

## PART THREE

### UNIFORM PARISH REGULATION

#### CHAPTER ONE

#### PARISH AND PARISH ORGANIZATION

#### ARTICLE 15

#### THE 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 Hierarch. 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.

**Section 6:** Any non-conformance with the foregoing shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the canons. The Archbishop, upon the recommendation of the local Metropolitan, shall have the authority to revoke the ecclesiastical charter of a Parish, if, in his judgment, there is sufficient cause for such action. In each such case, notice of the revocation, stating the cause for such action, shall be forwarded to the Parish Council in writing.

**Section 7:** The Parish shall furthermore abide by the decisions of the Clergy-Laity Congresses irrespective of whether it was represented thereat, the administrative determinations of the Archdiocesan Council, and such interim legislation as may be adopted between Congresses by the Archdiocesan Council.

**Section 8:** Each Parish shall be known as the (name) Greek Orthodox Church of (locality). Each Parish shall use the authorized logo of the Archdiocese and the name of the respective Archdiocesan District/Metropolis on its stationery and publications, in accordance with the Archdiocesan Graphics Standards Manual.

## ARTICLE 16

### PARISH PROPERTY

**Section 1:** The Church edifice and other buildings constituting Parish property shall be used in accordance with the Charter to serve the religious, educational, cultural and philanthropic ministries of the Parish. Parish property shall be held and used by the Parish to carry out the purposes of the Orthodox Christian Faith as defined in Article 15.

**Section 2:** The Parish shall hold title to all of its real estate and personal property in its corporate name and no other, except as otherwise required by any applicable civil law. [The personal property shall only include property which is deemed to be real estate or which may create a lien upon real estate under the provisions of local law or any provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.] The Parish Council, in consultation with the Priest, shall administer such property for the benefit of the Parish.

**Section 3:** The Parish may purchase real and personal property, or sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber its real property, or construct a church edifice or other buildings upon approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the parishioners in good standing present at a Parish Assembly duly called (with at least ten (10) days prior written notice) for that purpose, provided that approval from the respective Hierarch is received, as follows:

A. The Parish's request for approval to the respective Hierarch shall be in writing and shall include the following documents:

1. A copy of the notice of the Parish Assembly certifying the date of mailing;
2. A copy of the minutes of the Parish Assembly signed by the Priest, Chairman and Secretary of the Assembly;
3. A survey of the realty and improvements, if any;
4. A description of the surrounding area, including its relationship to other Parishes, if any;

5. Financial statements as to the financing of the property/project including, but not limited to, the cost, the manner and terms of purchase, and the contemplated sources of income for payment and maintenance thereof; and

6. Such other information as shall be pertinent or as may be requested by the respective Hierarchy.

B. The respective Hierarchy shall consult with the Archdiocesan District/Metropolis Council in reviewing the Parish's request and may also appoint an *ad hoc* committee comprised of persons with expert knowledge and experience in finance, real estate, building construction and such other matters to advise him and the Local Council executive committee in their review. In the event that the respective Hierarchy determines that additional information is needed from the Parish in order to appropriately review its request, he shall request any such information from the Parish within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the Parish's submission.

**Section 4:** Parishes shall maintain the architectural, iconographic and artistic integrity of all Church edifices in accordance with Orthodox tradition. For that reason, Parishes shall submit to the respective Hierarchy, for his prior approval related to aesthetic and dogmatic concerns, all preliminary plans for:

A. The erection of a church structure or other Parish building;

B. Any major structural alteration to an existing church structure or other Parish building; or

C. The iconography or any appointments of a Church structure.

All final plans shall also be submitted to the respective Hierarchy for his prior approval.

A Hierarchy's review and approval under this Section shall be limited solely to aesthetic and dogmatic issues and no review by the Hierarchy shall be deemed to extend to or constitute a review or approval of engineering, architectural or mechanical plans, state or local safety or building code compliance or any other structural matter.

**Section 5:** All special contributions, bequests, gifts, and devises beyond Stewardship shall be used by the Parish only for the purposes for which they were made.

**Sections 6:** Based on the recommendation of the local Metropolitan, that a Parish is in heresy, schism, or defection from the Archdiocese, the Archbishop may declare the Parish in canonical disorder and may assume the administration of the Parish and control of its properties until the Archbishop, in consultation with the Metropolitan, declares the Parish to be in canonical order. In the event that the Archbishop, in consultation with the Metropolitan, determines that the Parish cannot be restored to canonical order, the title to properties shall vest in the Archdiocese. If under applicable law, title may not vest automatically in the Archdiocese, title shall vest in an ecclesiastical corporation controlled by the group of parishioners that the Archdiocese determines remains loyal to it.

**Section 7:** In the event that a Parish is deemed to be in canonical disorder and title to the Parish properties is vested in the Archdiocese, the Archbishop and the respective Hierarchy are authorized to sign any deed or other document as may be necessary.

## ARTICLE 17

### CLERGY

**Section 1:** The Priest by virtue of his canonical ordination and assignment heads and administers the Parish and exercises on its behalf the priestly duties, which consist in shepherding the Parish entrusted to his care, directing its orderly life, preserving its unity and keeping it faithful to its divine purpose. He shall sanctify his parishioners through the administration of the sacraments and the performance of all other prescribed services of worship. He shall also proclaim the Gospel and impart knowledge of the doctrines, traditions, canons and disciplines of the Church. Further, he shall guide the growth and progress of the Parish in the Christian life through the performance of his pastoral duties. Priests are accountable to their respective Hierarch and will submit a report of their ministry to him at least annually. The Eparchial Synod shall determine the format for these reports.

