

# Delegate Handbook

## Volume 1

Ver September 04<sup>th</sup>, 2019

# Instructions and Schedule



**Diocese of the West  
Orthodox Church in America  
2019 Diocesan Assembly  
October 15-17, 2019**

**Meeting at**

**Glen Eyrie Conference Center  
3820 North 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904**

Version September 04<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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**DATE:** September 04<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
**TO:** All Assembly Delegates and Observers  
**FROM:** 2019 Diocesan Assembly Committee

Please read the contents of the four 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.

**Diocesan Assembly Schedule**  
**Holy Theophany Church/Glen Eyrie Retreat House**  
**October 15 - 17, 2019**  
**Colorado Springs, CO**

<b>Tuesday October 15, 2019</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>
3:00 PM -5:00 PM	Registration of Assembly Delegates & Observers at Glen Eyrie Welcome Center
5:00 PM	Vespers
6:00 PM	Dinner and Meeting of the Diocesan Council, Department Heads, and Deans  All other delegates are free to get dinner on their own

<b>Wednesday October 16, 2019</b>	<b>Event</b>
7:30 AM	Breakfast at King James Dining Room
8:00 AM	Registration of Assembly Delegates & Observers, Parish Hall
9:00 AM	<b>Molieben and First Plenary Session</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Molieben</li> <li>-Welcome to Assembly – Archpriest Anthony Karbo</li> <li>-Appointment of Assembly Officers and Secretariat</li> <li>-Acceptance of Minutes of 2018 Diocesan Assembly</li> <li>- Address of His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN</li> <li>-Address and Chancellor’s Report of His Grace, Bishop DANIEL</li> <li>- Treasurer’s Report – Matushka Theodora Blom</li> <li>-Diocesan Budget, Presentation and Approval – Ms Dorothy Nowik</li> <li>-Nomination Committee Report – Archpriest Matthew Tate</li> <li>-Diocesan Life Highlights #1</li> </ul>
12:00 PM	Lunch at King James Dining Room
1:15 PM	Deanery Meetings
	<b>Second Plenary Session</b>
2:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Report of the Metropolitan Council – Archpriest John Dresko</li> <li>-Communications – Archpriest John Dresko</li> <li>-Charities – Archpriest Lawrence Russell</li> <li>-Pension Board Update – Archpriest Matthew Tate</li> <li>-Monastic Life in the Diocese – Archbishop BENJAMIN</li> <li>-Orthodox Church Capital Investment Fund (OCCIF)</li> <li>-Deanery Reports – Deans</li> <li>-Diocesan Life Highlights #2</li> </ul>

4:00 PM	Break
5:00 PM	Vespers
6:00 PM	Dinner at King James Dining Room
7:00 PM	Address of Archpriest Michael Oleksa

<b>Thursday October 17, 2019</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>
7:00 AM	Check out of Glen Eyrie
8:00 AM	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at Holy Theophany
10:00 AM	Brunch at Holy Theophany
11:00 AM	<b>Third Plenary Session</b>
	-Elections of Diocesan Council -Adjournment -Clergy Meets with Archbishop BENJAMIN in Church -Laity Meets with Bishop DANIEL in the hall
	<b>End of Third Plenary Session and Assembly</b>
12:30 PM	Brief Meeting of the Diocesan Council

**DIOCESE OF THE WEST**  
**Minutes of the 2018 Diocesan Assembly**  
**July 23, 2018**  
**Union Station Hilton, St Louis MO**

**1:12 PM** Archbishop BENJAMIN opened the Diocesan Assembly with a prayer

**Credentials:**

- 3 Hierarchs
- 47 Clergy
- 38 Lay
- 12 Observers

**Welcome**

His Grace Bishop DANIEL, Chancellor, welcomed Assembly attendees and introduced His Grace, Bishop Flavian of Cherepovets and Belozersk of the Patriarchate of Moscow as a guest of the Assembly.

**Appointment of Assembly Officers**

- Chair: Fr David Lowell
- Secretariat: Lynnell Brunswig and Fr Andre Perez
- Tellers: Fr John Dresko and Dorothy Nowik

**Minutes of 2017 Diocesan Assembly** were approved by the Diocesan Council and are posted online.

**Address of His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN** (posted in full on the Diocesan website)

His Eminence gave thanks to God for His continued benevolence toward our diocese, for those assembled here and the communities they represent.

