



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS ^{OF} ATLANTA

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ

October 16, 2025

TO: All Parish Priests, Esteemed Parish Councils and Board of Elections of the Metropolis of Atlanta

"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". (2Cor. 4:6)

Soon, my beloved, you will plan for your Fall General Assemblies and for your Parish Council Elections. In doing so, I pray you will pause, as a Parish Family to give thanks to God for sustaining your Stewardship Diakonia to His Holy Church for yet another year. *These instructions are for parishes having elections in 2025.*

To assist you and your Board of Elections in the execution of a smooth elections process, we are enclosing a set of the Election Guidelines as well as a copy of the Uniform Parish Regulations of our Holy Archdiocese. I urge you to review them carefully and implement them faithfully.

As always, swift processing and ratification of your Parish Council Election results depends on COMPLETE, TRUTHFUL AND ACCURATE REPORTING OF SAME ON YOUR PART. To achieve that:

- A. Please review and use the "Parish Council Election Guidelines" enclosed.
- B. Please ensure that candidates for the Parish Council be members in good standing of the Parish for at least one year immediately preceding the date of the election and live their lives and activities according with the faith and canons of the Church.
- C. Your Election Chairman must ensure that your Parish leadership fills out and signs as indicated **all of the enclosed forms** before mailing them in **one complete submission** to the Metropolis Office of the Chancellor. **Your cover page will be the "Checklist for Parish Election Ratification". Only complete TOP portion of checklist.**
- D. Each candidate shall attend a regional seminar as scheduled by each Conference Vicar for the purpose of discussing the UPR and the significance of the affirmation of office. (Please see next two pages of this letter for details concerning this procedure implemented in the Metropolis of Atlanta in 2006.)
- E. Please check with your Parish Council to ensure that your parish's Archdiocesan financial stewardship commitment to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta for its missions and obligations has been met in full for 2025 (which include Total Allocation & Priest Benefits payments. If not, please do **not** send until all paperwork and their affirmations can be signed and are complete.

Beseeching the Lord's sufficient grace and power upon all of you and upon our beloved Nation, I assure you of my unwavering commitment to serving your needs.

Faithfully yours with love in Christ,
Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Chancellor
Enclosures

2480 Clairmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30329 Telephone: 404-634-9345 Fax:
404-634-2471 Web: www.atlmetropolis.org E-mail: info@atlanta.goarch.org



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS ^{OF} ATLANTA

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ

October 16, 2025

TO: All Parish Priests, Esteemed Parish Councils and Board of Elections of the Metropolis of Atlanta

In November and December, our parishes will be conducting elections for the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Churches of the Metropolis of Atlanta. The Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese indicate that as a prerequisite for elections, all candidates must attend a pre-election seminar. **Article 25, Section 3, Part A, B and D state: “All candidates shall attend a seminar conducted by the priest prior to the election at which the priest shall discuss the UPR, and the significance of the affirmation of office. At the discretion of the respective Hierarch, such seminar may be held locally or regionally, provided the candidates are given appropriate advance notice.... 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, their name shall be deleted from the list of candidates.”**

His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos has requested that regional pre-election seminars required by the UPR be scheduled in each of our seven conferences for all the Parish Council candidates. The presentations will be planned by the seven Conference Vicars and assisted by our Conference Ambassadors and area clergy. The seminar(s) will be scheduled on various dates and locations within each Conference, so it is important for each Priest/Board of Elections Chairman to contact your Vicar to ensure your parish candidates have adequate notice and access to training dates/locations. Please emphasize that the seminar is mandatory for all candidates, however, if a candidate has a **justifiable cause**, then the local priest will meet with the candidate, as provided by Article 25, Section 3, Part C. (List of scheduled conference training dates is on reverse side.)

On behalf of His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos, I convey my appreciation for your consideration and cooperation with this requirement.

Faithfully yours with love in Christ,

+ Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis

Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis
Chancellor



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS ^{OF} ATLANTA

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ

October 16, 2025

CONFERENCE DATES AND LOCATIONS FOR REGIONAL PARISH COUNCIL TRAINING SEMINARS 2025

*All Parish Council Candidates must attend one of the sessions offered by each Conference Vicar.
Election Committees, please call your Vicar or email to confirm training date, time and place.*

CONFERENCE VICARS CONTACT INFORMATION

Western Florida Conference:

Fr. Athanasios Haros, (727) 937-3540, Email –
frathanasios@stnicholastarpon.org Date/Location TBA*

North Florida Conference:

Fr. Constantine Simeonidis, (407) 331-468, Email –
csimeonidis69@gmail.com Date/Location TBA*

South Florida Conference:

Fr. Spiro Bobotas, 305-854-2922, Email – frspiro@stsophiamiami.org
Date/Location TBA*

Western Conference:

Fr. Matthew Carter, 850-433-2662, Email – frmatthewcarter@gmail.com
Date/Location TBA*

Central Conference:

Fr. Paul Kaplanis, (404) 633-5870, Email - frpaulk@atlgoc.org
Date/Location TBA*

Coastal Conference:

Fr. Michael Platanis, (803) 252-6758, Email - newsmyrna@gmail.com
Date/Location TBA*

Northeast Conference:

Fr. Sarantis Loulakis, (336) 851-1358, Email - patersarantis@yahoo.com
Date/Locations are found on the following page of this notice.