**Section 2:** Clergy entering the Archdiocese from the Holy Cross School of Theology, or otherwise, shall be initially assigned by the Archbishop in consultation with the respective Hierarch. Clergy are assigned or transferred by the respective Hierarch within his Archdiocesan District/Metropolis by virtue of the authority of his office and in accordance with the canons, ecclesiastical procedure and the needs of the Archdiocesan District/Metropolis. Clergy may be transferred between Metropolises in accordance with the provisions of the Archdiocesan Charter, Article 16, "Assignment and Transfer of Clergy." Prior to the assignment or transfer of a Priest, the respective Hierarch(s) shall inform all affected Parish Councils of the assignment/transfer upon consultation with the respective Priest and the respective Parish Council.

A. In accordance with the canons and ecclesiastical procedure, neither the Parish Council nor the Parish Assembly is authorized to dismiss a Priest.

B. All transfers and assignments and changes in a Priest's status shall be reported to the Archdiocese in a timely manner.

**Section 3:** The Priest shall have charge of all matters pertaining to the spiritual life and growth of the Parish, including, but not limited to, divine worship and related personnel. He shall determine the usage of all sacred vessels and appointments. He shall personally maintain the register books for all marriages, baptisms, chrismations, and funerals that take place at the Parish. In addition, the Priest must submit registry records and completed ecclesiastical marriage licenses to his respective Hierarch in a timely manner. He shall also promptly submit all required civil marriage licenses and documents to the appropriate governmental authorities in a timely manner.

**Sections 4:** When transferred, reassigned or removed, the Priest shall deliver to his respective Hierarch or his successor as may be appropriate: all sacred vessels and other liturgical items belonging to the Parish; and all registry books and other pertinent records of the Parish. In addition, the Priest shall also provide a written inventory of all such items to the respective Hierarch, his successor and the Parish Council.

**Section 5:** Where more than one Priest is assigned to a Parish, the head of the Parish Clergy is the Presiding Priest. Any other Clergy shall be directly responsible to him. The assignment of additional Clergy to a Parish shall be made by the respective Hierarch in consultation with the Presiding Priest.

**Section 6:** When a Priest must be reassigned for any reason, the respective Hierarch will make every effort to give him another assignment. In the event that a Priest is removed without cause, or cannot perform his priestly duties, and has not arbitrarily refused reassignment, the Archdiocese will provide for maintenance of his current remuneration and benefits, until he is reassigned, provided he does not refuse reassignment.

**Section 7:** Subject to canonical tradition, in the event that the service of a Priest in a Parish is interrupted for any reason and he cannot be reassigned by the respective Hierarch, the Priest shall have the right to request to appear before the Synodical Committee on Clergy Affairs for resolution of his case. In the event of the dismissal of a Priest for canonical reasons the rule of Spiritual Court shall apply.

**Section 8:** The Archdiocesan Council and the Archdiocesan Benefits Committee will establish remunerative standards for the Clergy. These standards, for the following year, shall be sent to each Parish annually, by September 30.

A. After the review and approval of the respective Hierarch, each Parish shall be obliged:

1. To assume the moving and travel expenses when a Priest is assigned to a Parish.
2. To compensate the Priest appropriately according to the established remunerative standards for the Clergy as found in the Clergy Compensation Plan.
3. To provide a housing allowance or a parish house including the payment of all utilities for such parish house. This designation is to be in the form of a Parish Council resolution and should be designated in advance of payment.
4. To provide the family Orthodox Health Plan Coverage (or single coverage as applicable).
5. To pay the full cost of existing Social Security (FICA/SECA) coverage at the full self-employment rate.
6. To either purchase or lease an automobile for use by the Priest and cover all related expenses.
7. To defray all expenses incurred in attending Clergy-Laity Congresses or Local Assemblies.
8. To provide for an annual vacation period of fifteen (15) calendar days, plus an additional week for each five (5) years of ordained service (up to a maximum of five (5) weeks), regardless of the amount of time served in his current Parish. Prior to absenting himself from his Parish, a Priest shall obtain written permission from the respective Hierarch.
9. To provide for a paid sabbatical of three (3) months after six (6) years of continuous service in the same Parish.

B. No Parish shall reduce, withhold or adversely alter a Priest's remuneration without the consent of the respective Hierarchy.

**Section 9:** Should a Priest become seriously ill or disabled while in the service of a Parish, he shall be compensated fully by the Parish during such illness for a period of at least three (3) months and at fifty percent (50%) for the next three (3) months.

**Section 10:** At every reasonable and practical opportunity, as approved by the respective Hierarchy, each Priest shall be encouraged to pursue his ongoing education by attending workshops, seminars and appropriate continuing education programs. The Parish, if approved by the Parish Council, shall subsidize the cost of such education and the Priest will receive his remuneration during this period.

**Section 11:** It shall be mandatory for each Priest to join and maintain current his participation in the Archdiocesan Pension Program and the Orthodox Health Plan in accordance with the provisions of said program/health plan.

