

General Assembly

19 June 2022, St. John XXIII Parish

Minutes of the Meeting

The General Assembly was convened at 12:30 p.m. and chaired by Mr. Oscar Mbeche, President of the Parish Administrative Council (PAC). The meeting was attended by 33 parishioners/participants as indicated in Annex I (attached). The following officers of the Parish Administrative Council (PAC) were present:

Father Paul C. Friel - Parish Priest
Mr. Oscar Mbeche - President
Ms. Camille Roney - Vicariate Liaison
Ms. Sandra Simpson - Safeguarding
Mr. William McClain - Human Resources
Ms. Yvonne Moussy - Property Management
Mr. David Karumba - Independent Auditor (incoming new Auditor)

The following officers of the PAC were absent:

Mr. Joselito Benitez – Vice President (recovering from surgery)
Mr. Augustine Agyeman-Duah – Treasurer (business trip)

1. Opening Prayer

The opening prayer was led by Father Paul C. Friel, Parish Priest. After the prayer, a good welcome was extended by Father Paul to the participants to the General Assembly. He invited the participants to the ongoing “International Food Festival” at the Parish.

2. Welcome and Approval of Agenda

Mr. Oscar Mbeche, Parish Administrative Council (PAC) President, welcomed the participants to the General Assembly (GA), including the PAC officers who were present.

As an introduction, he informed the participants on the importance of the GA. The GA of the St. John XXIII Parish was established as the “legal body which reviews and approves the budgets and accounts, elects members of the PAC and reviews its work”. Per Article 4 of the Parish Statutes, all members should attend the GA annually to review and approve the Accounts, Budget, and other planned activities of the Parish.

The GA is held in conformance with Article 8 of the Parish Statutes. It is held once a year and usually scheduled no later than the 30th of June. Last year’s AGA was held on the 20th of June 2021. Article 10 of the Statutes stipulates that the PAC President or the Vice-President shall preside over the GA.

He extended his appreciation to the active members of the PAC for their voluntary efforts and contributions to the Parish. The PAC, as an elected body by the General Assembly, “is

responsible for the day-to-day Parish Administration and Finance, Parish Office Staff, Grounds and Maintenance and Legal issues regarding the Canton and Diocese of the Parish”. The PAC supports and works behind the Parish Priest.

Mr Mbeche announced that all the required documents, Financial Statements and Budget have been posted in the Parish website 2-weeks before the GA.

3. PAC Report 2021

Mr. Mbeche presented the 2021 Report of the PAC highlighted by the following:

- a) From the 2021 GA, there has been a positive financial outlook of the Parish. The Parish continues to receive pledges and the presence of parishioners in Masses and other Parish activities has improved. Parish income has increased marginally, by 0.4%, as compared with the previous year, to CHF589,000.
- b) The following were developed and approved: (1) “Finance and Administration Policies” which serves as the guide for various financial-related activities and will supplement the Parish Statutes. (2) “Human Resources (HR) Policies” have also been approved.

Mr. Mbeche advised that the other PAC members will now present the developments in their Ministries. He will present the Treasurer’s report since the Parish Treasurer was not present. The Auditor’s report was volunteered to be read by Mary Bernasconi (Parishioner).

No questions were raised from the General Assembly and approval of the PAC Report 2021 by Mr. Oscar Mbeche is presumed. (*full report is posted in the Parish website*).

4. Reports on the Parish’s Finances 2021 (Parish Treasurer, Mr Augustine Agyeman-Duah)

- a) Mr. Mbeche presented the Treasurer’s Report since Mr. Agyeman-Duah was on a work-related official mission.

The Parish was in a good financial standing for the year ended 31 December 2021 with a surplus of CHF 178,246 before the consideration of the accounting estimates. The Parish has continuously met its financial obligations which include the repayment of loans. The remaining loan balance was approximately CHF582,000. Because of the pandemic, the Parish was given flexibility in the repayment of the loans, but the Parish still made some payments through the year. By 31 December 2021, it has paid a total of chf 190,000 with further payments over the first half of 2022.

