Activities  Unlimited

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday September 8, 2026

The General Meeting, held at the Midland Park Christian Reformed Church at Midland Park, New Jersey, started at 9:30 AM with social activities, and was called to order by President Gaspar Lesznik at 10:00 AM.

President Gaspar Lesznik led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by The Rev. Andy Kadzban who delivered the invocation.

President's Message

a. Gaspar Lesznik discussed the transition of AU from being a part of the WRC to being an independent legal entity.
b. AU was started 47 years ago at the WRC by four men who had lost their spouses. It had grown to over 330 members today, with only two members being parishioners of the WRC which has about 200 members.
c. The church has asked us to be an independent legal entity and AU has decided to effect this separation as of January 1, 2027.
d. Annual dues will increase from $60 per person to $70 to cover inflation and legal expenses operating as AU, Inc.
e. All existing AU activities remain unchanged. The Rev. Andy Kadzban assured the membership that the WRC will continue to honor the heritage of AU and will continue that relationship and support such as the use of the facilities at the WRC, administrative support, etc.
f. Gaspar Lesznik confirmed that AU, Inc. will be a non-profit organization. While we are exempt from Federal income tax, we will be paying State sales tax.
g. The membership raised the issue of insurance. Doug Cooper stated that AU already has its own insurance and will continue to do so when we become AU, Inc. in 2027.
h. The membership raised the question on whether the membership dues is tax-deductible. Gabe Carifi stated that only charitable, research, and education non-profit organization are tax deductible. AU, Inc. dues are not tax deductible.
i. Gaspar Lesznik informed the membership that the AU, Inc. Constitution and By Laws will be posted on the AU website.

Treasurer's Report

a. Doug Cooper reminded everyone who has TD bank accounts to contact the bank and link their accounts to the AU Affinity Program with the bank. The bank pays AU $10 a year for an existing account and $25 for a new account. We collected $1,372 this year.
b. Doug Cooper reminded everyone to contribute to the coffee and refreshments at the General Meetings as well as to the Food Pantry.

Membership

a. Jim Webb reported that the membership at AU is at 330, with 35 new members so far this year. Jim Webb reported that there were 2 new members in September:
    - Joseph Scarpelli
    - Douglas Tanner

a. Jim Webb introduced new members present at the meeting:
    - Michael Barnes
    - Doug Tanner
    - Dennis Portsmore
    - Joe Scarpelli

b. Gaspar Lesznik encouraged the new members to explore the 23 clubs we have in AU and get involved.

Cares and Concerns

a. John Toth was absent from the meeting.
b. Gaspar Lesznik asked the membership to self-identify those who have birthdays in August and September. He then led the group in the singing of Happy Birthday.
c. Gaspar Lesznik announced the passing of Herb Umland, a past member and a past President of AU.
d. Various member shared occasions of joy, i.e., wedding, births, etc.
e. The Cares and Concerns Committee sent out 5 Get well cards, 1 Thank You card, 1 Congratulations card, and 3 Condolence Cards.

Events

a. Gaspar Lesznik announced that the Fall Social will be held at the Upper Ridgewood Tennis Club on September 17 from 6-9 PM. Doug Cooper announced that walk-ins are welcome, bring check or cash, $45 per person.
b. Jack Warner reminded everyone that the October General Meeting is at The Brick House on October 13 at 8:30 AM with a buffet breakfast and entertainment by the Barbershop Quartet, a part of The Blue Chip Chorus. Walk-ins are welcome at $25 per person.
c. The Fall Golf Outing is at Farmstead on September 25 with breakfast at 8:00 AM and tee-time at 8:30 AM. Lunch will be served. The all-inclusive cost is $105 per person.
d. Joe Pullaro announced that Lunch at Fino Ristorante in Allendale on October 21 at 12:30 PM. Wives and significant others are welcome. The cost is $39 per person.

e. Jim Webb announced a radical change to the Beefsteak Dinner in January. AU, Inc. will be the caterer with Gaspar Lesznik as the Head Chef, with the help of many volunteers. More details will follow.
f. Gaspar Lesznik announced the formation of the Music Appreciation Club with its inaugural session in February 2027. The Club will be headed by Jim McKeown, and it is for people who want to learn about and enjoy great music. Jim McKeown has put together a program of Music of America which he will present in the December General Meeting.

Club Activities

a. Joe Pullaro announced the meeting of the History Club on September 22 at the VFW in Midland Park at 1 PM. Jack Warner has an excellent presentation on the Erie Canal. Not only is the Canal the single most important public works project ever built in the US, Jack Warner and his father had personal connection with the Canal.
b. Mark Stahl announced the Safe Shooting Club meeting on September 30 at 1PM at the VFW. They will be discussing some topics on self-defense, warning signs of mass shootings, and awareness of the environment. On October 23, they will be doing some shooting at the Waldwick Rifle Club at 11 AM. All are welcome. If someone wants to observe or actually try shooting, there are instructors around and will work with you one-on-one.
c. Marc Bernhardt talked about the upcoming meeting of the Science Club on September 15 at 1 PM at the VFW. They will have a roundtable discussion on clinical trials – how to take a drug from testing it on mice to using it on humans?
d. Peter Bieszard talked about the Long Hike Club which meets on Mondays. Don Kirkpatrick emails the location for each week on Friday to Club members. Peter Bieszard also talked about the Book Club which meets at 10 AM on September 23 at the WRC. Members are asked to contribute on books to read for 2027.
e. Barry Glick was speaking on behalf of John DeSantis, Chair of the AU Guys. He expressed delight in the addition of the Music Appreciation Club. He also expressed the desire to have the AU Guys play some beautiful music during the social session at the Monthly General Meeting while everybody is enjoying coffee, bagels, and fellowship.

Attendance

Seventy-two (72) members were in attendance.

Main Event

The Main Event was a concert by the Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra. Chuck Dye introduced the Orchestra with its first performance in March of 1940 with 38 musicians. Today, the Orchestra has about 80 musicians, led by its Artistic Director and Conductor Kyunghun Kim. They perform four concerts a year at the Westside Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood. They also participate in many community outreach programs working with youths. They have a partnership with William Paterson University, and a resident composer.

Maestro Kim introduced the Quartet musicians:

- Gabriel Anker, Concertmaster - First Violin
- Hannah Finkelberg, Assistant Concertmaster - Second Violin
- Kyunghun Kim, Artistic Director and Conductor - Viola
- Jennifer Lee - Cello

The Concert started with Beethoven's Romance in F major, followed by the Double Violin Concerto in D minor by J. S. Bach, Concerto No. 1 in A minor by Saint-Saëns, and concluded with the intoxicating Eine Kleine Nachtmusik by Mozart.

The General Meeting concluded at 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Winston Lau
Secretary