## ARTICLE 18

### PARISHIONERS

**Section 1:** Every person who is baptized and chrismated according to the rites of the Orthodox Church is a parishioner. The religious, moral and social duties of a parishioner are to apply the tenets of the Orthodox Faith to his/her life and to: adhere to and live according to the tenets of the Orthodox faith; faithfully attend the Divine Liturgy and other worship services; participate regularly in the holy sacraments; respect all ecclesiastical authority and all governing bodies of the Church; be obedient in matters of the Faith, practice and ecclesiastical order; contribute towards the progress of the Church's sacred mission; and be an effective witness and example of the Orthodox Faith and Traditions to all people. A parishioner in good standing practices all the religious and moral duties as described in this Section 1. At a minimum, a parishioner in good standing must: be eighteen years of age or over; be current in his or her stewardship and other financial obligations to the Parish, abide by all the regulations herein stated and the Parish Bylaws; and cooperate in every way towards the welfare and well being of the Parish. (Stewardship is recommended to be ten percent (10%) of one's annual income as stated in Holy Scripture to help meet the financial obligations of the Parish, the Metropolis and the Archdiocese.)

**Section 2:** Any person wishing to be a parishioner in good standing in more than one Parish must remit his or her Stewardship financial obligation to each Parish as stated in Section 1 of this Article. A parishioner wishing to move from one Parish to another must present a letter of transfer from the Priest of the Parish from which he or she is moving stating that he or she is in good standing.

**Section 3:** No person shall be deemed a parishioner in good standing while: not adhering to the standards outlined in Sections 1 and 2 of this Article; retaining affiliation in an Orthodox Parish which defies the jurisdiction or the ecclesiastical authority of the Archdiocese; being a member of or practicing a non-Orthodox faith or other

religion; and deliberately disregarding and transgressing the moral law of the Church.

**Section 4:** The Priest shall judge any cases of special circumstances justifying the waiver of a parishioner's stewardship financial obligations.

**Section 5:** A parishioner in good standing has the right to attend, participate and vote at Parish Assemblies, as well as to vote in Parish Council elections. Each such parishioner may also be nominated for election to the Parish Council or to represent the Parish at a Local Assembly or the Congress.

**Section 6:** An Orthodox Christian parishioner in good standing at his or her canonical Orthodox Parish may serve as a sponsor in another Parish without being obliged to become a member in good standing at the Parish where the sacrament will take place. A parishioner may serve as a sponsor in another Parish by presenting a letter of good standing from his or her home Parish Priest.

**Section 7:** Each Parish shall maintain a Parish Record which shall include, at a minimum, the following information concerning each parishioner: baptismal and family name, occupation (optional), dates of baptism and/or chrismation and marriage, complete family record of spouse and children, date of entry into the Parish indicating if transferred from another Parish, date of death, and such other information that shall be deemed appropriate.

## ARTICLE 19

### PARISH MINISTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

**Section 1:** All Parish ministries and organizations shall be under the guidance and supervision of the Priest.

**Section 2:** A communicant under 18 years of age may be a member of any Parish youth organization, irrespective of whether his or her parents are parishioners in good standing of the Parish, upon approval of the Priest.

**Section 3:** Each Parish shall endeavor to have at least the following ministries: Chanter(s); a Choir; Acolytes; a Sunday (Catechetical) School; a Greek Language/ Cultural School; chapters of the Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA), Young Adult League (Y.A.L.), a Junior Orthodox Youth (JOY) program; a chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society; an Outreach and Evangelism Ministry; and such other ministries as are necessary to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of the Parish.

**Section 4:** The Bylaws of any Parish organizations shall comply with the Charter and Regulations and shall be subject to the approval of the Priest, Parish Council and the respective Hierarch.

## ARTICLE 20

### ORGANIZING NEW PARISHES

**Section 1:** New Parishes shall be organized according to the following procedure: When a Hierarch determines that an area of his Archdiocesan District/Metropolis may

be in need of a Parish, he shall appoint an *ad hoc* committee to study and investigate the feasibility of creating a new Parish. This committee shall utilize the resources available through the Archdiocese. The committee shall assist the Orthodox Christian communicants in the area and provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the respective Hierarch that a Parish can be supported in that locality. The prospective Parish shall form an Organizational Committee including at least the following subcommittees:

- A. A Planning Committee to study, analyze and formulate an overall program and prepare a proposed budget for the Parish;
- B. A Fund-Raising Committee;
- C. A Real Estate Committee to investigate, select and arrange for buildings and other facilities for the Parish's immediate needs; and
- D. A Stewardship/Membership Committee to prepare a complete list of the families and number of adults/children to be served by the Parish.

**Section 2:** Upon receipt of an application for permission to organize, the respective Hierarch shall provide the proposed Parish with a copy of the Archdiocese's Articles of Agreement for Organization of Parishes. The respective Hierarch shall consult with existing Parishes in the applicable geographic area. If the respective Hierarch decides, in his discretion, to grant permission to organize, he or his representative shall call an organizational meeting of those who signed the application. He or his representative shall preside at the organizational meeting. During the organizational meeting, an interim Parish Council shall be elected to serve until such time as the Parish is fully organized and accepts these Regulations. Together with his recommendation, the respective Hierarch shall submit to the Archdiocese copies of:

- A. All correspondence between the Metropolis and the Parish;
- B. All documents submitted by the proposed Parish;
- C. The minutes of the organizational meeting; and
- D. Any other pertinent information.

**Section 3:** Upon acceptance by the new Parish of the Archdiocesan Articles of Agreement for Organization of Parishes, the Charter, and these Regulations, and together with the recommendation of the respective Hierarch, the Archbishop will grant to the new Parish an ecclesiastical charter.

