change to:** All actions of the Diocesan Council shall be by majority vote (unless otherwise authorized by the Diocesan Assembly) of the members present. Such a vote shall be taken only at a duly constituted regular or special meeting of a majority of members. However, if a special meeting cannot be scheduled with a quorum in time to address an issue, a vote of members of the Diocesan Council may be conducted by either regular or electronic mail. In this case, the Secretary shall distribute to each Diocesan Council member the text of the resolution and any background information required to make the decision. The Secretary shall collect and compile the results from the voting members, report them to all the members and record the results in the minutes of the next Diocesan Council meeting.
- **Purpose:** To provide the Diocesan Council with a means by which it can make a decision on matters which arise between scheduled meetings.
 - **Decision**
 - Motion to accept: Ruth Burket
 - Second: Dorothy Nowik
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

10 minute break...

Council reconvened

Met Council Report

Presented by: Dmitri Solodow and Archpriest Matthew Tate

- Discussion Ensued

Motion from the floor - Priest Isaac Skidmore

- Recognize and honor SIC's work

WHEREAS His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN and the other members of the Special Investigative Committee (SIC) have restored transparency to the Church of Christ

BE IT RESOLVED that the faithful of The Diocese of the West gathered at its annual assembly in 2008 recognize and honor the SIC and pray that its efforts bear fruit unto the salvation and eternal life of God's faithful people, to the glory of His Holy name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- **Decision**
 - Moved to accept: Archpriest John Pierce
 - 2nd by Lois Herring
 - Delegates: unanimously accepted

Second Plenary Session (cont'd)
October 9, 2008

Credentials Reports – Archpriest David Brum

- 1 Hierarchy
- 37 Clergy Delegates
- 33 Lay Delegates
- 11 Observers

Metropolitan Council Financial Committee Report – Archpriest Matthew Tate

- Highlights:
 - Central Church will focus fund raising for Missions Grant and Stocking Project only
 - Stocking project will be sun-setted, or taken over by the Diocese of NY next year
 - Seminaries and other groups will petition themselves except St. Herman Seminary in Kodiak, AK – it will continue national campaign
 - 3 possible budgets discussed: \$106, \$90, & \$50
 - 3 dioceses are going to the AAC supporting the \$50 head tax

Motion from the floor – His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN

- Resolve to share a portion of proceeds from the sale of St. Eugene property with St. Barbara Monastery

WHEREAS the Diocese of the West has worked arduously for many years to maintain and utilize the St. Eugene property at Point Reyes, and has recently relocated the chapel to St. John of Shanghai Monastery in Manton, California, and has sold the property;

BE IT RESOLVED that a portion of the proceeds (to be determined by the diocesan council) from the sale of the St. Eugene Property in Point Reyes go to the sisters at St. Barbara Monastery to be used by the monastery to build St. Eugene Chapel.

• Decision

- Moved to accept: Archpriest John Pierce
- 2nd: Ruth Burkett
- Delegates: unanimously accepted

Motion from the floor – Archpriest Joseph Hirsch

- The diocesan assembly resolve to support a fair share assessment of the central church of no less than \$90 and not greater than \$106

WHEREAS the Diocese of the West is painfully aware of the findings of the Special Investigative Committee that egregious and outrageous abuses have occurred over a prolonged period of time in the management of the monetary offerings of the People of God by officers and employees of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), and;

WHEREAS these abuses have not only damaged the image of the Holy Church and scandalized the faithful, but have injured the life, growth, and welfare of many of our parish communities by draining essential resources, stifling parish programs, and inflicting unnecessary poverty and suffering upon the faithful clergy, and;

WHEREAS in spite of these abuses and misuses of Church resources there remain functions which can and properly ought to be performed by the central administration of the territorial Church, and;

WHEREAS the cessation of many of these programs threatens the gradual disintegration and weakening of the Autocephalous OCA and a resulting polarization which would be an evil potentially as great in its consequences as has been our recent over-centralization, and;

WHEREAS the OCA is the most effective agent for executing some of its present programs for the good of the whole Church, and;

WHEREAS the defense of the Church from legal threats by those who were demonstrably responsible for their majority of the aforementioned abuses, requires for a time the expenditure of substantial sums of legal fees, and; WHEREAS the Church has acquired a substantial indebtedness in making restitution for past misappropriation of funds;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2008 Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of the West endorses and supports the reduction of the annual fair share assessment from \$106 per annum to no less than \$90 per annum with the anticipation that by the end of this ensuing triennium there can be further profound reduction in the annual assessment.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that concurrent with our support of the previously stated level of support (Head Tax), we also support (over the next 3 years) a process that will move away from the Head Tax system to one of percentage giving. Ultimately, we would recommend the biblical system of the tithe on the diocesan level, and the same from the diocese to the central administration.

- **Decision**

- Moved to accept: Archpriest Joseph Hirsch
- 2nd: Archpriest Basil Rhodes
- Delegates: accepted by majority; some dissention

Archimandrite Meletios Webber

- Provided reflection on the spiritual life and the struggle against the thoughts

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Chancellor's Report

Diocesan Assembly - 2009

The twelve months since our last Diocesan Assembly have been a remarkable time in the history of the Orthodox Church In America. The election of our own Fr. Jonah as a Bishop, and then Primate, was as momentous as it was unexpected. In the Diocese, we have seen the installation of a new abbot at St. John's Monastery in Manton and the ongoing construction of two new monastery chapels. Two new missions, under Fr. Matthew Tate's leadership, have also been established...one in Bend, Oregon, the other in Spokane, Washington. Last fall, the Dormition Monastery in Calistoga was returned to the Diocese of the West. (Welcome, Father Sergious!)...Life Giving Spring is for sale. Many thanks to Kathryn Short and David Miller for all of their time and energy in keeping that ship afloat and many thanks to an anonymous donor who gave so much to keep the Center going.

The unexpected death of our beloved brother, The Archpriest Joseph Hirsch has been hard to accept. Father Joseph acted as the good pastor and wise counselor to so many. It is hard to imagine this Assembly or life in the Diocese without him. Memory Eternal!

One of the great joys of our Diocese is found in the ongoing life of our parishes, missions and monasteries....the worship, the works of charity, the pilgrimages and the sacrifices of clergy and laity alike. I think of St. Peter's in Lake Havasu City which has undergone a genuine renewal, or Hesperia which is now alive and well. I think of St. Nicholas in Redding where the new priest, along with his matushka and three children, set up house in 112 degree heat last July and now will lead the community while living on a small mission stipend..... or Culver City, where despite every kind of obstacle, the mission continues to flourish in its new facilities. Think of all the faithful that are spiritually renewed at our monasteries and convents during retreats and visitations throughout the year! These are but a few examples of the work of God being accomplished every day in the Diocese of the West.

I keep praising Mary Caetta every year....but it's impossible to do otherwise. Many thanks to her for wearing "many hats" beyond simply being treasurer. She is always willing to go the extra mile. Many thanks also to the staff at the Chancery...Barry and Elias for their hard work and hospitality whenever we visit.

With two dioceses to watch over, our Bishop BENJAMIN is always busy, always in demand, but he manages to watch over all of us as a good shepherd should.....in a spirit of kindness and love.

Respectfully Submitted,
Archpriest Ian MacKinnon