- In reporting on pastoral changes, His Eminence noted the passing of Mitred Archpriest Michael Margitich of Santa Rosa, and Archpriest Vadim Pogrebniak of Seattle. Memory Eternal was sung. His Eminence reported on retirements and ordinations in the Diocese; most notably the retirement of former Diocesan Chancellor Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, who was awarded a mitre by the Holy Synod in recognition of his many years of service and contributions to the Diocese and the Orthodox Church in America.
- His Eminence extended condolences to Fr Matthew Ismailov of the Church of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women in West Sacramento after the devastating fire last week encouraged members of the assembly to consider giving financial aid toward the reconstruction of the temple, and cautioned parishes to ensure the adequacy of their insurance coverage.

- His Eminence reminded attendees of two important anniversaries in the near future. First, the marking of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formal establishment of Holy Trinity Cathedral on October 19 & 20, 2018; and second, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America in 2020.
- His Eminence gave direction regarding forms for tonsure of readers/ordination of subdeacons; requirements for reference and background checks; annual reporting of adherence to PSP requirements, retention of these records as well as permanent retention of insurance documents.
- His Eminence reported on the resignation of longtime Diocesan Treasurer Mary Caetta, who was the victim of a phishing scam causing financial loss to the Diocese, noting that, nevertheless, he and the diocesan council are grateful for her many years of service as treasurer. He then introduced Matushka Theodora Blom, the new treasurer. Matushka Theodora was already assisting Mary Caetta, and so is familiar with the diocesan finances.
- His Eminence expressed his gratitude to His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa for his service as diocesan chancellor, and to Fr Andrew Smith for his excellent work as administrative assistant.

**Address of His Grace, Bishop DANIEL (posted in full on the Diocesan Website)**

- His Grace, in his first address as Chancellor, joined His Eminence in expressing his gratitude for his predecessor, Mitred Archpriest Ian MacKinnon.
- In addition to his role as Chancellor and Auxiliary Bishop, His Grace serves as Consultant to His Beatitude and is now acting as Chancery Administrator, overseeing a restructuring process for the Chancery and for His Beatitude’s staff while also continuing to serve as rector of Ss Peter and Paul Church in Phoenix. He conveyed his gratitude to all who support him in these roles.
- His Grace participated in a recent trip to Russia with a group of priests, including two from our Diocese, with the purpose of instituting an exchange program to introduce our clergy to the life of the church in Russia. He noted that although they went to learn about the church in Russia, they also learned about who we are in our diocese and in the OCA, touching on key points:
  - Shared history, shared vision engenders a special sense of unity.
  - Unity among the clergy, the sense of Brotherhood, the esprit de corps among the clergy is something that we should give thanks for, celebrate, and preserve.
  - Sense of mission. The history of our diocese preserves a distinctive place in the history of Orthodoxy in North America, whose roots are based within the concept of mission. We preserve that concept through our commitment to planting new missions, building new communities and supporting established ones.
  - Sense of continuity and tradition (experienced liturgically and in unity of liturgical praxis). We seek to remain true to our liturgical heritage. Within our diocese there is the sense that we seek always to serve the Divine Services beautifully, prayerfully, and in a spirit of continuity
  - Financial responsibility – i.e. responsible stewardship on the diocesan level. We possess a longstanding commitment to responsible stewardship and transparency relating to the

material and financial means entrusted to the Diocese of the West for its life, mission, and ongoing administration. An example of this commitment, shared on a Church-wide level, is OCCIF, which began as a diocesan initiative in the Diocese of the West.

- Monasticism. Our diocese is blessed with seven monastic communities. To the best of my knowledge, we have more monastic communities in our diocese than in any other diocese of the Orthodox Church in America.
- Commitment beyond ourselves (Orthodox Church in America and beyond). Almost every type of board, commission, committee, council, project, plan, etc. of the OCA numbers among its members clergy and faithful of the Diocese of the West. This can be seen beginning with the leadership exercised by Archbishop Benjamin as a member of the Holy Synod, by our representatives on the Metropolitan Council, in OCA financial matters, pension board, audit committee, theological education, communications, music...

