

METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

PARISH COUNCIL – THE NOMINATION PROCESS

Introduction

The Metropolis of Atlanta is pleased to offer her parishes this guideline in how to recruit people to assume the awesome responsibility as a member of the Parish Council. As Fr. James Kordaris, Director of the Archdiocesan Department of Parish Renewal, Outreach and Evangelism, has written,

“Parish council members represent their parish and the Orthodox Christian faith. As leaders of the community, parish council members are on the front lines and are able to have a long-term effect on their parish. To serve on the parish council is a ministry and those who serve are called to represent Christ to all whom they meet in all aspects of life.”

Differing approaches are used by our parishes in recruiting people to run for Parish Council. Some of the approaches are based on the parish’s particular bylaws. Some bylaws establish a nominating committee which reports to a Parish Assembly a recommended slate of nominees. After their report, nominations are taken from the floor. Other parishes have an informal nomination process where the parish priest and leaders of the community solicit people to run for the Parish Council. Whether there is a formal or informal process, the following guidelines are offered to assist in this process.

Who Should Serve

People who serve should recognize this as a privilege and responsibility. Again we refer to Fr. Kordaris, “Choosing Suitable Candidates for the Parish Council --

Parishioners are often nominated as candidates for the Parish Council because of their education, business experience or legal background. The best parish council members are not necessarily those who are business-oriented, but rather, those who are Church-oriented and Christ-centered. To be a good council member, one must be active in the worship and sacramental life of the Church. The best candidates are easy to find – they are in church.”

From the REGULATIONS OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE

Article 25 Election of Parish Council; Section 2:

A candidate for the Parish Council must be a parishioner in good standing of the Parish for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the date of the election and must live his or her life in accordance with the Faith and canons of the Church. The Priest determines whether the Parishioners are in canonical and financial good standing as specified in Article 18, Sections 1 through 3.

Other factors to consider for potential nominees:

- Must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing per the Regulations of the Archdiocese and Parish bylaws
- Be a regular participant in the sacramental life of the church
- Understand the mission of the church
- Should have been a member in at least in one ministry of the parish
- Have some basic knowledge of the Orthodox Church to include Church History & Structure, Ministry and Regulations
- Be willing to attend ongoing training sessions
- Be knowledgeable of the bylaws of the parish
- Be an example of servant-leadership
- Approach the work to be done in a conciliar manner
- Be committed to serve
- See service on the council as a mission and ministry.

Practical Steps

- I. The Clergy should meet with a recruiting or nominating group to identify those in the parish who meet the factors suggested above.
- II. Create a resource handout for potential nominees which includes:
 - a. Roles and Responsibilities of a member of the Parish Council
 - i. The mission of the parish as defined by the Regulations (see attachment A)
 - ii. What is the Parish Council (see attachment B)
 - iii. Expected time commitment and duty schedule (see attachment C)
 - iv. Specific responsibilities within the Parish (see attachment D)
 - b. Resources from the Church
 - i. Regulations of the Archdiocese (available on goarch.org)
 - ii. Local Parish Bylaws
 - iii. Parish Council as a Ministry (see attachment B)
 - c. List with dates of upcoming meetings and training they should attend (see attachment E)
 - i. Parish Assembly to be nominated
 - ii. Parish Council Training Seminar
 - iii. Parish Council Meetings to attend until the remainder of the year—to assist them in transitioning onto the council
 - iv. Budget workshops and meetings for the ensuing year
 - v. Election Date
 - vi. Required Metropolis Parish Council Seminars

Per the Regulations: All candidates shall attend a seminar conducted by the Priest prior to the election at which the Priest shall discuss and explain to the candidates the Uniform Parish Regulations, and the significance of the affirmation of office.
 - vii. Metropolis President Meetings
 - d. Application/ Information on themselves (see attachment F)
 - e. Copy of the Oath of Office (see attachment G)
 - f. Copy of the Metropolis form to be signed upon the conclusion of the seminar (see attachment H)
- III. Notice in Communiqués of the Parish
 - a. Announcing to the community the number of people to be elected.
 - b. Election Date
 - c. Nomination Procedures per the local bylaws if applicable
 - d. Who to contact for more information, for nomination packets and/or to determine their eligibility.

