

St John XXIII Parish
The English-speaking Roman Catholic Parish in Geneva

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Draft Minutes of the General Assembly 24th June 2018 – Parish House Main Hall

ATTENDANCE

PAC Members:

President	Michael Wilson
Vice President	Paula Murphy Ives
Treasurer	Augustine Agyeman-Duah
Vicariate Liaison	Craig Titus
Child Protection/Safeguarding	Celeste Sandoval
Property Management	Leonard Greer
Parish Priest	Fr. Paul C. Friel

Apologies:

Fundraising	Jorge Flores
Human Resources	Gerry Lynch

Parishioners: (33)

Mary Bapst	Joselito Benitez
Cyril Boschert	Carol Drake
Jonathan Drake	Marjorie Cobbe
Annie Yuson	Béatrice Kalimanshi
Úna Walsh	Larry Grummer-Strawn
Elvie Samson	Mary Ann Igdem
Sharon Ledermann	Jane Gannon
Deus Mubangizi	Janet Thomas
Voytek Chelkowski	Giovanna Titus
Sarah Edejer	Sara Grummer-Strawn
Jewel Thomas	Kevin McKenna
Patricia Matthews	Brian Chan
Joan Acheampong	Arthur Sandoval
Agnes Anyait	Nathalie Aierndes
Stephen Claffey	Vincent Oluoch Oduor
Sharon Dad-Ang	Josephine Agyeman-Duah

Minutes: Sarah Edejer

1. Opening Prayer

The meeting started at 12:50 with an opening prayer by Fr. Paul.

2. Welcome & Approval of Agenda

Michael Wilson, PAC President, greeted the Assembly and introduced the members of the PAC who were present. Special acknowledgement was made to Sharon Ledermann in her capacity as the new PPC President. Quorum was satisfied as the Assembly of 33 parishioners was more than twice the number of PAC members (7) present, as per Parish Statutes Art. 11 (Sec. 1).

The Chair declared that, pursuant to Art. 8 (Sec. 3) and Art. 9 of the Parish Statutes, the Agenda was published on the Parish website a month prior to the meeting. One addition to the Agenda was requested: the management of Turkana funds. This item was added to the Agenda, under Any Other Business. No other additions or amendments were noted and the Agenda was approved.

3. Approval of GA minutes (15 June 2017)

Paula Murphy Ives presided over the approval process of the 15th June 2017 General Assembly Minutes.

No other questions or amendments were noted and the Minutes of the 15th June 2017 GA were approved.

4. PAC 2017 Report

Michael Wilson thanked his PAC colleagues and the parishioners for the work done in 2017-2018. He conveyed the Parish's gratitude to Paula Murphy Ives for her service as PAC Vice President.

Communications – Paula Murphy Ives

The Parish's move to online communications has proved efficient. A special thanks was extended to the Drakes for their donation of the wooden signage, advertising the Parish.

Jonathan Drake inquired about the possibility of putting the weekly sermon up on a podcast. Fr. Paul recognized that it would be possible, but would require the expertise of a younger parishioner familiar with social media.

At the end of her report, Paula Murphy Ives asked for recommendations to fill her position as PAC Vice President. Any nominations may be forwarded to Fr. Paul.

Human Resources – Paula Murphy Ives, in the absence of Gerry Lynch

Gerry Lynch is working on regularized and equal market salaries for the staff, as well as an update of the job descriptions. The process is on-going, with the hope of being completed within the short term.

Patricia Matthews inquired about the staff salary review, which was already recorded in last year's Minutes, and asked for clarification on the delay. Fr. Paul responded that negotiations are still on-going. Patricia also extended a special thanks to the office staff.

Property Management – Leonard Greer

Leonard Greer gave an update on the deteriorating condition of the roof in the main church. A small repair is scheduled for this summer.

Mary Bapst asked, "Is there an explanation for the lack of surfacing on a few metres of the sidewalk, which are dangerous at night?" Fr. Paul explained that the sidewalk is the property of the Ville de Genève, and according to the construction project manager, has passed all official Health & Safety codes. Michael Wilson noted that it is possible to reach out to Ville de Genève on the matter.

Mary Bapst also pointed out that there is a crack in one of the steps. Leonard Greer is aware of the situation.

Safeguarding – Celeste Sandoval

The Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed in 2018, and has been up to date. The next review will be in 2020.

5. PPC 2017 Report – Sharon Ledermann

Sharon Ledermann highlighted the necessity of using all the tools at our disposal, especially technology, to engage with others and to engage with the Word of God. She presented the members of the new PPC, and their goal of acting in an advisory capacity to Fr. Paul, in order to support and challenge the different groups in the Parish.