Despite the decrease in the 2021 Parish income for 2021 due to the pandemic, it has continuously supported and fully paid the Parish office staff.

Challenges in the redemption of pledges was cited. The pledges received have been constant but, the actual money received has been less than the pledges received. The parishioners were encouraged to continue their contributions.

Targets for 2022 are as follows: to launch a new fund-raising campaign to further reduce the Parish's loan balance and to continue to be prudent. In accordance with the Parish Statutes, the Accounts and the Budget were posted in the Parish website two (2) weeks before the GA.

No questions were raised from the General Assembly and approval of the Treasurer's Report 2021 by Mr. Augustine Agyeman-Duah is presumed. *(full report is posted in the Parish website).*

5. Vicariate Liaison Report 2021 (Vicariate Liaison – Ms. Camille Roney)

Ms Roney described the ECR Geneve as administering about 51 Parishes and Linguistic Missions meeting the needs of Catholics in Geneva and surrounding areas. As Vicariate Liaison, Ms Roney facilitates the communications with the Vicariate Offices in Geneva and in the Diocesan offices in Fribourg, as needed.

Starting the Fall season of 2021, revenue increased, contributions to the Diocese resumed, leading to contributions of support to different Catholic churches at local and international levels. Details of these organizations are in the Outreach report in the website. When the loan agreement with ECR was renewed, we negotiated a reduction in the interest rate to 1.5% (from 2%). In 2021, we were able to make substantial repayments on both the Vicariate (CHF130,000) and Mission Interior (CHF60,000) loans. During Covid-19 in 2021, we continued to receive very positive and helpful support from the Diocese and the Vicariate staff.

For our 2023 target, we hope to continue (a) the contributions holiday with the Vicariate, (b) to manage the loan repayments in line with our financial situation and, (3) to build relationships and communications with the Vicariate team and the larger Diocese.

No questions were raised from the General Assembly and approval of the Vicariate Liaison Report 2021 by Ms. Camille Roney is presumed. *(full report is posted in the Parish website).*

6. Human Resources (Coordinator – Mr. William McClain)

Mr. McClain apprised the Assembly on the following:

- a) The total administrative and utility staff of the Parish is now 5 people.
- b) Job descriptions and Work Contracts of each Parish staff have been standardized and updated. A new part time job has been created for the Facilities Cleaner.
- c) Members of the office staff have been telecommuting or working from home since Covid-19 started. The staff returned to work in the office in early 2022.
- d) New Policies and Guidance were created and implemented for the Parish staff. These include the Working Time & Attendance Policy and, the Workplace Environment & Code of Conduct Policy. The PAC has reviewed and improved the Parish

Remuneration Policy on how we manage staff salaries and certain expenses paid on behalf of the Parish Priest.

- e) Because of Covid, we built up a big accrual of vacation time. We worked through a time tracking process to reduce the overall financial accrual and drive down unused vacation balances

No questions were raised from the General Assembly and approval of the Human Resources Report 2021 by Mr William McClain is presumed (*full report has been posted in the Parish website*)

7. Safeguarding/Child Protection (Coordinator - Ms. Sandra Simpson)

Ms. Simpson was elected in September 2021 as coordinator of the Safeguarding/Child Protection Ministry replacing Ms. Celeste Sandoval. She expressed her gratitude to Ms. Sandoval for her contributions to the Safeguarding Policies.

She informed the Assembly that “safeguarding is a term broader than child protection and relates to the action that the Parish takes to promote the welfare of children and young people within our Church community”. Referring to the Parish Safeguarding Policy, “the care of God’s children is one of the primary responsibilities of all members of the Church thus everything possible must be done to ensure that children and young people are always in a safe, secure and happy environment. Anyone placed in a position of trust within the Church, paid or unpaid, who has direct access to children and young people must be selected with the utmost care”. The text of the Parish Safeguarding Policy may be found in the Parish website under the Catechism tab. The link to the Safeguarding Response team is also in the Parish’s website.