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Attachment A: The Mission of the Parish

Mission of the Parish Council

The mission of the parish as defined in the Uniform Parish Regulations – and therefore the mission of the Parish Council – is “... to keep, practice and proclaim the Orthodox Christian Faith pure and undefiled.”

PART THREE: UNIFORM PARISH REGULATION

CHAPTER ONE: PARISH AND PARISH ORGANIZATION

ARTICLE 15: PARISH

Section 1: The Parish is the local eucharistic community of the Church in a given locality; organized under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese whose ecclesiastical authority is its canonically consecrated Hierarchy. Locally, the Parish is headed by a canonically ordained and duly appointed Priest. The assignment of such appointed Priest shall bind the Parish to the Archdiocesan Regulations, Uniform Metropolis Regulations and Uniform Parish Regulations with the same force and effect as if the same were formally approved and adopted by the Parish.

Section 2: The aims and purposes of the Parish are to keep, practice and proclaim the Orthodox Christian Faith pure and undefiled.

Section 3: Parishes shall be governed in accordance with the holy canons, the Archdiocesan Charter and Regulations promulgated thereunder, and, as to canonical and ecclesiastical matters, by the decisions of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Eparchial Synod of the Archdiocese. In accordance with the Charter, the Parish shall express the life of the Church in the local community according to the Orthodox Christian Faith and Tradition, sanctifying the faithful through the Divine Liturgy and the Holy Sacraments. It shall edify the religious and ethical life of the faithful in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the decrees and canons of the Holy Apostles and the Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Church, as interpreted by the practice of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Section 4: The diakonia (ministry) of the Parish will include

- proclaiming and teaching the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox Faith;
- sanctifying the faithful through God's grace in worship, the Divine Liturgy and the other sacraments;
- enhancing its parishioners' spiritual life; and
- adding to the numbers of the faithful by receiving persons into the Church through instruction, baptism and/or chrismation.

In addition, the Parish shall establish educational and philanthropic activities to foster the aims and mission of the Parish and to edify its parishioners in the Faith and ethos of the Church.

The Parish shall also engage in such inter-Orthodox, ecumenical and interfaith activities as are consistent with the policies of the Archdiocese.

Section 5: The Parish shall conform faithfully to the worship, sacramental life, doctrines, canons and discipline of the Church. It shall also adhere to the Archdiocesan Charter, the Regulations and all Hierarchical encyclicals.

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Attachment B: What is the Parish Council (pg1)

PARISH COUNCIL

(From www.renewal.goarch.org.)

The president was preparing to exit Air Force One on an official visit. Before exiting the plane he took what seemed like a very long time checking his appearance in the mirror – first his hair, then his tie, and then his suit. When an aid teased him about his vanity, the president replied, “When I go out that door, I’m not just a man – I am the United States of America .”

In much the same way, parish council members represent their parish and the Orthodox Christian faith. As leaders of the community, parish council members are on the front lines and are able to have a long-term effect on their parish. To serve on the parish council is a ministry and those who serve are called to represent Christ to all whom they meet in all aspects of life.

Mission of the Parish Council

The mission of the parish as defined in the Uniform Parish Regulations – and therefore the mission of the Parish Council – is “... to keep, practice and proclaim the Orthodox Christian Faith pure and undefiled.”

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Rich Man walked by poor Lazarus every day. The Rich Man didn't hate Lazarus – he just ignored him, committing the sin of indifference. The opposite of love is not hate. The opposite of love is indifference. We have been blessed with great treasures of the faith and Lazarus lies at our gate. Lazarus is the visitor that walks through the doors of our church on Sunday morning. Lazarus is the non-Orthodox spouse. Lazarus is the lapsed Orthodox Christian visiting the parish after a long absence. Like the Rich Man in the parable, we often walk right by without noticing, and they eat from the crumbs that fall from our table.

If we believe that in Orthodoxy we have the fullness of the Truth, then we have the great responsibility – the Great Commission – to share it with everyone. As Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of ALL nations – EIS TA PANTA EQNH.

Parish Council Seminar - [Contact Chancellor Office of the Archdioceses for further information.](#)

Ambassadors of Faith

For non-Orthodox as well as for inactive Orthodox Christians, entering an Orthodox church can be a very uncomfortable, intimidating experience. Research has shown that non-believers attend church at least once each year, and when they attend, they are profoundly affected by their first impressions.