She extended thanks to the Parish staff and the volunteers in the different liturgical ministries and the different prayer groups/events, as well as to the clergy who supported these events and/or supported the liturgy. Special recognition was also given to the Soup Kitchen team, Stephen Ministry, the Bethany group, and JPIC (formerly the Laudato Si group).

Voytek Chelkowski asked whether the Parish offers a weekly Bible study, as he had experienced in Singapore through a program called Road to Emmaus. Sharon replied that currently, there is only Walking With Purpose, which is exclusively for woman. Cursillo comes close, but is not a weekly meeting. She is looking for someone to lead a male and/or a non-gender specific group.

Fr. Paul shared the PPC's idea to start local faith-sharing groups (families and neighbors), and that the first step would be identifying where people live.

Annie Yuson mentioned that there was no Welcome Weekend this year, and asked whether it could be scheduled so that those who are looking for a ministry/community to join may find the right opportunities. Augustine Agyeman-Duah supported this, and said that the Parish needs to have mechanisms in place to identify newcomers. Béatrice Kalimanshi added that the Welcome Booklet is an asset for newcomers.

Fr. Paul replied that welcoming all newcomers would be difficult as there is someone new every week. Furthermore, the model of the Welcome Weekend needs to be reviewed, as 70%-80% of the tables at the last Welcome Weekend were not approached. Sharon Ledermann reminded the Assembly that each of us have the obligation to reach out to someone we don't know, and acknowledged that an infrastructure needs to be put in place.

6. Representative of the Parish Designated by the Pastoral Team – No Report was given.

7. Vicariate Liaison 2017 Report – Craig Titus

Craig Titus highlighted the continued collaboration with the Diocese, with Fr. Pascal Desthieux (Episcopal Vicar of Geneva) and with Bishop Charles Morerod.

The Vicariate is pleased with the repayment of our loans, which we are paying back on a regular basis. Craig noted that our Parish is currently exempt from extra financial contributions to the Diocese, but this will need to be renegotiated in the future.

He also highlighted our Parish's contribution to the Diocesan collections. This year, the collections went towards 21 different charities - at diocesan, national, and international levels.

8. Report on Parish Finances 2017, followed by Q&A – Augustine Agyeman-Duah

Financial performance & challenges

Augustine Agyeman-Duah stated that compared to last year, the Parish had an increase in income by 5% thanks to the Kermesse and room rentals, while expenditures have decreased by 13%. The Parish stayed within budget and, for the first time in two years, has made a surplus. A special thanks was extended to Fr. Paul and Lucy Odhiambo (Parish bookkeeper) for ensuring that the Parish stays within budget.

Augustine raised the on-going challenge of redeeming pledges and asked that anyone unable to fulfil their commitment, for any reason, have a discussion with Fr. Paul.

He reiterated the Parish's commitment to repaying our loans. As of December 2017, we still owe CHF 900'000 to the ECR. In June 2018, the debt is currently at CHF 860'000, with a further payment of CHF 60'000 approved by the PAC.

A committee will be set up to continue raising funds for loan repayment, as the Growing In Faith (GIF) campaign is ending this year.

Approval of Budgets

The Parish annual Budget of CHF 713'159 was presented by the PAC Treasurer. Additional funds have been allocated to Religious Education for World Youth Day 2019, and to Maintenance & repairs. The funds formerly destined for the Office Manager's salary have been retained in the personnel budget, with the intention of paying a stipend to volunteers.

Patricia Matthews pointed out that salaries remain the same as before, but presumably Tess's (former Office Manager) salary was not in last year's budget. In reality, the funds in question were included in the 2017 Budget, which was approved in 2016.

9. Auditor's 2017 Report – Kevin McKenna

Kevin McKenna confirmed that the accounts of the Parish are in order.

As the end of his term is approaching, he recommended that the PAC appoint a co-auditor to ensure an orderly transfer of knowledge. Michael Wilson re-appointed Kevin McKenna as the Parish Auditor for 2018, and noted the need for a co-auditor. The Assembly supported the motion.

10. Any Other Business

Management of Turkana funds

Augustine Agyeman-Duah stated that it has been the Parish's custom to keep the Turkana funds and the Tertiary fund in separate bank accounts. However, Assistance Abroad has requested to bring everything together. Former parishioners still contribute to these accounts, so Augustine's plan is to keep both accounts open while the Parish transitions.

Other

Two working groups are to be set up: a capital campaign working group (to replace the Growing In Faith campaign) and an outdoor café working group.

Mary Bapst expressed appreciation for the new green hymnbooks, which were an initiative taken by Fr. Paul.

11. Closing Prayer – Fr. Paul