**Section 4:** The Priest and the interim Parish Council shall be authorized, by virtue of the issuance of the ecclesiastical charter, to take all necessary steps to incorporate the Parish. The Parish's Articles of Incorporation/Articles of Organization and Bylaws, shall conform to all Archdiocesan requirements for such documents and shall be filed with the Archdiocese for review and approval prior to any other use or filing.

**Section 5:** After the legal incorporation of the Parish, a Parish Council shall thereafter be elected, for a full term, in the manner prescribed in these Regulations.

**Section 6:** Any failure to comply with this Article may subject the Parish to revocation of its ecclesiastical charter under the provisions of Article 15, Section 6.

**Section 7:** The respective Hierarch will assign a Priest to a new Parish, if one is available. The respective Hierarch will serve new Parishes, which do not yet have a permanent Priest; Parishes, which are in the process of organizing; and existing

Parishes with fewer than fifty (50) families of the faithful in remote locations. An ecclesiastical charter shall not be granted to a new Parish except as specified in these Regulations.

## ARTICLE 21

### ORGANIZATION AND PARISH BYLAWS

**Section 1:** All Parishes must maintain and file Articles of Incorporation/Articles of Organization, Bylaws and/or other applicable corporate documents. All such documents shall comply with Archdiocesan requirements as such requirements may be amended, from time to time, by the Archdiocese. Parish Bylaws shall incorporate these Regulations by reference and may also include such additional provisions as shall be deemed necessary, by the Parish Assembly, to meet local needs. However, in the event of a conflict between a Parish's Articles of Incorporation/Articles of Organization, Bylaws or any other Parish document and these Regulations, the provisions of these Regulations shall govern. In the event that the Bylaws of a Parish do not specifically incorporate all of these Regulations by reference, they shall be deemed to do so.

**Section 2:** Upon the assignment of a Priest by the respective Hierarch, the Parish accepts and agrees to comply with the Charter and Regulations of the Archdiocese. A Parish's Articles of Incorporation/Articles of Organization, Bylaws and any other applicable corporate documents shall be submitted to the Archdiocese through the Metropolis for review and approval. Any amendment(s) to such documents shall also be submitted for review and approval, prior to the effective date of the amendment(s). Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Archdiocese's and/or respective Archdiocesan District/Metropolis' failure to review and/or to disapprove any document(s) or provision(s) thereof shall not be deemed a waiver of the right to subsequently review and/or disapprove the document(s) or any provision(s) thereof.

## ARTICLE 22

### NON-VIABLE PARISHES

**Section 1:** When it is determined by the Parish Council that the Parish is incapable of sustaining itself and wishes to be dissolved, a Parish Assembly shall be called. If three-fourths (3/4) of the existing parishioners in good standing favor such dissolution or in the event that a Parish has been disbanded and a Parish Assembly cannot be called, the Archbishop in consultation with the respective Hierarch shall have the authority to declare the said Parish dissolved or disbanded and its properties shall devolve to the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese, in consultation with the respective Hierarch, shall apply the net proceeds of any property sale for the benefit of a Parish(es) in the same Archdiocesan District/Metropolis.

**Section 2:** The respective Hierarch has the authority to recommend revocation of the ecclesiastical charter of a Parish in the event he deems the Parish to be non-viable.

## **ARTICLE 23**

### **MERGER OF PARISHES**

**Section 1:** When it is determined by the Parish Councils of two or more Parishes that it would be in the best interests of such Parishes to merge, and to have only one church edifice, Parish Assemblies for each Parish shall be duly called, with at least ten (10) days written notice. A quorum must be present at each Parish Assembly. Approval of the merger shall require the approval of all Parish Assemblies by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Parishioners present and voting at the Parish Assemblies. The consent of the respective Hierarch shall also be required for the merger of Parishes.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **PARISH COUNCIL**

## **ARTICLE 24**

### **PARISH COUNCIL**

**Section 1:** To serve on a Parish Council is a ministry and all those who serve are called to represent Christ and the Orthodox Faith to all whom they meet in all aspects of life. The Parish Council shall consist of the Priest, as the head of the Parish, and a number of elected lay members fixed by the Parish Bylaws or by local statute according to the needs of the Parish. The Parish Council is responsible to the Parish Assembly and to the respective Hierarch for conducting all Parish affairs in keeping with the mission, aims and purposes of the Church as set forth in the Charter and these Regulations. The Parish Council shall be deemed to mean also Board of Trustees or Board of Directors when such designations are required by local statute. The Priest shall be a nonvoting member of the Parish Council.

**Section 2:** The officers of the Parish Council shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers as the Parish Bylaws require.

**Section 3:** The members of the Parish Council are elected for a term not to exceed three (3) years by the parishioners in good standing.

**Section 4:** No employee of the Parish may serve on the Parish Council, the Board of Auditors, or the Board of Elections.

**Section 5:** A vacancy on the Parish Council shall be considered to exist in the event of: the death or resignation of a member; the physical or mental incapacity of a member; the invalidation of the election of a member; or the failure of a member to be current in his Stewardship financial obligations to the Parish.

A. Removal from the Parish Council shall also be considered when a member: (1) is not or has ceased to be loyal to the doctrines, canons,

worship, discipline, customs and practices of the Church; (2) is in violation of these Regulations or the Hierarchical Encyclicals of the Archdiocese; (3) does not recognize the duly constituted ecclesiastical authorities of the Metropolis or Archdiocese; (4) is guilty of a serious moral transgression; or (5) has violated his or her affirmation of office; or (6) has engaged in actions which do not further the administrative or spiritual well being of the Parish, the Metropolis or the Archdiocese.