It is also important to note that the percentage of Greek Orthodox Christians marrying non-Orthodox Christians is in the range of 70-90%. Some priests will tell you that it is closer to 100%. If we don't make Orthodoxy real and accessible to the non-Orthodox spouse, then eventually we will lose the couple and their children.

Often the first person our visitors see is a member of the parish council. Reaching out to those who enter our doors with a handshake, a greeting and a welcoming smile could be the most important missionary work we do. Simply put -- friendliness has eternal implications. Unless people see in us the light and the love of Christ, they will not believe.

Choosing Suitable Candidates for the Parish Council

Parishioners are often nominated as candidates for the Parish Council because of their education, business experience or legal background. The best parish council members are not necessarily those who are business-oriented, but rather, those who are Church-oriented and Christ-centered. To be a good council member, one must be active in the worship and sacramental life of the Church. The best candidates are easy to find – they are in church.

We are Conciliar

The Priest is head of the Parish, and is charged with the guidance of the total Parish program. The parish council consists of the Priest, and the elected lay members, and is referred to as a *board* only when so required by local statute. In internal matters of the Church, we always use the designation of *Parish Council* . This is because one of the identifying traits of the Orthodox Church is that we are conciliar – decisions are made in council.

To refer to the Parish Council as “The Board” is a symptom of our inclination to apply the corporate paradigm to the operation of the Church. Although some tools used in corporate life may also be useful in the operation of the Church, the corporate paradigm falls short and reduces the local church to something less than she was meant to be.

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Attachment B: What is the Parish Council (pg2)

Setting An Example for the Parish

The duties of a parish council member (*UPR Ch 2, Article XII*) include regular attendance at divine services and participation in the sacramental life of the Church, "...thereby setting an example for the parish." To set an example for the parish will require that we overcome the stereotype of the parish council member who is rarely seen in church. It is easy to be like Martha -- Jesus, the Son of God, came to dinner and Martha spent the entire time in the kitchen "anxious and troubled about many things."

A Commitment to Serve

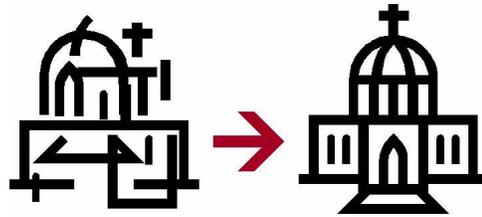
In the Oath of Office, the parish council members affirm that they "...will fulfill faithfully and sincerely the duties and obligations required of a member of the Parish Council..." No contract is signed, but a promise is made which rests on the shared commitment of all council members to serve the Church, which is the Body of Christ on earth. We are His hands, feet, eyes and more. To serve on the council is a ministry and a mission. We are called to use the gifts with which we have been blessed to carry out the work of the Church.

Fr. Jim Kordaris is the Director of the Archdiocesan Department of Parish Renewal, Outreach & Evangelism. Prior to his decision to pursue the priesthood, Fr. Jim served for six years on the parish council of the St. Mary's/Kimisis Greek Orthodox Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, including two years as President. Inquiries and comments may be sent by e-mail to ParishRenewal@goarch.org. Website: www.renewal.goarch.org.

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Attachment B: What is the Parish Council (pg3)



PARISH LEADERSHIP: *Connecting the Dots*

"...there are many parts, but one body." 1 Corinthians 12:20

Fr. James Kordaris

Our churches are busier than ever with youth activities, seniors group, athletics, choir, junior choir, Bible studies, support groups, community outreach, Sunday school, educational programs and much more. As these activities grow and develop leadership from within, they often take on a life of their own, disconnected from one another and from the Eucharistic community out of which they were formed.