**TBA – Election Committees, please call your Vicar or email him to confirm training date, time and place.*

CHECKLIST FOR PARISH ELECTION RATIFICATION

(Parish Clergy and/or Election Committee Chairman should please check off and enclose each item below **before** mailing and send this page as a cover sheet for all required documents in **one** submission.)

- _____ 1. Certification of Pre-election Seminar Attendance
- _____ 2. Parish Council Candidate's Pledge forms (one for each candidate elected to serve on Parish Council)
- _____ 3. Listing of Election results (with names and number of votes for each candidate)
- _____ 4. Verification of Parish Council Elections Form
- _____ 5. Verification of Parish Total Membership Number Form/Parish
- _____ 6. Enclosed are Summary and Individual forms for all current and future Parish Council Members confirming they ALL have passed background check required of all Clergy, Youth Workers & Volunteers

Financial Obligations (including Total Allocation Priest Benefits Funding) are up-to-date with _____ the Archdiocese _____ the Metropolis (check those that are complete)

Signature of Parish Priest _____

Signature of Election Committee Chairman _____

Date Mailed from Parish to Metropolis Office _____ (Do not fill out below.)

For Metropolis of Atlanta USE ONLY during ratification process. Parishes leave BLANK.

Dear Parish Priest/Election Committee Chairman:

Date Election Materials Received at Metropolis Office from your parish: _____

Items received are marked with ✓ (checkmark). Missing/Incomplete items include those items marked with X. *Please send them as soon as possible so ratification request can be processed.*

- _____ 1. Certification of Pre-election Seminar Attendance
- _____ 2. Parish Council Candidate's Pledge forms (one for each candidate elected to serve on Parish Council)
- _____ 3. Listing of Election results (with names and number of votes for each candidate)
- _____ 4. Verification of Parish Council Elections Form
- _____ 5. Verification of Parish Total Membership Number Form Parish
- _____ 6. Financial Obligations are up-to-date with _____ the Archdiocese (Allocation & Priest Benefits) _____ the Metropolis
- _____ 7. All current and future Parish Council Members have passed the background check required of all Clergy, Youth Workers & Volunteers

Faithfully yours,

+Fr. George Tsahakis, Chancellor

Date: _____

CERTIFICATION OF PRE-ELECTION SEMINAR ATTENDANCE

This is to certify that _____ has
attended the Parish Council Candidate Pre-Election Seminar for the
_____ Conference on _____, at
_____ Greek Orthodox Church from
_____ a.m. to _____ p.m., and is eligible for election at their
respective parish.

Signature of Conference Vicar/Priest Certifying

Affix Seal of Church

2025 PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDATE 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.

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(REPRODUCE ON PARISH STATIONARY)

ELECTION RESULTS

DATE _____, 2025

ON THIS DATE, WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS OF OUR PARISH, CONDUCTED THE ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE IX OF THE "UNIFORM PARISH REGULATIONS" OF OUR HOLY ARCHDIOCESE. VOTING BEGAN AT _____ AND ENDED PROMPTLY AT _____. TOTAL OF THE _____ MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING WITH OUR PARISH VOTED.

AFTER THE VOTING WAS COMPLETED, ALL OF THE BALLOTS WERE EXAMINED AND FOUND TO BE IN ORDER, AND HAVING HAD NO OBJECTIONS RAISED BY ANYONE, WE HAVE RULED SAID BALLOTS AND ELECTIONS AS VALID.

MEMBERS ELECTED TO THE PARISH COUNCIL ARE LISTED IN THE ORDER OF NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>VOTE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
1. _____	_____	6. _____	_____
2. _____	_____	7. _____	_____
3. _____	_____	8. _____	_____
4. _____	_____	9. _____	_____
5. _____	_____	10. _____	_____

CANDIDATES WHO RECEIVED AN INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF VOTES ARE:

1. _____	_____	3. _____	_____
2. _____	_____	4. _____	_____

WE HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID ELECTION RESULTS WERE ACCURATELY AND PROPERLY RECORDED AND REPORTED. (Please affix appropriate signatures below)

CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF ELECTIONS

SECRETARY, BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEMBER, BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEMBER, BOARD OF ELECTIONS

(REPRODUCE ON PARISH STATIONARY)

VERIFICATION OF PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

DATE _____, 2025

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS, HAVING SUPERVISED THE ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ELECTIONS WERE CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO THE “UNIFORM PARISH REGULATIONS” AND THE PARISH BY-LAWS AND THAT THOSE ELECTED WERE ECCLESIASTICALLY QUALIFIED.