B. In the event that the Priest believes that the removal of a Parish Council member is required for one of the reasons listed in subsections (1) through (5) above, the Priest shall submit his recommendation, in writing, for the removal of the member to the respective Hierarchy.

C. If, the respective Hierarchy, upon the recommendation of the Priest, or for any other reason, determines that the removal of a Parish Council member is necessary for one or more of the reasons listed in subsections (1) through (5) above, the respective Hierarchy shall render a decision regarding the matter and shall notify the Priest and Parish Council of such decision. If any member(s) of the Parish Council is (are) removed, the matter shall not be brought before a Parish Assembly.

D. Prior to removing all or a majority of the members of a Parish Council for any reason(s) during the same twelve (12) month period, the respective Hierarchy shall consult with and obtain the consent of the Synod.

E. When an individual or individuals are removed from the Parish Council by the respective Hierarchy, the vacancy(ies) created shall be filled through direct appointment by the respective Hierarchy, with a recommendation from the Priest and Parish Council, from among the Parish's parishioners in good standing to fulfill the term of the person removed. The interim Parish Council shall serve for such period of time as the Hierarchy may determine, but in no event longer than twelve (12) months.

**Section 6:** Members of the Parish Council must attend Parish Council meetings. No proxies are permitted. To the extent permitted by applicable law, in the event of an emergency, a special telephonic meeting may be called by the Priest and Parish Council President. A member, who misses three (3) consecutive meetings without justifiable cause, may be relieved of his or her office upon prior notice to the member and the majority vote of the Parish Council.

**Section 7:** Except as specified above with respect to removals by the respective Hierarchy, a vacancy on the Parish Council shall be promptly filled by the Parish Council by electing a successor therefor from among the parishioners in good standing of the Parish. Such successor shall serve for the unexpired portion of the term of the vacant office. If a vacancy on the Parish Council occurs after the Parish Council elections but before the first meeting of the Parish Council at which officers are elected, the vacancy shall be filled after the election of Parish Council officers.

**Section 8:** All newly appointed members who fill a vacancy of the Parish Council, must attend a Parish Council Seminar to be conducted by the Priest prior to taking the affirmation of office and assuming the duties of their position.

*Local By-law Article 24, Section 9: The number of members of the Parish Council is 15 members. Seven members will be elected on the even year and 8 members will be elected on the odd years. The term of office shall be two years.*

## ARTICLE 25

### ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCIL

**Section 1:** Members of the Parish Council shall be elected by parishioners in good standing of the Parish in accordance with the Regulations and the Parish Bylaws. The election of the members of the Parish Council shall be held no earlier than the first Sunday in November, and no later than the second Sunday in December.

**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.

**Section 3:** Candidates for election to the Parish Council shall be nominated in accordance with the provisions of the Parish Bylaws.

A. 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.

B. At the discretion of the respective Hierarchy, such seminar may be held locally or regionally, provided that candidates are given appropriate advance notice and more than one reasonable opportunity to attend the seminar in a location within close proximity to the applicable Parish.

C. In the event that an otherwise eligible candidate(s) cannot attend the scheduled seminar(s) for justifiable cause, the Priest shall meet privately with such individual(s) to provide the seminar.

D. At the conclusion of the seminar all candidates must sign a statement acknowledging that they understand the Regulations and will abide by them and the affirmation of office. If a candidate for the Parish Council does not attend a seminar and sign the statement, his/her name shall be deleted from the list of candidates.

**Section 4:** A parishioner in good standing and duly enrolled in the Parish Record but delinquent in his or her Parish stewardship obligations for the current year may vote in the election by meeting his or her stewardship obligation prior to the election, unless Parish Bylaws have established alternate deadlines in this regard. If a Parishioner is delinquent for more than the current calendar year, he or she may vote in the Parish Council elections only if he or she has met his or her unfulfilled stewardship financial obligations at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the elections.

**Section 5:** A new parishioner of the Parish may vote in the election if he/she has become a member in good standing at least three (3) months prior thereto.

**Section 6:** Parish Bylaws may provide for absentee balloting only in the case of elections of the Parish Council. Such ballots must be in the hands of the Board of Elections not later than the commencement of voting and shall be opened and tabulated with the ballots personally cast. No proxies shall be allowed.

**Section 7:** Elections shall be held at a place on Parish premises previously announced by the Board of Elections and voting shall be by secret ballot. Voting shall begin after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy and shall terminate on the same day at such time as determined by local Parish Bylaws.

**Section 8:** The election results shall be entered in the minutes of the first Parish Council meeting, showing the number of votes cast for each candidate, and shall be signed by each member of the Board of Elections. The candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be declared elected for the ensuing term, subject to ratification by the respective Hierarch. In the event of a tied vote, the other members of the incoming Parish Council shall fill the office from among the tied candidates by majority vote at their first Parish Council meeting, pending the ratification by the respective Hierarch. The tied candidates, if otherwise found to be qualified, may be provisionally approved by the respective Hierarch if he ratifies the election results and the elected individual may, upon his/her election, take the affirmation of office and participate in the election of officers.

**Section 9:** Any parishioner in good standing of the Parish questioning the validity of any election may, within five (5) days after such election, lodge a written protest with the respective Hierarch. Such protest shall be signed by the questioning parishioner and at least four (4) other parishioners in good standing and shall list in detail all the reasons for the protest. In the event that a protest is filed and such protest is upheld and deemed valid, the respective Hierarch will declare the protested election void and a new election will be ordered. The decision of the respective Hierarch thereon shall be final.