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Cor. 12:27)

For a parish to be effective in its mission, all of its organizations and activities must be seen – and more importantly – must *see themselves* as members of one body, pursuing the same goals, and always leading toward the Eucharist. Sometimes we find that people will participate in one organization or ministry of the parish, yet they are rarely seen participating in Divine Liturgy. This happens in everything from Bible study to basketball. A priest from a large parish refers to this as the need to "connect the dots." All the activities, organizations and ministries need to connect in the Eucharist. And while all the various activities of the church may be worthwhile endeavors, they may not be moving people toward transfigured life in the within the body of Christ. We all know the argument: "What if this activity is the only activity in which a member of the parish is involved? Isn't it better to have some contact than none at all?" But if a parish organization is not led by a Christ-centered individual who sets an example by being present in Liturgy, how do we expect this activity to bring people to the Eucharist? An activity is effective when lives are transformed in such a way that people are inspired to become more Christ-like. One way to change perceptions is to refer to every activity and organization of the parish as a *ministry*, reminding us that everything the Church community does should lead people to Christ.

"Different kinds of service, but the same Lord." (1 Corinthians 12:5)

Often the various parish ministries and organization develop into one person's or one group's turf. The activity becomes an autonomous group within the church, not coordinated or integrated with others. Sometimes there may even be competition among the groups. This is not compatible with the vision of the Church as the body of Christ with many limbs and organs all working together.

Building a Leadership Team

An effective strategy for getting the limbs and organs of the body of Christ working together is to gather the leaders of all the various ministries on a regular basis to pray for the church, coordinate the parish calendar of events and discuss common activities and goals of the parish. The priest directs the parish leadership by presenting the vision or mission of the Church, and opens the lines of communication between organizations and ministries. A positive result of this can be that all begin to coordinate their efforts and cooperate in working toward a common goal. This happened recently at the parish of Saint Nicholas in Youngstown, Ohio where a monthly Saturday morning breakfast meeting of all the leaders of the various parish ministries and community organizations was initiated. As the ministries planned the parish's first annual Family Outreach Sunday, they were drawn together to work toward making this a successful event for their individual organizations and for the parish. Their coordinated effort resulted in attendance not seen at St. Nicholas since Pascha with attendance up by nearly 50 percent. Each organization hosted a booth in the church hall. Many provided food or refreshments to be served at the brunch, and the day was a positive experience for those who hosted and those who attended. Their first Family Outreach Sunday was a success in that it brought many inactive Orthodox Christians to church while bringing the ministries of the parish together to work toward a common goal.

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Attachment B: What is the Parish Council (pg4)

Parish Activities/Ministries Coordinator

In 1999 the clergy and lay leadership of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Portland, Oregon began to assess the growing needs of the parish, and to consider ways to coordinate and grow the ministries of the parish. Initially they considered hiring a youth director, but upon further consideration realized that there were parish needs beyond the scope of the youth program. The leadership at Holy Trinity concluded that what was needed was a parish staff member whose responsibility it would be to coordinate the growing number of existing parish ministries and to develop additional ministries. With the assistance of a grant from Leadership 100, the parish established the position of Parish Activities Coordinator, to address the challenge of organizing a large and active parish life, promoting volunteerism, fostering involvement in existing ministries, and working collaboratively with clergy to develop new ministries. Under the guidance of the parish priest, the coordinator works with the leaders of all parish ministries with a particular emphasis on youth related activities, and connects parishioners with suitable church ministries and programs. The position of Parish Activities Coordinator is outlined in the *Ministry Profiles* section of the www.Outreach.goarch.org web site.

“Without Vision the People Perish” (Proverbs 29:18)

Every parish has a different personality – different strengths and weaknesses. Every parish is located in a particular environment in a particular neighborhood. Every parish is made up of a different group of people with different needs, ethnic heritage, skills and education. For these reasons, every parish will have a different vision for the ministry that lies before them. Vision is a picture of the future that produces passion. With their priest as their guide, parish leadership is encouraged to hammer out a vision for the future of their church. Vision causes people to imagine the future of their church and to develop concrete steps to realize that vision. The greater importance of vision is that it creates *passion* in ministry. And if we are passionate about ministry, that passion will be contagious. People will be inspired to accomplish great work for the realization of the vision. As Orthodox Christian leaders, give all you can to this effort. Give all the time, service and prayer that you can give. Apply whatever gifts you have to this calling, because eternal lives are at stake.

Fr. Jim Kordaris (FrJimK@goarch.org) is Director of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Outreach & Evangelism (www.outreach.goarch.org) and pastor of Saint George Greek Orthodox Church on West 54th Street in New York.

