

MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT

September 2019

Submitted by Joseph Kormos

The Diocesan Mission Committee includes Gator Greenwill and Erik Hjelle and Frs. Joel Weir, Joel Wilson, Elijah Mueller and Chris Maciolek and Thomas Mueller. Joe Kormos is facilitator and consultant to the committee.

The committee meets via teleconference every three or four months.

Key focus areas of the committee are:

- Provide support for existing missions
- Identify fruitful effective locations for future mission plants
- Build a sense of mission in existing parishes in the diocese.
- Provide parish development support for existing parishes in the diocese.

Efforts since October 2018 (Last report)

In addition to three teleconference calls:

Mission Communities Dinner Meeting

A dinner meeting of priests and lay representatives from all missions will again take place on Monday evening of the assembly. This year Fr Joel Wilson will lead the discussion.

Farmington MO Exploration

The exploration of Farmington MO as a potential mission location is continuing. This is an effort to consider how to planta new community where an existing community once existed without a local core group and without a priest able to commit significant local time to the effort. Most effort is coming from Fr Joel Wilson –two hours away.

An Akathist service was held at the nearby dormant Desloges parish. There was not significant attendance. The modest remnants of that parish are not a likely foundation for a mission.

A four part speaker series, with the goal of attracting attention from local seekers/inquirers, is planned in Farmington public locations (library etc.) for mid-September thru early Oct 2019 using four “regional” priests from OCA and other jurisdictions. Newspaper and social media advertising will be used. Topics include:

- *Carrying God in My Pocket* – Fr. Nicholas Finley
- *The Meaning of Life and the Fountain of Youth* – Fr. Achilles Karanthos
- *My Enemy is Keeping Me from Heaven* – Fr. Isaiah Gillette
- *Becoming Archangels* – Fr. Joel Wilson

Aurora IL

A suggestion was received to explore Aurora IL as a mission location. A demographic study was done and the input of the Chicago Deanery has been requested.

Financial Support for Building Projects

Early efforts have begun to explore if/how financial support can be offered for Mission Building projects by modeling such assistance on Diocese of the South methodology.

Survey on Attitudes Toward Missions

Fr. Joel Weir created and distributed a survey concerning attitudes of existing parishes toward missions. A summary is in process.

Tentmaker Priest Qualities

The role and desirable qualities for tentmaker priests – of particular importance in mission situations - is being developed via input from various bi-vocational priests. *What are effective job professions for bi-vocational situations? How could the Diocese assist bi-vocational priests to be more effective? Would simply acknowledging the reality and value of bi-vocational ministry be a step forward? What skills are needed to a greater degree in bi-vocational priests. How do parishes/missions /parishioners/parish leaders need to adapt in bi-vocational situations.*

Small Parish Forum

Sponsored jointly by our diocese, the Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania and the OCA Bulgarian diocese, the Sixth Parish Forum was held at St John the Baptist Church in Canonsburg PA. Formerly known as the Small Parish Forum this year's events was opened to parishes of all sizes.

Theme was "Strengthening Our Commitment to the Community: *Growing and Sharing Our Faith; Welcoming Others.*" Keynote speakers included Fr. Maximus Urbanowicz (OCA) and Fr. Paul Abernathy (AOC).

Topics included a discussion of the movie "Becoming Truly Human"; a panel discussion of adult converts; Social media tips for parishes; resources for teaching the faith; "Stimulating a Thirst for Charitable Parish Ministry"; a video on Parish Hospitality; Principles of Orthodox Evangelization.

Attendees included many members of our diocese, other sponsoring Dioceses and other Orthodox jurisdictions. Diocesan attendees receive travel cost stipends.

Consulting Assistance

Parish Development assistance has been provided for particular Diocesan parishes at the direction of His Grace.