Two new members have joined the team, Matt Hadley and Karen Reyes. Matt is a qualified Safeguarding trainer and Karen is a medical doctor currently working at the WHO.

For any concerns about the safety of children and young people in any parish activity, we can contact a member of the Safeguarding Response team. With the team, they will decide on the appropriate course of action and ensure support for the child involved. All disclosures, of course, will be handled in the utmost confidence.

Ms. Simpson advised that the Safeguarding/Child Protection Ministry is in close coordination with the Religious Education Ministry’s Director, Ms. Anna Berkeley. All Volunteer Catechists provide a signed “Declaration of Acceptance of the Safeguarding Policy”, a signed “Disclosure Form”, Criminal Record extracts, and they attend the “Safeguarding Awareness Training” given by the Parish at least once every three (3) years.

The Parish Growing in Faith campaign that supported the transfer of our parish and the renovation of facilities, allowed us to provide on-site classrooms that now meet Safeguarding standards.

The Parish Safeguarding Policy is due for its biennial review. The PAC will review the document to ensure that it reflects the best practice.

No questions were raised from the General Assembly and approval of the Safeguarding/Child Protection Report by Ms. Sandra Simpson is presumed (*full report has been posted in the Parish website*).

8. Property Management (Coordinator – Ms. Yvonne Moussy)

Ms. Moussy apprised the attendee on the following: Maintaining the hand sanitation at the Parish's entrance and sanitizing the chairs after each mass; Four Fire drills held in November 2021; planted lavender plants on the Parish roof; provided the logistics for the International Street Food Festival 2022. They target to plant Apple seedlings on the Parish grounds in 2022.

No questions were raised from the General Assembly and approval of the Property Management Report by Ms. Yvonne Moussy is presumed (*full report has been posted in the Parish website*)

9. Auditor's Report (Parish Auditor – Ms. Beryl Oriaro)

Ms. Mary Bernasconi presented the Auditor's Report on behalf of Mr. Beryl Oriaro. The Parish Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 was audited by Ms. Oriaro.

She highlighted that on the auditor's "Opinion", "the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Parish as of December 31, 2021, and the changes in its net assets and cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles". And that "the audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The schedule of functional expenses in Note 5 to the financial statements are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the financial statements".

No questions were raised from the General Assembly and approval of the Auditor's Report 2021 by Mr. Beryl Oriaro is presumed (*full report is posted in the Parish website*).

10. Parish Pastoral Council (Chairwoman - Ms. Sharon Ledermann)

Ms. Ledermann shared the following: the first meeting of PPC was held in May 2021 since the start of Covid; the PPC is focused on having the regular Mass and bringing it to the heart of the Parish. The start of the adoration is planned for Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. We need to encourage parishioners to go back to the Parish by bringing back the Ministries via the "Ministry Day" in the Fall. Walking with Purpose will move from virtual to live meetings. There will be a QR code for male parishioners to enter their availability and interests. She invites parishioners who can contribute/share their talents/gifts like hospitality, entertainment (i.e. helping in the sound system) etc....

She encouraged the assembly for their comments, ideas via email (contact details through the Parish). Looking for people to help organize, take notes, represent PPC in the PAC, etc...).

Ms. Ledermann expressed her appreciation to the great work and contributions of Ms. Anne Berkeley for the Religious Education Ministry of the Parish (i.e., Catechism, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Communion, Kairos, etc.).

No questions were raised from the General Assembly and approval of the PPC Report by Ms. Sharon Ledermann is presumed (*full report has been posted in the Parish website*)

11. Budget for 2023

Mr. Oscar Mbeche presented the Parish Budget for 2023. The budget for 2023 has been kept the same as the budget for 2022. He summarized the budget, as follows:

Parish's Activities:	Budget 2022 (CHF)	Budget 2023 (CHF)
Parish Ministries and Programmes	60,600	60,600
Outreach Programmes	100,000	100,000
Facilities	184,459	184,459
Parish Administration	215,000	215,000
Growing in Faith Initiative	189,836	189,836
Total Functional Expenses:	749,895	749,895

Mr Mbeche highlighted many underspendings vs. the 2021 budget because of Covid.