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Attachment C: Expected Time Commitment and Duty (pg 1)

Sample Language to consider:

Meeting requirements: Attend a monthly meeting (usually the 2nd Wednesday of each month) and any additional meetings as required conducting the business of the Parish.

Be on duty every 4th week from Sunday morning to Saturday evening with a team of 3 other Parish Council members. All team members must serve on Sunday morning and someone from the team must cover all sacraments and events during that week. Help with services during Holy Week and other times during the year including funerals, weddings and baptisms.

Attend a Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly or National Congress

Itemize any expenses that a Parish Council Member may incur such as costs for continuing education, seminars, and conferences.

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Attachment D: Responsibilities and Duties (pg 1)

REGULATIONS ARTICLE 29: DUTIES OF PARISH COUNCIL

Section 1: The members of the Parish Council shall attend the Divine Liturgy regularly and participate in the sacramental life of the Church, thereby setting an example for the Parishioners. Under the leadership of the Priest, the Parish Council shall:

- A. Assist the Priest in the administration of the affairs and ministries of the Parish;
- B. Establish the appropriate committees, including but not limited to Stewardship, Finance, Fundraising, Planning and Real Estate committees;
- C. Utilize the Stewardship material provided by the Archdiocese to implement and expand the Parish Stewardship program and ministries;
- D. Prepare budgets for the Parish's administration and ministries and collect the revenue of the Parish;
- E. Provide for the Priest's remuneration and benefits in accordance with the Clergy Compensation Plan of the Archdiocese;
- F. Provide financing for the salaries of the Parish personnel;
- G. Provide financial resources for the Parish's administration and for the Parish's spiritual, educational and other ministries and expenses;
- H. Buy, sell or mortgage Parish property, subject to the approval of the Parish Assembly and the provisions of these Regulations;
- I. Provide for payments and assessments for support of the Archdiocese as fixed by the Congresses;
- J. Submit to the respective Hierarch and the Archdiocese, at the end of each year, the financial statement of the Parish for that year (certified by the Parish's Board of Auditors) and the Parish budget for the ensuing year;
- K. Submit annual Parish profile reports that may be required by the Archdiocese and the respective Archdiocesan District/Metropolis; and
- L. Adhere to the Charter, the Regulations and decisions promulgated at the Congresses.

Section 2: All personnel employed by the Parish including schoolteachers, are engaged or discharged by the Parish Council with the consent of the Priest.

Section 3: The Priest and Parish Council shall be responsible for all personnel employed by the Parish. In addition, the Priest and the Parish Council shall be responsible for the Parish's adherence with all applicable personnel and volunteer policies promulgated by the Archdiocese.

Section 4: Upon the expiration of its term, the Parish Council shall surrender to the succeeding Parish Council all Parish records, including the list of Parishioners, minute books, bankbooks, checkbooks, financial records, and all other property of the Parish.

Section 5: The Priest and Parish Council and its officers may exercise any additional authority, consistent with the Charter, Regulations and the Parish Bylaws.

REGULATIONS ARTICLE 30: PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Section 1: The Priest as head of the Parish, by virtue of the ecclesiastical authority vested in him, shall guide and oversee the Parish. The Priest together with the Parish Council is responsible to the respective Hierarch for the whole life and activities of his Parish.

Section 2: Each Parish shall be administered by the Priest and Parish Council cooperatively.

Section 3: All committees or boards of the Parish, except for the Board of Elections and the Board of Auditors, shall be under the jurisdiction of the Priest and Parish Council.

Section 4: If a problem should arise between a Priest and the Parish Council, the matter shall not be brought before the Parish Assembly. The Priest or the Parish Council shall have the right to refer the matter to the respective Hierarch.

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Attachment D: Specific Responsibilities

Sample Handout

Eligibility:

According to Parish By-laws, to be eligible to run for Parish Council, candidates must satisfy the following criteria:

- Be a Voting Member in Good Standing of the Parish for at least 1 year as defined by the Bylaws;
- Must be older than twenty-one years of age;
- Must live his or her life in accordance with the Faith and canons of the Church
- Be active in the Liturgical life of the Parish;
- Participate annually in the Stewardship Program of the Church
- Any person, or his or her spouse, while receiving compensation for services rendered to the Parish on a full or part-time basis, cannot serve on the Parish Council.