PRIEST SIGNATURE _____

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Election Committee Chairman Signature

Election Committee Secretary Signature

Election Committee Member Signature

Election Committee Member Signature

(REPRODUCE ON PARISH STATIONARY)

VERIFICATION OF PARISH TOTAL MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF
MEMBERSHIP IN GOOD STANDING FOR THE PARISH FAMILY
IN THE CITY OF _____, STATE
OF _____ UP TO THE DAY OF ELECTIONS WAS
_____. FURTHERMORE, WE CERTIFY THAT EACH
MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING HAD FULFILLED THEIR
FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE TO THE PARISH AND
THAT THE PARISH FAMILY HAD FORWARDED OUR
FINANCIAL TOTAL COMMITMENT PLEDGE TO THE
ARCHDIOCESE AND TO THE METROPOLIS PRIOR TO THE
ELECTIONS.**

DATE _____, 2025

SIGNATURE OF PRIEST

SIGNATURE OF PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

SIGNATURE OF PARISH COUNCIL TREASURER

Please Read and Follow This Document for 2025 Parish Council Elections

This handout reprints from *the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Uniform Parish Regulations* the section pertinent to Parish Councils. In addition to the responsibilities of Parish Council Members, it reviews the election guidelines, including the Board of Elections. It reviews the ratification of elections of Parish Council and Affirmation of Office .

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 Hierarchy 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 non-voting 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:

- A.** No employee of the Parish may serve on the Parish Council, the Board of Auditors, or the Board of Elections.
- B.** Family members of a parish employee, but not more than one family member from the same household, may serve on a Parish Council. The names and relation to the parish employee shall be reported to the respective Hierarchy and be subject to the ratification procedures set forth in Articles 25 and 26.
- C.** Family members of a priest actively serving in a parish, but not more than one family member from the same household, may serve on a Parish Council. The names and relation to such priest shall be reported to the respective Hierarchy and be subject to the ratification procedures set forth in Articles 25 and 26.
- D.** No family member of a Treasurer of a Parish Council may serve as an officer on the same Parish Council. Otherwise, more than one family member, but not more than one family member from the same household, may serve as an officer of a Parish Council. The names and relation to each shall be reported to the respective Hierarchy and be subject to the ratification procedures set forth in Articles 25 and 26.
- E.** The term "family member" is as defined in Article 32, Section 1.

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 (A) (1) through (6) 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 (A) (1) through (6) 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.

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.

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 Hierarch. 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 Hierarch, 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 conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, during which at least two thirds (2/3) of those persons to serve on the new Parish Council shall take the affirmation of office jointly. The affirmation shall be administered by the priest and shall be repeated by all those present who are to serve on the Parish Council. The affirmation of office shall be administered no later than the third Sunday in January. Until such time, the prior Parish Council shall continue to fulfill the responsibilities of the Parish Council. In the event that a person who is to serve on the Parish Council is not present for the affirmation of office, the Priest shall administer the affirmation to him/her at the beginning of the first Parish Council meeting that such person attends. Exceptions to the deadline imposed in this Article 26, Section 3 may be made at the discretion of the respective Hierarchy.

Section 4: Each member or member-elect of the Parish Council is obliged, without exception, to execute the Disclosure Statement (attached hereto as **Addendum A-3**) pursuant to the Disclosure Policy (attached hereto as **Addendum A**) prior to assuming his/her office and 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 execute his/her Disclosure Statement and/or to affirm and subscribe to the affirmation of office 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 Hierarchy 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 Hierarchy 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, but in no event later than the third Sunday in January, the Parish Council shall convene to elect its officers under the chairmanship of the priest who shall not vote. At least two thirds (2/3) of the Parish Council must be present in order for the election of officers to take place. Neither absentee ballots nor proxies shall be permitted. Exceptions to the deadline imposed in this Article 27, Section 1 may be made at the discretion of the respective Hierarchy.

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 Hierarchy.

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.

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.

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.

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 Hierarchy 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 Hierarchy.

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.

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.

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. No employee of the parish may serve on the Board of Elections, and no more than one family member, at the same time, shall serve on the Board of Elections. No family member of a priest serving a parish may serve on its Board of Elections. A "family member" is defined as spouse, children and their spouses, grandchildren and their spouses, siblings and their spouses, parents and grandparents.

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.

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.

Section 4: The Board of Auditors shall report its findings to the Metropolis.

Section 5: The limitations set forth in Article 32, Section 1 shall also apply for membership on a parish Board of Auditors.

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 Hierarch 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. Each Parish shall comply fully with the Total Commitment programs approved and revised by the Clergy Laity Congress from time to time. The Total Commitment program specifically includes, but is not limited to, all operational policies related thereto, including any and all disclosure, reporting and other policies and procedure.

- 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.

Section 10: All transfers of money or other property to a Parish shall be deemed gifts unless, prior to the transfer, the Parish Council acknowledges in writing that said transfer is a loan.