Questions raised:

1. Will we go back to giving US\$ 25000/year to Turkana?

Answer: We reduced to US\$15000 for 2021 and 2022 as part of budgetary prudence because of Covid. We will revert to the US\$25000/year grants to Turkana in 2023.

2. Will we pay all of our loans?

Answer: Yes, we purposely reduced our payments to the ECR (also referred to as the Vicariate) and the Mission Interior because of budgetary prudence in 2020, 2021 and 2022. For 2023, we would like to have a concerted effort to liquidate all these loans.

The General Assembly noted and approved the Parish Budget for 2023 by Mr. Oscar Mbeche (*full report is posted in the Parish website*).

12. PAC Elections

Parish Auditor:

Mr. Oscar Mbeche informed the Assembly that the present auditor, Ms. Beryl Oriaro, has retired/resigned after 3-years of service to the Parish. The new Parish's auditor is Mr. David Karumba, a chartered accountant who works with Global Fund.

The Assembly voted their approval for Mr Karumba.

13. Global Outreach Team Report 2021 (led by Mr Joselito Benitez and composed of Fr. Paul Friel, Mr. Francis Kofi, Mr. Oscar Fornosa, Ms. Patti McAnulty, Ms. Tricia Matthews, and Ms. Vicky Brohier) was not presented in the assembly.

The team has spent a total amount of CHF23,928.23 in 2021 for its 10 outreach projects. It includes countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. It also supported the Turkana Education Fund (education scholarship) by providing a total amount of CHF15,069.24 in 2021.

The full report for the Global Outreach Team Report is posted in the Parish website.

14. Conclusion

Father Paul welcomed Mr. David Karumba as the new Independent Auditor, Mr. Matt Hadley, and Ms. Karen Reyes as members of the Parish Safeguarding Team.

Father Paul expressed his appreciation to Mr Mbeche, PAC President, for the PAC’s hard work, to the Ministries and their volunteers and, to the Parish Administrative staff in meeting the challenges of the past years since the start of Covid-19. He shared his contribution to controlling expenses for the Parish by: cutting the grass and watering of plants, cleaning of his apartment, washing and ironing. Now that we are back to ‘normal’, he expects these tasks to be handled by the cleaner.

The Parish looks forward to a better future for the Parish’s community.

15. Closing of the General Assembly 2022

In closing, Father Paul led the prayer of gratitude for a successful General Assembly meeting. The meeting concluded at 1:30 p.m.

o0o

Annex I

General Assembly
19 June 2022, St. John xxiii Parish

Attendance

1. Ms. Josephine Agyeman-Duah
2. Ms. Ruth Balane
3. Ms. Ma. Victoria Barnes
4. Ms. Maria A. (Marigel) Barrozo
5. Ms. Anna Berkeley
6. Ms. Mary Bernisconi
7. Ms. Dang Castillo
8. Ms. Cecilia Cuello

9. Ms. Lanie Dangle
10. Ms. Britte Devek
11. Sr. Franca Edet
12. Mr. Raphael Evoeme
13. Father Paul C. Friel
14. Mr. Manuel Goyena
15. Ms. Rosalina Goyena
16. Ms. Rose Ganub
17. Ms. Dannette Haley
18. Ms. Lilia Hernandez
19. Mr. David Karumba
20. Mr. Michael Kauuma
21. Ms. Sharon Ledermann
22. Ms. Maribel Mapanao
23. Mr. Oscar Mbeche
24. Mr. William McClain
25. Ms. Yvonne Moussy
26. Mr. Robert O’Riordan
27. Ms. Beryl Oriaro
28. Ms. Gemma Quijada
29. Ms. Camille Roney
30. Mr. David Roney
31. Mr. Romy Scharzmann
32. Ms. Sandra Simpson
33. Mr. Alex Taylor