His Grace noted that there are many things unique to our diocese that we need to recognize and appreciate—not in a spirit of pride, but in a spirit of gratitude. May Christ bring it to perfection.

**Charities:** Archpriest Lawrence Russell POSTPONED

**Proportional Giving:** Archpriest John Dresko reported, “It’s working.”

### **First Diocesan Highlights**

Archpriest Matthew Ismailov of Holy Myrrhbearing Women Church, West Sacramento, spoke regarding the recent tragedy of July 12, when a devastating fire destroyed the church. Est 1925, the church was a monument of architecture, and the center of spiritual life for many Orthodox Christians. Fr Matthew recounted the profound sadness and unforgettable loss that accompanies such a tragedy. In the face of the devastation, however, a miracle occurred, as the large icon of the Mother of Kazan remained undamaged by the fire that engulfed the entire interior of the church. Fr Matthew related how, when he was a Muslim youth, a friend gave him a locket of the Mother of God. Passing by an Orthodox Church, the locket drew him into the church where a service was being conducted. The priest, afterward, told him that the service was served in honor of the Mother of God. It was she who drew him to the church. It was she who was looking out for him.

Fr Matthew recalled the story of the icon of the Lady of Kazan, and how her icon is one of the greatest relics of Orthodoxy. In the 1500’s fire consumed Kazan, including many orthodox churches. Muslims jeered, saying it was punishment from God. In reality, it was an omen that the Orthodox faith was firmly established in the Muslim land. The destruction of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women Church also became a mockery in Sacramento among the protestant church leaders, a number of whom declared that it was punishment for being idol worshipers, and cross worshipers.

Fr Matthew has learned that fire insurance covers only a small portion of the loss. To begin to



rebuild will require significant financial resources. This fire is a test of faith; not just for our parishioners, but for all the Orthodox Church. In asking for aid, he quoted a centuries old expression: "Misfortune unites," noting that people come together in unison with one another in misfortune. In closing, he said, "Let us unite in one feast to rebuild our church. We will be grateful for any help in this holy task. We ask you for your prayers. May God be with us all."

Archbishop BENJAMIN announced that a GoFundMe page has been set up to accept donations for the rebuilding of Holy Myrhhbearing Women Church.

**Treasurer's report:** (Full report included in the online packet)

Matushka Theodora Blom, by way of introduction, noted her love of accounting and of the Church. Her previous experience includes work for St Tikhon's seminary and other non-profits.

In 2017, proportional giving went well, and end of year resources were up. The Diocese invested some funds with Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund (OCCIF). Proportional giving in 2018 is over budget so far.

Major changes in tax law that will affect some of our clergy and parishes, including some changes in deductions and reimbursables. Due to efforts by the Freedom From Religion group, revocation of housing allowance for clergy is before the 7<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals. If the decision to revoke goes through, it will affect clergy within the next few years.

In answer to questions, Matushka Theodora noted that this will not affect pension payments, and that revocation of housing allowance will not be retroactive. As long as housing allowance is available, it can still be applied.

Workers Compensation topic has arisen: If you're paying anyone on a regular basis, you need to pay worker's compensation through your insurance carrier. (In Washington State, this is accomplished through the Department of Labor and Industries.) General Liability insurance is extremely important! Do not be caught with inadequate coverage.

**Diocesan Budget:** Dorothy Nowik presented on behalf of the Finance Committee which is comprised of Archpriest Matthew Tate, Archpriest John Dresko, and herself.

Three changes need to be made to the budget presented in the delegate packet online:

- Mathematical error on the total budgeted expenditures. Total reads \$823,175, should be \$824,175
- Add \$2,000 for 2019 clergy retreat
- Increase Treasurer salary by \$4,000 to \$24,000

The changes decrease the overall reserve fund from \$15,825 to \$8,825

**MOTION to accept 2019 Budget as amended:** Archpriest John Pierce

**SECOND:** Priest Steven Osburn

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Metropolitan Council Report: Archpriest John Dresko**

- A task group headed by Bishop DANIEL and including Fr John Dresko is exploring changes for the optimization of the Chancery. Major consideration is being given to Metropolitan TIKHON's Four Pillars.
- Attention is being given to the historic anniversary of 50 years of autocephaly for the OCA in 2020.
- New metrics books available.
- Refurbishing of archives underway. A bequest of \$275,000 was received specifically to safeguard the archives.
- Gift and bequest acceptance statute adoption has been shared with dioceses. It is important, both on national and parish level, to know what should or should not be accepted as a gift. Important to discuss on national and parish level.