**Section 10:** In case of the resignation of any member-elect of the incoming Parish Council, or a vacancy for any other reason, in the interim between the day of Parish Council elections and the election of officers, the members of the incoming Council shall, after the election of officers, elect a new member from among the Parish's parishioners in good standing to fill the vacancy.

**Section 11:** In the event that an insufficient number of candidates shall be nominated for election to the Parish Council, or the number nominated is equal to the number of vacancies, the election of those nominated shall take place in accordance with the election procedures established by these Regulations. The Parish Council, after the ratification and the taking of office of any new members, and the election of officers shall proceed to fill any vacancies on the Council from among the Parish's parishioners in good standing. Those elected by the Parish Council shall, in such order as may be determined by the Council, and following ratification by the respective Hierarch, serve the term that a member duly elected by the Parish would have served.

***Local By-law Article 25, Section 12:*** *Nomination to the Parish Council shall be by the submission of a signed application to the standing Board of Elections and in accordance with all provisions of the UPR.*

***Local By-law Article 25, Section 13:*** *Absentee ballots are permitted in the election of the Parish Council. Such absentee ballots shall be available the Sunday prior to the elections. Absentee ballots may be obtained either in person at the Church office or by mail. The deadline for returning the ballots shall be consistent with the provisions of the UPR.*

***Local By-law Article 25, Section 14:*** *The time for voting shall be from the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy until 4:00 pm.*

## ARTICLE 26

### RATIFICATION OF ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCIL AND AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE

**Section 1:** No earlier than five (5) and not later than eight (8) days after the election is held, the Priest shall forward the results to the respective Hierarchy. The Priest shall at the same time verify in writing that all candidates were qualified and that the election was conducted in accordance with these Regulations and the Parish Bylaws. It shall be confirmed that the Parish has met its financial obligations to the Archdiocese including the Total Commitment and the Archdiocese Benefits Program Assessment.

**Section 2:** The election will not be considered final until receipt of ratification by the respective Hierarchy, following the process described in Section 1 above. The affirmation of office shall not be administered until such ratification is received. The existing Parish Council shall continue to fulfill its function until the election of the new Parish Council is ratified and members have taken the affirmation of office.

**Section 3:** After ratification of the election has been received from the respective Hierarchy, a special ceremony shall be held at the close of the Divine Liturgy in which all the members of the Parish Council shall take the affirmation of office jointly. In the event that a member elected to the Parish Council is not present for the affirmation of office, the Priest shall administer the affirmation to such member at the first Parish Council meeting, prior to the election of officers. The affirmation shall be administered by the Priest and shall be repeated by all the members of the Parish Council. The affirmation of office shall be administered no later than the second Sunday in January. Until such time, the prior Parish Council shall continue to fulfill the responsibilities of the Parish Council.

**Section 4:** Each member or member-elect of the Parish Council is obliged, without exception, to take the following affirmation of office and thereafter subscribe his/her name thereto:

A. "I, (name) do solemnly affirm that I will uphold the dogmas, teachings, traditions, holy canons, discipline, worship and moral principles of the Greek Orthodox Church, as well as the Charter and Regulations of the

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese 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."

B. A person declining to affirm and subscribe to same shall not be a member of the Parish Council and his or her office shall be deemed vacant.

**Section 5:** In the event the respective Hierarch declines to ratify the election of one or more of the persons elected to a Parish Council, he shall state his reason for such action and shall direct the Parish to conduct a special election to fill the vacancy(ies) thus created. He may appoint person(s) to serve as interim members of the Parish Council until such election is held. In the event the respective Hierarch declines to ratify the election of a majority or more of the members of a Parish Council, he shall first consult with the Archbishop.

## ARTICLE 27

### ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS

**Section 1:** Following the administering of the affirmation of office, the Parish Council shall promptly convene to elect its officers under the chairmanship of the Priest who shall not vote. No absentee ballots or proxies shall be permitted.

**Section 2:** The offices of the President or Treasurer shall not be held by the same person for more than six (6) consecutive years, except by special permission of the respective Hierarch.

**Section 3:** In the event that the office of the President of the Parish Council shall become vacant, the Vice President or if more than one the First Vice President, shall assume the office of the President. Any other office, which may become vacant, shall be filled by election of the Parish Council.

*Local By-law Article 27, Section 4: In addition to the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, there shall be a Financial Secretary.*

## ARTICLE 28

### MEETINGS OF PARISH COUNCIL

**Section 1:** The Parish Council shall generally hold regular meetings at least once a month, and special meetings whenever the Priest, the President, or a majority of the Parish Council shall deem it necessary.

**Section 2:** A majority of the members of the Parish Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Vacancies on the Parish Council shall not be used in order to establish a quorum.

**Section 3:** The minutes of the meetings of the Parish Council shall be signed by the Priest, the President and the Secretary.

*Local By-law Article 28, Section 4: All Parish Council meetings shall be conducted according to the UPR and the Parish bylaws. Roberts Rules of Order may be consulted for further clarification, if necessary.*

## 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 Hierarchy 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.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PARISH ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

#### 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.

*Local By-law Article 30, Section 5: All Parish Assemblies shall be conducted according to the UPR and the Parish bylaws. Roberts Rules of Order may be consulted for further clarification, if necessary.*

#### ARTICLE 31

##### PARISH ASSEMBLY

**Section 1:** A Parish Assembly may be convened for matters other than those involving canonical and dogmatic issues. The Parish Assembly is the general meeting of the Parishioners in good standing of the Parish and is the general policymaking and appropriating body of the Parish.