Further practical eligibility considerations:

- Be an active steward in the Parish (time, talent and treasure); and
- Demonstrate leadership within the Community.

Duties and Responsibilities if elected:

According to the Parish Bylaws, Parish Council members must:

- Begin duties immediately following the oath of office;
 - Attend church regularly, participate in the regular and special projects of the parish;
 - Fulfill annual stewardship obligations;
 - Be familiar with and comply with all bylaws of the parish and the archdiocese;
 - Oversee the programs and activities of the parish under the leadership of the priest;
 - Serve on committees appointed by the parish president;
 - Attend all regular and special meetings of the Parish Council;
 - Ensure that all financial matters of the parish are handled appropriately, including securing Parish Assembly approval for any items required by the bylaws;
 - Ensure that proper notice of all Parish Assemblies is given;
 - Act upon all decisions of the Parish Assemblies of the parish;
 - Handle all parish personnel matters;
 - Pre-approve all fund raising activities on parish property and by parish ministries.

Some Details of this Commitment:

Fulfilling the duties and responsibilities listed above means all candidates must be willing and able to undertake a variety of activities which include, but are not limited to:

- Attendance and participation in all meetings of the Parish Council (currently fourth Monday of each month for 3-4 hours) or additional meetings as needed; newly elected members should plan to attend the remaining monthly meetings this year;
- Serve “On-Duty” on a 3 to 4 week rotation during which time the member of Parish Council is responsible for arriving early for opening and/or staying late for opening and closing the facilities on their assigned times. This includes Liturgies (Sunday and weekday), meetings, church events, Sacraments (*e.g.* Baptism, Marriage) and possible private events.
- Share responsibility with other Parish Council members for planning, ushering and coordinating all Holy Week services and activities. Coordinating Holy Week activities includes all planning (tents, sound system, tables and chairs, set-up and take-down), scheduling and serving the Parish during the Agape picnic on Pascha;
- Participate on one or more committees within the Parish (*e.g.* Youth, External Ministry, Building, Stewardship, Bylaws, Elections, etc.);
- Participate in periodic Ministry planning sessions;
- Actively lead the Parish - This is not a figurehead position. Parish Council members must be at the forefront of Parish life inspiring others.
- Participate in adult religious education opportunities.
- Be available to attend regional, Metropolis and National meetings.

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Attachment E: Sample List with Dates of Upcoming Events

Important Dates and Activities to plan to attend:

Sept	9-28	6:30 Parish Council Meeting
October	10-21	Deadline for submitting the application
	10-25	Parish Assembly to accept nominations and determine slate
	10-26	5:30 Candidate Seminar and Photos taken
	10-26	6:30 Parish Council Meeting
November	11-7	9:00 to noon 2009 Budget Workshop – part I
	11-9	6:30 to ? 2009 Budget Workshop – part II (if not completed on 11-7)
	11-22	Elections
	11-23	6:00 Open Budget Meeting
	11-23	6:30 Parish Council Meeting (following Open Budget Meeting)
December	12-13	Parish Assembly to approve budget
	12-21	Parish Council Meeting
January	12-27; 1-3; or 1-10	Oath of Office – PC photo (date determined at Nov or Dec meeting and subject to receiving the ratification from the Metropolis)

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Attachment G: Copy of the Oath of Office

“I do solemnly affirm that I will uphold the dogma, teaching, traditions, Holy Canons, worship, and moral principles of the Greek Orthodox Church, as well as the constitutional charter, discipline, and regulations of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, and that I will fulfill faithfully and sincerely the duties and obligations required of a member of the Parish Council, so help me God.”

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Attachment H: Parish Council Pledge

I understand that the aims and purposes of the Parish are to keep, practice and proclaim the Orthodox Christian Faith pure and undefiled. I understand that the Parish shall express the life of the Church in the local community according to the Eastern (Hellenic) Orthodox faith and tradition, sanctifying the faithful, and edifying the religious and ethical life of the faithful in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, the decrees and Canons of the Holy Apostles and the Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Ancient Undivided Church as interpreted by the practice of our Mother Church of Christ, the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. I also understand that the diakonia (work and ministry) of the Parish will include proclaiming the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox faith, sanctifying the faithful through God’s grace in worship, the Divine Liturgy and the other Sacraments; enhancing their spiritual life; adding to their number instructing others and receiving them into the Church through baptism and/or chrismation; educating them in the Orthodox faith and in the ethos of the Church through the establishment of programs, schools and philanthropic activities and implementing Christian ministries.