**Question:** Can metrical book be available digitally?

**Response:** Whether or not you have a digital copy you SHOULD have a physical copy. Ideally, both should be kept. Confidential information must be protected and secure.

Archbishop BENJAMIN asked deans when they visit their parishes to be sure metrical books are up to date. The Archbishop will also inspect. Metrical records must be kept current and complete.

**Question:** Are the Gift and Bequest Acceptance policies usable on the parish level?

**Response:** They're very verbose and should be simplified for parish use.

**Background Checks and Ongoing Education: Priest Andrew Smith**

Last October the OCA implemented a new background check system, Protect My Ministry, which also provides training in sexual misconduct prevention. Background checks and training for those involved in child-related positions must be renewed every three years. The previous program, Darkness to Light, is no longer being used. All background checks are now run through the Diocese. Applicants need to submit their own applications. When a background check submission has been completed, the diocesan chancery receives the official documentation, and Fr Andrew mails the documents to priest. Notify Fr Andrew if you have a large group of people who need checks and he'll hold the paperwork and send the documents back to the priest in one packet.

Archbishop BENJAMIN: This policy is critical for the Diocese. If you do not adhere you will be shut down.

**Second Diocesan Highlights: OCCIF Presentation**

John Della Monica, President of the Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund (OCCIF), announced that a program will be unveiled on Wednesday that will allow individuals in several states to make investments to the fund in increments as low as \$1,000 with a 5-year vest.

Working to expand to more states. A video outlining the program was presented. OCCIF's is first to offer best rate to its borrowers, but to also benefit its lenders. Currently the fund has \$2.5 million in requests, and needs to build capital to fund them.

Fr David Lowell encouraged everyone to ask their questions at the OCCIF booth.

**Proposed OCA Statute Amendments** – Bishop DANIEL reported that six proposed amendments are on the floor for the All-American Council. The procedure for amendments is outlined in Article 17 of the Statute. The rules for passage of amendments are included in the AAC Delegate packet. Proposed amendments are as follows:

- Relating to periodicity of AAC from three years to four
- Establish periodicity of internal audits to annually from vague requirement
- Clarification of election of at-large members of the Metropolitan Council
- Clarification of rights to canonical process
- Clarification of right to sit on Holy Synod
- Amendment correcting typographical errors

Bishop DANIEL requested that delegates review the proposed amendments. There will be time to discuss them on the floor at the assembly.

### **Diocesan Elections**

The following slate of candidates was presented:

Clergy Delegates to the Diocesan Council

- Archpriest John Dresko
- Archpriest Damian Kuolt

Lay Delegates

- David Lane
- Carrie Guy

Metropolitan Council Lay Delegate:

- David Lane

Auditors

- Maha Andranly
- Mike Wagoner
- Fr Andre Paez

Fr David Lowell called for nominations from the floor. None were submitted.

**MOTION:** Fr Matthew Tate moved to accept slate of candidates by acclamation

**SECOND:** Fr Basil Rhodes

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Other Business:**

- His Grace, Bishop Flavian was invited to give a few remarks: His Grace noted that he is here representing Moscow Patriarchate, and offered his thanks for the opportunity to take part in the Assembly. He noted that it's good to observe that we have the same problems, same questions, same goals. Archbishop BENJAMIN thanked Bishop Flavian for joining us.
- David Lane, member of the Nominations Committee for the Metropolitan Council announced that there are three each clergy and lay positions open for the Council as well as for the Pension Board. Please consider serving and see him for information.
- Archbishop BENJAMIN proposed a letter of greeting to Mary Caetta, and asked prayers for Fr Damian Kuolt for his upcoming heart surgery.

**The Diocesan Assembly was adjourned at 2:56 PM with a prayer**

Respectfully submitted by Lynnell Brunswig

No Report At This Time – Check Back Later