**Section 2:** Notice of a Parish Assembly shall be mailed to all Parishioners in good standing at least ten (10) days prior to the Assembly and shall include the agenda. The agenda shall be prepared by the Priest and the Parish Council and shall include all items to be discussed at the Assembly.

**Section 3:** A Parish Assembly consists of parishioners in good standing of the Parish who have met their stewardship obligations to the Parish in accordance with the Parish Bylaws. A person whose name appears on the Stewardship rolls but who is in

arrears in the payment of his/her stewardship obligations may take part in the Parish Assembly by meeting such stewardship obligations on or before the date of the meeting. If a Parishioner is delinquent for more than the current calendar year, he or she may vote at the Parish Assembly only after that parishioner has met the unfulfilled stewardship financial obligations at least thirty (30) days before the Parish Assembly. New parishioners may exercise their vote at Parish Assemblies if they have been parishioners in good standing for at least three months. The Priest shall be a non-voting participant of the Parish Assembly.

**Section 4:** The quorum for a Parish Assembly under local By-laws shall be as high as possible in such number of parishioners in good standing as its By-laws may determine. If a quorum cannot be achieved, no vote can be taken. If a quorum is not present, the Parish Assembly shall be called a second time within twenty-one (21) days. At such time, decisions may be taken by the number of parishioners in good standing present, with the exception of matters pertaining to the purchase, sale or encumbering of Parish property, in which case a quorum of parishioners in good standing shall be required.

*Local By-law Article 31, Section 4.1: A quorum for the Parish Assembly shall consist of 35 members in good standing.*

**Section 5:** Proxies shall not be permitted at a Parish Assembly.

**Section 6:** Regular Parish Assemblies shall be convened by the Priest and the Parish Council, at least twice each year, at dates fixed by the Parish Council.

**Section 7:** Special Parish Assemblies shall be held when the Priest and/or Parish Council deem it necessary. Subject to Section 1 above, a special Parish Assembly may be convened. In addition, and except as otherwise prohibited by these Regulations or required by law, if at least ten percent (10%) of the Parishioners in good standing of the Parish submit a written petition requesting a Parish Assembly, a special Parish Assembly shall be convened. Any such petition must be submitted to the Priest and the Parish Council stating the purpose for the meeting.

**Section 8:** The Chairman of the Parish Assembly shall be elected by the parishioners in good standing present.

**Section 9:** The Secretary of the Parish Assembly shall be appointed by the Chairman and shall record the minutes of the Assembly. The minutes of the Parish Assembly shall be signed by the Priest, the Chairman and the Secretary of the Parish Assembly.

*Local By-law Article 31, Section 10: The chairman of the Assembly may appoint a parliamentarian, if needed*

## ARTICLE 32

### BOARD OF ELECTIONS

**Section 1:** The Board of Elections shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members elected at a Regular Parish Assembly within the same year as the election from

among those who are not candidates for election to the Parish Council. Immediate family members of candidates and incumbent Parish Council members are not eligible to serve on the Board of Elections.

***Local By-law Article 32, Section 1.1:*** Immediate family shall be defined as husband-wife, parents, brother-sister, children

**Section 2:** The Board of Elections shall, in cooperation with the Parish Priest, verify the eligibility of the list of candidates, notify all eligible Parishioners concerning the elections, supervise the elections and tabulate and report the results. The Priest shall be advised of all meetings of the Board of Elections, which he may attend if he so desires. The Priest shall certify that all the candidates are Parishioners in good standing as specified in Article 19, Sections 1 and 2.

**Section 3:** A vacancy on the Board of Elections shall be filled by the Parish Council by electing a successor therefor from among the parishioners in good standing who are not candidates for election to the Parish Council.

***Local By-law Article 32, Section 4:*** The Board of Elections shall specify the maximum number of votes per ballot. The maximum number of votes per ballot shall correspond with the total number of seats up for election. The minimum number of votes per ballot shall be one vote.

## ARTICLE 33

### BOARD OF AUDITORS

**Section 1:** The Board of Auditors shall consist of at least three parishioners none of whom are members of the Parish Council. The Board of Auditors shall be elected at the last Parish Assembly preceding an election from among those who have not served on the Parish Council for the year being audited and who are not candidates for election to the Parish Council. The Board of Auditors shall have the financial competency to properly execute its responsibilities.

**Section 2:** The Board of Auditors shall audit financial records of the prior year and prepare a report of such audit for presentation to the Parish Assembly. After review by the Parish Assembly, the Parish Council shall transmit copies of the final audit to the respective Hierarch and the Archdiocese.

**Section 3:** A vacancy on the Board of Auditors shall be filled by the Parish Council by electing a successor therefor from amongst the parishioners of the Parish in good standing for the unexpired portion of the term of such vacancy.

***Local By-law Article 33, Section 4:*** The Parish Council shall submit all financial records and documents to the Board of Auditors in a timely manner. The Board of Auditors shall submit the audit report at the first Parish Assembly of the year.