I understand that the Metropolitan will regularly bless and systematically supervise each Parish. I understand that the Priest or Proistamenos heads the Parish and exercises in its behalf the priestly duties, directing its orderly life, preserving its unity, keeping it faithful to its divine purpose, sanctifying his flock through the administration of the sacraments and performance of all other prescribed services of worship, proclaiming the teachings of the Apostles and the Dogma of the Fathers, preaching the Word, teaching the commandments of the New Life, imparting a knowledge of the doctrines, traditions, Canons, and disciplines of the Church, and guiding the growth, progress and enlightenment of the congregation in the Christian life. I understand further that the Priest, as head of the Parish, by virtue of the Ecclesiastical authority vested in him, shall guide and oversee the total Parish program and is ultimately responsible, with the Parish Council, to the Metropolitan for the whole life and activities of his Parish. I understand that the Parish shall be administered by the Priest and the Parish Council cooperatively and that the Parish Council is comprised of the Priest and the elected lay members of the Parish who have been ratified by the Metropolitan of the Metropolis.

I understand that the duties of the Parish Council include the following:

- To administer the affairs of the Parish in such a manner as to aid the Priest in the fulfillment of its aims and purposes, establish a stewardship program, appoint a stewardship committee to implement and expand the stewardship program of the Parish.
- To collect the revenue of the Church, issuing receipts thereof and paying by check the salaries of the Parish personnel, Parish expenses, budgetary grant-in-aid for Parish educational and philanthropic organizations and such sums as may be fixed by the Clergy-Laity Congress for the support of the Archdiocese.
- To buy, sell or mortgage Parish property as provided by the Uniform Parish Regulations.
- To submit a budget for approval to the first General Assembly of each year, to submit monthly to the Archdiocese the portion of the total commitment allocation for the Archdiocese and Metropolis Ministries and needs, to submit to the Metropolitan at the end of each year a report of stewardship and submit annually to the Archdiocese and to the Metropolis the Parish budget for the ensuing year and the audited financial statement for the prior year.

I will be a model for the Parish by conforming faithfully to the worship and sacramental life of the Church, its doctrines, and Canons, discipline, the Archdiocesan Charter, and the Special Regulations and Uniform Parish Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, and the encyclicals of the Church. I will model faithful membership with my stewardship of time, talents, and treasures. I will apply the tenets of the Orthodox faith in my daily life and activities, will seek personal spiritual growth, attend Divine Liturgy and other services of worship on Sundays and Holy Days, keep the rules and fasts of the Orthodox tradition, will frequently receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, will train and teach the young according to the faith and spirit of Orthodoxy, will respect the Clergy, the Ecclesiastical authority and all governing bodies of the Church, will be obedient in all matters of faith and Ecclesiastical order, and will cooperate in every way towards the welfare and prosperity of the Parish and the success of its sacred mission. I will attend all Parish Council meetings unless there is a justifiable reason for not doing so. I will attend all General Assemblies of the Parish unless there is a justifiable reason for not doing so. I will attend all meetings called by the Metropolitan for members of the Parish Council or the officers holding my position on the Parish Council, unless there is a justifiable reason for not doing so.

I am willing to affirm the following oath without any reservation if I am elected to the Parish Council:

“I do solemnly affirm that I will uphold the dogma, teaching, traditions, Holy Canons, worship, and moral principles of the Greek Orthodox Church, as well as the constitutional charter, discipline, and regulations of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, and that I will fulfill faithfully and sincerely the duties and obligations required of a member of the Parish Council, so help me God.”

If I fail to adhere to the foregoing, I understand that I may be removed from the Parish Council by the Metropolitan of the Metropolis.

On this ____ day of _____, 20____, I solemnly affirm that I understand and will to my best ability adhere to the foregoing if I am elected to become a member of the Parish Council.

Name --printed

Signature

Parish Name/City/State