## ARTICLE 34

### PARISH FINANCES AND ARCHDIOCESAN TOTAL COMMITMENT

- Section 1:** The Parish Council shall be the custodian of all Parish funds.
- Section 2:** The Parish fiscal year shall be the calendar year. At the first Parish Assembly of each year the Parish Council shall present a financial report detailing all income and expenses for the preceding year.
- Section 3:** The budget for the ensuing year shall likewise be submitted for approval by the Parish Assembly at the last regular meeting of the prior year.
- Section 4:** The Parish budget shall include appropriations for sending its delegates to the Clergy-Laity Congresses and Local Assemblies.
- Section 5:** The Parish Budgets must include a line item for Archdiocesan Total Commitment, which shall be calculated in accordance with the decisions of the most recent Congress.
- Section 6:** Full disclosure of each Parish's finances and support through the Total Commitment program are critical to the operation of the Archdiocese and the fulfillment of its mission and ministries. The respective Hierarchy is responsible for ensuring that each Parish in his Archdiocesan District/Metropolis submits the financial records required under these Regulations and meets its Total Commitment to the Archdiocese, as required under these Regulations. As such, he has the authority to take such measures and to impose such financial and other restrictions, as he deems necessary and appropriate to enforce the Parish's obligations.
- Section 7:** Parish Financial Statements must be forwarded to the Archdiocese and Metropolis no later than May 15th of the subsequent year and must:
- A. Include any and all Corporations, Institutions and Entities under the direct or indirect control of the Parish or Parish Council. Financial activities outside of the normal Parish operating statements must be reported, however, they can be presented separately and need not be consolidated into the Parish operating statements.
  - B. Include a Balance Sheet, Income and Loss Statement and Budgets approved by the Parish Assemblies.
  - C. Be certified in writing as to their validity by the Parish Priest, Parish Council President and Treasurer.
  - D. Be prepared according to the guidelines as set forth by the Archdiocesan Council.
  - E. Include and report all activities of the Parish including but not limited to Building Funds, Festivals, Special Appeals or any and all restricted Fund Activities.
  - F. Submit the Parish's Financial Statements and complete copies of all insurance policies currently in force for the Parish.
- Section 8:** Each Parish is required to meet the Total Commitment financial obligations and financial reporting requirements as outlined in Section 5 of this Article.
- A. In the event a Parish does not submit the required financial records to the Archdiocesan District/Metropolis within thirty (30) days of receipt of a

written request for such records, the Parish's commitment may be raised twenty-five percent (25%) from the previous year's amount. No meetings or discussions with a Parish will be held until such records are received.

B. Each Parish must remit monthly to the Archdiocese the portion of its Total Commitment allocation for Archdiocesan and Metropolis needs as determined by the Clergy-Laity Congress and the respective Hierarchy.

C. Failure to remain current in the Parish's Total Commitment and Archdiocesan Benefits Assessment prevents ratification of Parish Council elections. Parish Council elections will not be ratified until the year's commitment is met or agreed arrangements are approved by the respective Hierarchy.

D. If a Parish refuses to remit its Total Commitment, the Archdiocesan District/Metropolis may conduct a certified audit of the Parish at the Parish's expense.

E. If a Parish is delinquent in its Total Commitment to the Archdiocese for the prior year, the Parish's delegates will not be allowed to vote at the Clergy-Laity Congress unless authorized otherwise by the respective Hierarchy, as specified in Article 4, Section 6.

**Section 9:** Notwithstanding the other provisions of Article 34, Section 5, the respective Hierarchy shall have the authority to make special provisions in the matter of a Parish's Total Commitment financial obligations to the Archdiocese, as he deems necessary and appropriate. The Archdiocese shall be notified of all such special provisions made by a respective Hierarchy.

*Local By-law Article 34, Section 10: General Assembly approval shall be obtained for non-budgeted line item expenditures exceeding \$3000.00*

## **PART FOUR**

### **ARTICLE 35**

#### **AMENDMENT OF REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL TEXT**

**Section 1:** These Regulations may be amended as provided in the Archdiocesan Charter, Article 22 and such amendments shall become effective immediately following their ratification by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In the event that no response is received from the Ecumenical Patriarchate within ninety (90) days following receipt of the amendments by it, the amendments shall be deemed approved. Following their approval, the Regulations as amended, must be faithfully and firmly adhered to by all the Parishes, whether or not they were represented at the Congress, and regardless of whether they voted with the minority.

**Section 2:** The English Text of these Regulations shall be deemed for all purposes the official text.

*Local By-law Article 35, Section 3: The procedure for amending the By-laws of the parish shall be consistent with the UPR and the Parish By-laws. For a by-law to*

*be proposed, it must first be presented on the floor of a General Assembly. By-law proposals may only be submitted by the Parish Council or a member in good standing of the parish. After receiving a second, the By-law shall be referred to the by-law committee to be prepared for publication. The by-law committee shall then publish the proposed text in parish publications at least 10 days before the next Parish Assembly where that By-law will be presented for approval. Approval of the by-law requires 2/3 majority for passage. The by-law will then be submitted to the Metropolis for ratification before being in force.*

***Local By-law Article 35, Section 4:*** *The bylaw committee is an ad-hoc committee of the parish council. A by-law committee will be formed when the Archdiocese issues a revision of the Uniform Parish Regulations or when the Parish Council or the General Assembly sees a need. The Parish council shall appoint and oversee the work of the by-law committee. The by-law committee shall consist of the Priest, Parish Council President, two members from the Parish Council and two Stewards from the membership. The work of the by-law committee is to review and commit to writing the proposed local bylaw(s) consistent with the needs of the parish and the UPR. The length of mandate for the by-law committee exists until the vote on the by-law(s) at a duly called General Assembly.*

Revised 11/05/2008